

Cable Communications Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

DRAFT

Administrative Conference Room
Meridian Municipal Building, Okemos, MI
April 17, 2013

Present: Commissioners: Walter Benenson, Patrick Crowley, Tunga Kiyak and Andrew Lathrop
Staff: Deborah Guthrie and Kristi Schaeding
Township: Ron Styka
Comcast: John Gardner
AT&T: None
Haslett Schools: None
Okemos Schools: None

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Benenson called the meeting to order at **6:03 pm**.

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Crowley moved TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. Seconded by Commissioner Kiyak.

Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Kiyak moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2013 AS SUBMITTED. Seconded by Commissioner Crowley.

Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Remarks:

No Public Present.

Communications:

Commissioner Kiyak requested an update on the Comcast DTA box issue that was discussed at the last meeting. Comcast Representative John Gardner responded that he resolved the second internet account. Communications Director Deborah Guthrie indicated that she appreciated his help with the matter.

Commissioner Kiyak started a discussion regarding the March 26th letter from Comcast regarding the realignment of their HD programming line-up. Gardner commented that Comcast has a legacy of adding channels as they become available and they are creating new "genre-based neighborhoods" utilizing four-digit channel number capabilities.

Chair Benenson inquired if all the lower channels will be going away at some point. Gardner responded by saying that at some point they will. Communications Director Guthrie questioned if it was all channel mapping and whether or not additional bandwidth is required. She also inquired about the location of the PEG channels on the basic tier service and whether or not they can be moved. Gardner responded by saying the channel number doesn't correspond to the level of service.

Guthrie requested clarification from Gardner by asking if HD is only available in certain locations and if HOMTV would have to be in one of those locations to be HD?

Gardner responded by saying that is a totally different discussion and Comcast is not adding HOMTV on HD.

Old Business:

Comcast Guide Channel - Communications Director Guthrie explained that she doesn't understand why all other channels are allowed to be present on the guide channel and PEG channels are not. Guthrie questioned how a company can treat a group of people differently than another group of people. She commented that she doesn't buy it when Comcast states it is not available. And she commented that she will continue to pursue the issue. Guthrie requested this item remain on the agenda under "Old Business" because the Resolution of Support still needs to be drafted.

HOMTV Citizen Survey – Communications Director Guthrie explained that she sent information via email to the commission along with a memo regarding a survey and recommends the commission to make a decision on how to move forward from here. She said the former surveys focused more on customer service.

Guthrie said the dynamics have changed when looking at the way the Communications Department has been redesigned and new media methods and program offerings and the new ways in which people are receiving information. She stated that she felt it would be beneficial to meet additional times and develop a purpose and scope for the survey and issue Request for Proposals (RFP) before the 2014 township budget deadlines.

Commissioner Crowley also recommended setting up a meeting to determine how to move forward with the survey and what direction we want to go with it. Chair Benenson proposed a subcommittee and meeting that would be open to the public and focus on the particulars of the survey.

Commissioner Kiyak proposed the special meeting date of May 22nd from 5:00 – 7:00 pm.

Commissioner Crowley moved TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING ON MAY 22 TO DISCUSS THE SURVEY. Seconded by Commissioner Kiyak.

Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Communications Director Guthrie stated that she will research and provide the survey language included in P.A. 480 and the franchise agreement during the special meeting.

Commissioner Kiyak requested Communications Director Guthrie to contact her peers in the surrounding PEG communities and inquire if they have completed any recent surveys and could perhaps provide us with ideas of social networking or internet questions they used.

Communications Director Guthrie explained that most municipalities dissolved their cable commissions and there maybe half a dozen left in the state of Michigan because P.A. 480 removed all authority from cable commissioners.

New Business:

Detroit V. Comcast Lawsuit – Communications Director Guthrie stated that she met with Township Manager Jerry Richards regarding the lawsuit and will be meeting with the township attorneys soon to discuss creating a letter.

Reports:

- Cable Compliments/Complaints: Communications Director Guthrie provided an update from a complaint received from a township resident regarding iPad streaming. Guthrie stated that she had a conference call with the township IT department director and Granicus that resulted in the IT department stepping up their efforts to make sure streaming will be made available on the iPad and other mobile devices. According to Guthrie, June 1st is the target date to be mobile.
- Comcast: Comcast Representative Gardner provided an update of the Internet Essentials Program offered by Comcast and explained that they are working with schools, community partners and government agencies to spread the word about the program. Gardner explained that the criteria of the program has been expanded to include more families.

He also commented that Comcast offers courtesy service to public libraries.

- Township Information: Township Liaison Ron Styka announced the new Township Manager will start on May 7th. Frank Walsh was chosen by the Township Board to as the next manager following the retirement of Jerry Richards on May 3rd.
- Chair's Report: Chair Benenson reported that he recently had a Comcast issue and was able to work with them and in the end everything worked out fine with no problems.
- Communications Director's Report: Communications Director Guthrie inquired if you have a Comcast subscription, do you have to have it connected to your house in order to use the service on your iPad? Gardner responded by saying you cannot received a Comcast account or services without having your house connected.

- Viewership/Promotions: Communications Director Guthrie reported that she organized the annual joint luncheon between the ACM and NATOA groups at the Michigan Association of Broadcasters (MAB) conference. HOMTV was given ad space in the MAB brochure along with other news outlets. Guthrie expressed the importance of continuing a strong relationship with the MAB.
- Programming: Communications Director Guthrie announced a new news show was recently launched called "Meridian News Now" and is solely hosted and produced by the interns. She explained that she is not sure how long the program will continue because the interns will be graduating soon and will highly likely be moving on to full time careers in the field.

Other Business & Announcements:

Commissioner Kiyak, Commissioner Lathrop and Chair Benenson have all expressed their desire to waive payment from the township for attending the regularly scheduled cable commission meetings.

Future Agenda Items:

Nothing to Report.

Public Remarks:

No remarks from the public.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Crowley moved TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. Seconded by Commissioner Kiyak.

Hearing no objections, Chair Benenson ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT **7:16 p.m.**

NEXT MEETING:

The next scheduled meeting is **Wednesday, July 24, 2013 in the Administrative Conference Room.**