Open Data Advisory Group
January 2, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Introduction
A meeting of the Open Data Advisory Group (ODAG) was held on January 3, 2018 from 6:30-8pm at 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Conference Room 311. The following Members and County Staff Liaisons were in attendance:

Members	*County Staff Liaisons*
Alyssa Doom	Alexandra Fox
Duke Banks	Emily Hughes
Christopher Hedrick	Jaime Lees (Staff Liaison)
David Husband	Katie Pegoraro
Edith Wilson	

Visit by Mark Schwartz, County Manager
The County Manager welcomed the Group and thanked the members for their service. He reflected on one of his top three priorities when he started as County Manager – customer service and transparency – and how open data remains a key initiative that supports this priority. He shared the contents of a memo on open data issued to all County employees on Nov 2 in which he authorized the creation of a data inventory and directed each department to publish at least one substantive open dataset in the coming year. He reiterated his commitment to Open Government and Data as outlined in his 2018 Priorities message to all County employees on Jan 2.

He noted the high quality work performed by County employees and the collection of data in the course of doing this work and acknowledged the culture shift required to not just collect and use data but to share it. We've started the culture shift conversation but to effect it will require constant attention from the top. The Manager related that during annual performance evaluations he asked each department head to tell him how they are doing on open data and that he is holding them accountable for progress in this area.

The Manager asked the Group to continue to be supportive, inquisitive and persistent, and to engage with County staff and other community members in responsible conversation. He posed that getting the raw/open data is a big challenge but adding context, i.e., telling the story, is an even bigger challenge.

The Manager opened the conversation to questions and comments from Group members, who raised the following topics:
1. Open Data will only be useful with context for the data, i.e., when it includes the raw data as well as unstructured data (e.g., supporting memos, documents).
2. Open Data can be a viable alternative to FOIA requests if (a) responses to open dataset requests are timely and (b) concerns about data quality be balanced against the usefulness of the data (example provided was medium quality field reservation data was nonetheless useful to Sports Commission) so as not to hold up open data publication until data is "perfect."

3. Privacy needs to be formally addressed, e.g., through a Chief Privacy Officer, such that data is looked at through the lens of how the specific dataset and the dataset in concert with other open data could be used; important to have the conversation and be aware even if no formal position funded; view Seattle Privacy Policy
4. Encouragement for the County Manager to be persistent in communicating about open data – to relay importance of the effort and highlight progress as well as new open data-focused initiatives.
5. Funding needed for County employee training on data analytics, open data and data privacy; to develop internal training on these topics; to send staff to conferences to gain/keep broader perspective on work being done outside the County

Administrative
1. Updates to the Open Data Catalog were demonstrated and discussed.
2. A request was made to update text on the Request a Dataset page to direct visitors to click individual requests in order to review County staff comments on the status of the particular request.
3. Attendees selected Mar 7 as the date for the next meeting.

County Manager's Nov 2 Memo to All County Employees
The Staff Liaison walked through the County Manager's Nov 2 memo on data sharing, open data and data quality. Key topics were the County Manager's directives to participate in the creation of a Data Inventory and to publish at least one substantive open dataset in the coming year.

The Data Inventory will be used to facilitate data sharing across agencies and to identify data which may be shared with the community. With the list of open data, the Group can help to prioritize the list and contribute to a schedule for publication.

The open dataset for publication will be identified by each department as they go through the Data Inventory process. Departments will work with DTS as they do now to collect and validate the data, ensure it is suitable for publication, to set up a schedule under which the data will be periodically refreshed, to publish metadata about the dataset and to publish the dataset to the Open Data Portal.

The memo also noted an effort related to open data – data quality. The Manager accepts responsibility for the quality of data published in the Open Data Portal and tasked every County employee with responsibility for monitoring and, where needed, improving data quality as well as correcting errors when identified.

After the release of the Manager's memo, the Data Matters internal blog was established to serve as a forum for employee questions or comments and to communicate with employees about Open Data and Data Analytics program topics, including definitions, purposes and goals, progress. Members suggested that this blog be made publicly available as well.

Examples of Using Arlington Open Data

Member Christopher Hedrick representing Code for NoVa demonstrated his use of Arlington Dog License open data to build the IFoundADog app. Visitors who found a lost dog but did not know the owner could enter the dog license # from the dog's collar and see the address associated with the dog license. Possible next steps for the app including modifying the license application process to allow licensee opt in to provide additional application information like phone number and email and/or the upload of a photo of the licensed dog, and enabling anonymous contacting of finder and licensee to facilitate secure communications.

Documenting Recommendations

The Group did not discuss in detail previously suggested recommendations as planned; this will be the primary topic of the next meeting. New recommendations raised during this meeting will also be discussed further. However, the DMF Liaison provided a brief update in connection with the recommendation for financial data to be posted as open data that the County is in the process of procuring a solution for the detailed sharing of financial information which should be available in about 1 year. The solution will not include Treasurer's or Schools' Data. Additional updates will be provided in future meetings.

Action Items

1. Send Mar 7 meeting invitation. (Staff Liaison)
2. Update Request a Dataset welcome text to direct visitors to click on request for County staff comments regarding the status of a particular request (Staff Liaison)
3. Re-distribute ODAG Sharepoint site URL (Staff Liaison)
4. Post links and reading materials to and read posted materials on ODAG Sharepoint site (All)
5. Distribute the County Manager's Nov 2 and Jan 2 memos (Staff Liaison)
6. Research options for and suitability of publishing Data Matters blog to public website (Staff Liaison)
7. Discuss options for expanding scope of IFoundADog and identify specific recommendations and communications opportunities (Edith Wilson, Christopher Hedrick)