

Open Data Advisory Group June 27, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Introduction

The initial meeting of the Open Data Advisory Group (ODAG) was held on June 27, 2017 from 6:30-8pm at 2100 Clarendon Blvd (Cheery and Dogwood conference rooms). The following Members and County Staff Liaisons were in attendance:

Members

David Bain
Duke Banks
Alyssa Doom
Christopher Hedrick
David Husband
Aaron Schroeder
Vadim Sokolov
Jason Thomas (Chair)
Dennis Whitehead
Edith Wilson

County Staff Liaisons

Jack Belcher (DTS)
Alexandra Fox (Libraries)
Bryna Helfer (Communications)
Dharmesh Jain (DES)
Jaime Lees (DTS, Staff Liaison)
David Mota (DTS)
Katie Pegoraro (DTS)
Girish Rajput (Schools)
James Schwartz (CMO)
Sanmeet Sidhu (DTS)

Jaime Lees, Staff Liaison and Jason Thomas, Chair introduced themselves to the group. ODAG Members and Liaisons introduced themselves and provided descriptions of their interest in and connection to data. A request was made to post bios of the ODAG members on the ODAG website (<https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/odag/>). Administrative logistics and standard ground rules were discussed and agreed upon.

It was noted that County Manager Advisory Groups have a more informal structure than County Board Commissions, including being able to participate in meetings via phone and communicate with ODAG members outside regularly scheduled meetings.

ODAG Charge

The County Manager's [charge to the ODAG](#) was reviewed. Concerns were expressed that the charge items lacked specificity and several ideas for topics in which to advise the County Manager were raised.

These included

- establishment of government performance goals,
- development of a County-wide data inventory,
- identification of potential university and economic development partners,
- empowerment of individuals to use data in innovative ways and
- specifying why the County posts open data, e.g., increasing equity in access to data, accelerating economic development.

A question was raised whether the ODAG would benefit from a formal charter, and volunteers offered to provide template/sample charters. This issue will be picked up again in a future meeting.

It was noted that not all County agencies are represented in the ODAG. Specific requests were made to include representation from the Dept of Management and Finance (DMF) and the County Attorney's Office (CAO). The Group will take up the topic of when and how to engage the CAO on specific topics, as has been done previously in the review of open data datasets by the CAO prior to publishing them. A DMF representative will be identified and included in future meetings.

Open Data Portal

The Open Data Portal (<https://data.arlingtonva.us/>) was presented and described. The Portal, introduced in 2016, is a publicly available and downloadable collection of 100+ datasets covering topics such as Public Safety, Health and Food Inspections, Demographics, Economic Indicators, Transportation and more. The backend for the Open Data Portal is the County's Data Hub. Questions were posed how datasets were selected for inclusion in the Portal and if there was a financial estimation mechanism to determine the cost of posting a given dataset to the Portal; answers will be researched and shared.

The Group was challenged by the Chair to come to the next meeting with use cases that Group members would be willing to champion – including researching the topic, working with County staff to identify relevant open datasets, identify community resources to complete the work and share the results of the initiative with Group members and more broadly in the community.

Reference was made to use cases for open data in other jurisdictions and for organizations that have used County open data in innovative ways. The group was asked what datasets they may want to prioritize and to share use cases for County open data. Several group members indicated they did not know what County data might be available and recommended that a County-wide inventory be developed. Many benefits of a data inventory were presented such as opportunistic use cases, being able to prioritize from a complete list, being able to estimate the level of effort to publish all open data and to know when the work is complete. Potential challenges were also identified including the resources needed to complete what would be a significant County-wide effort, the limited quality of a coerced inventory and questions whether all agencies are culturally poised to share data.

County Data Program

Members asked about the County's actions to date and plans around data. A brief introduction to the County's data program was provided, including reference to the data vision, strategy, policy, partners, partnerships and data sharing agreements and the relationship of the data program to the open data program. A request was made to distribute all relevant written materials to the Group for review ahead of the next meeting; discussion on the data program and its relationship to the open data program will continue at that time.

Meeting Schedule and Communication Logistics

Discussion was conducted around the Group meeting schedule and work that may be done in between meetings. An opinion was expressed and echoed by many that quarterly meetings, at least initially, would be insufficient to catch up on the County's data-focused progress to date as well as move forward with Member-driven initiatives and recommendations to the County Manager. Many ideas for meeting

schedule, communications, “homework,” and other interactions between meetings were shared. A proposal will be presented by the Chair to the Group in advance of the next meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8pm.

Action Items

1. Collect and post bios of ODAG members on the ODAG website. (Chair/Staff Liaison; as soon as feasible)
2. Share sample open data program charters from relevant organizations and jurisdictions. (Alyssa Doom, as soon as feasible)
3. Provide information how Open Data Portal datasets were prioritized for publication and whether cost estimation methods for dataset publication are available. (Chair/Staff Liaison, by next meeting)
4. Develop ideas for community-driven use cases for open data and present at a future Group meeting. (Members, as soon as feasible)
5. Share Data Program Vision, Data Analytics Program Overview, Data Analytics Program Strategy. (Chair/Staff Liaison, by July 18)
6. Review Data Program Vision, Data Analytics Program Overview, Data Analytics Program Strategy (Members, by next meeting)
7. Identify and invite a DMF representative to participate in the ODAG. (Chair/Staff Liaison, as soon as feasible)
8. Prepare and share a proposal for meeting schedules, communications and homework in between meetings. (Chair/Liaison, by July 18)