

Open Data Council
August 25, 2014
StateStat Conference Room
6 St. Paul Street, Baltimore
10:00 - noon

Minutes

1. Welcome – Greg Urban and Matt Power
2. Introductions – those in attendance quickly introduced themselves.
3. Review of the Open Data Law – Barney Krucoff
 - a. Barney discussed why the Open Data law (Senate Bill 644) is a good idea, what is open data, and the duties of the Council. (Barney’s PowerPoint slides were sent to the Council membership last week.)
 - b. Deliverables for the Council:
 - Establish a plan for providing all open data to the public at no cost;
 - On or before January 10th of each year the Council shall report to the Governor and the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of this article, on the activities of the Council for the previous year and any recommendations for legislation.
4. Ethics Review – Barney
 - a. Council is an “executive entity”, and has 30 days to come into compliance for conflict exemption and financial disclosure.
 - b. Conflict exemption - a member may have a conflict, but you need to declare it and have an exemption approved. Hypothetical example, Council member’s spouse works for IBM and they sell open data software.
 - Fill out Form 5 (from the Ethics Commission) and acknowledge the conflict. The conflict may or may not be exempted.
 - If exempted, other provisions of the Public Ethics Law continue to apply such as recusal from participation in State matters relating to the conflict.
 - c. Financial disclosure –
 - If you’re a state employee, and you have filled out Form 1 from the Ethics Commission, you’re done.
 - If you’re a state employee who hasn’t been asked to fill out Form 1, OR you’re an appointee from outside state government , you must fill out Form 2 from the Commission.
 - d. Ethics Commission’s contact information:
<http://ethics.gov.state.md.us/pages/home.htm>
410- 260-7770

5. Senator Bill Ferguson's Remarks –
 - a. Open Data movement can renew people's faith in government. People will see and realize all that state government does for the citizens of Maryland.
 - b. We need to pursue this idea of Open Data thoughtfully and carefully; data is powerful. There are some very good reasons why some data is closed.
 - c. The establishment of the Council is good timing in terms of the election. We will be able to establish ourselves before the new administration starts in January. Whoever the new Governor may be, we will have established that Maryland is committed to the idea of Open Data in a very real way.

6. Background on, and demo of, <http://data.maryland.gov> – Josh Exler
Josh showed the group how to access information using the portal. The portal is a cloud product purchased from Socrata Inc. Talked about who the users are, and how collaborative the gathering and displaying of data can be.

7. Governor's Remarks –
 - a. Thanked Senator Ferguson for his support of Senate Bill 644. Thanked members of the Council for their commitment, time, and involvement.
 - b. Open Data creates a smarter, responsive, and more effective form of government.
 - c. Cities are leading the way. 18 of the top 20 cities are using 311 as a common platform. The next generation is also calling for more pragmatic, more operationally collaborative public administrations. Leadership should be performance measured.
 - d. Government employees need to let go of their fear of transparency. Taxpayers need access to what they're paying for.
 - e. Maryland needs to improve:
 - i. Sharing how we spend State money;
 - ii. Better minimum metadata standards;
 - iii. More complete picture of all the data sets we collect;
 - iv. Promotion of the benefits of transparency and the use of the Open Data portals.

8. Background on, and demo of, <http://imap.maryland.gov> - Barney Krucoff
In contrast to data.maryland.gov which is focused on alphanumeric, and includes some mapping, the iMap Portal is focused on geographic data primarily. Barney demonstrated how data can be discovered and in many cases downloaded. Barney also showed <http://planning.maryland.gov/OurProducts/downloadFiles.shtml> where MDP is now making property data available for free after selling that data for 20+ years.

9. Open discussion –
 - a. How do agencies pick what data to post first? Suggestions:
 - Look at FOIA/PIA requests, and see what data sets are requested the most.
 - Attend developer meet-ups
 - List agency priorities

- b. What is the line between Open Data and a PIA request? Could we assemble data on PIA requests from across the government and make it Open Data?
- c. Do we need to develop standards or a uniform set of policies for distribution?
- d. Montgomery County has had success developing an Open Data policy including a data inventory and publication priority list. Could Montgomery share their story at the next meeting?
- e. Should the iMap tech committee which focuses on GIS technology be expanded to include those who work with the Socarata Open Data portal?
- f. Create a Council web site where meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, etc, could be posted.
- g. Maryland needs a uniform set of disclaimers / use constraints on open data so citizens don't find a different policy at each agency's website.
- h. Council could conduct an inventory of major data sets for each agency. We are looking for data that can be open, the cyber security folks are looking for data that needs to be secured. We need to coordinate our inventory work with the security team and not hit agencies with redundant inventory tasks.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Jackson
Executive Assistant
Office of the Secretary
Department of Information Technology

Upcoming Meetings: (please note that there have been some changes)

October 3, 2014, 9:30 - 12:00 p.m., Governor's Reception Room, Annapolis
November 7, 2014, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Governor's Reception Room, Annapolis
December 16, 2014, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., location to be determined