

Communications Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Administrative Conference Room
Meridian Municipal Building, Okemos, MI

November 2, 2016

Present: Commissioners: Chair, Walter Benenson; Vice Chair, Patrick Crowley; Commissioner, Tunga Kiyak and Commissioner Kevin Thatcher

Staff: Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director, Andrea Smiley, Administrative Assistant, Brandie Yates, Internship Coordinator and Mike Watz, Principal Kitch Law Firm

Township: Trustee, Ron Styka

Comcast: John Gardner, Director of External Affairs

AT&T: None

Haslett Schools: None

Okemos Schools: None

Call Meeting to Order: Chair, Benenson called the meeting to order at **6:00 pm**.

Public Remarks: None

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Kiyak moved **TO APPROVE**. Seconded by Vice Chair Crowley

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Vice Chair Crowley moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 3, 2016**.

Seconded by Commissioner Kiyak Voice

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Communications/Announcements:

1. HOMTV Internship Program 35th Anniversary
Communications Director, Guthrie introduced Brandie Yates, Internship Coordinator and thanked her for attending the meeting. Internship Coordinator, Yates announced the 35th Anniversary of the Internship Program. Chair Benenson presented Yates with a tribute for the 35th Anniversary on behalf of the Commission. Yates announced the 2016 Intern Appreciation and Golden Tape Awards Ceremony and invited the Commissioners to attend. She also announced that the Communications Department was seeking sponsors for the event, with Leightronix, Great Lakes Audio Visual and AVI as current sponsors. Guthrie discussed the advantages of the internship program and all the hard work the interns devote to the program.

Old Business:

1. DAS update – Principal Watz began the discussion that the Commission should make the attempt to develop a process, a flow chart for the direction of the Township as it

relates to DAS. He passed out a policy decision tree to the commissioners stating that they should answer the questions in order to move forward. The Township board is asking how to deal with DAS on a larger scale. Commissioner Kiyak stated that it was his understanding that the questions needed to be answered in order to develop the policy. The Commission's input along with the Planning and Engineering Departments will develop an agreement or ordinance. The commissioners commented that the questions aren't really directed towards the Communications Commission. Trustee Styka commented that the Board is looking for the Communications Commission to make a recommendation to the Board about how to proceed.

Principal Watza continued to discuss what needs to happen in order to get the DAS cell towers project moving forward.

ACD.net commented that East Lansing is on wave 3 with 14+ poles already installed. Chair Benenson requested a map of the locations so he had a point of reference. They also commented that Lansing currently has 20 towers and they are still working on the downtown corridor. ACD.net stated that they will make the towers look however the Township wants. The Board wants consistency for all DAS tower requests.

The Commissioners questioned why a motion was passed at the previous meeting but it was never taken to the Township Board. ACD.net stated that there is a current licensing agreement with Boyne and the Commission could use that agreement as a starting point.

Commissioner Kiyak moved **TO APPROVE STAFF ASKING TOWNSHIP MANAGER, FRANK WALSH TO CREATE A DAS COMMITTEE, CONSISTING OF ONE MEMBER FROM EACH OF THE FOLLOWING; THE TOWNSHIP BOARD, THE PLANNING COMMISSION, THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT, THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, LEGAL COUNSEL, MIKE WATZA AND THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, DEBORAH GUTHRIE TO DEVELOP A LICENSING AGREEMENT FOR THE TOWNSHIP USING THE BOYNE LICENSING AGREEMENT AS A STARTING POINT IN ORDER TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD. THE LICENSING AGREEMENT WILL BE DEVELOPED WITH THE INTENTION THAT IT CAN BE THEN USED AS A BASIS FOR AN ORDINANCE FOR THE TOWNSHIP. THE COMMITTEE WILL THEN FORWARD A RECOMMENDED DRAFT LICENSING AGREEMENT TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD.**

Seconded by Vice Chair Crowley.

Voice Vote: Motion carried unanimously

Vice Chair Crowley moved **TO APPROVE THAT THE COMMISSION RECOMMEND COMMISSIONER KİYAK TO BE APPOINTED TO THE COMMITTEE TO REPRESENT THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.** Seconded by Commissioner Thatcher

Voice Vote: Motion carried unanimously

2. Comcast Financial Audit – Director Guthrie commented that the Commission approved monies to be spent and introduced Principal Watza to provide an update. Watza stated that the audit is being performed by Garth Aspaugh and that there are issues with the audit but that he doesn't have the details of those issues. He is hoping

to have more information by the end of the year, 2016. The total scope of the audit consists of two years of the franchise agreement. The purpose of the audit is to find financials that may be owed to the Township by Comcast, including fees. Watza stated that the main idea is to work out an agreement without litigation. John Gardner, Director of External Affairs for Comcast, stated that Comcast provided a written response claiming that no financials were owed.

New Business:

1. 2017 Communications Commission Schedule – Discussion began with Trustee Styka commenting that the April 5, 2017 date may be a conflict since it will be during the Spring break period. Commissioner Thatcher made a motion **TO APPROVE MOVING THE APRIL 5, 2017 DATE TO APRIL 12, 2017 DATE.** Seconded by Commission Kiyak.

Voice Vote: Motion carried unanimously

Reports:

1. Cable Compliments/Complaints:
Chair Benenson made a comment on the amount of complaints being made concerning channel availability. Director Guthrie stated that it is concerning that we have received so many complaints this year about PEG channels being in black (unavailable) on Comcast. She felt that the number received this year is probably driven by it being an election year because many subscribers commented that the channels had been unavailable for some time and that is alarming. Director Guthrie also commented that Comcast is normally reliable, so it is alarming about the number of residents/subscribers with the same complaint. Director Guthrie explained the process on how the Communications Department handles complaints once received. Comcast representative, John Gardner commented that most of the issues end up being inside wiring that has gone bad. Vice Chair Crowley and Commissioner Thatcher questioned as to why only PEG channels would be unavailable, all channels would be unavailable if the wiring is bad. Gardner also commented that perhaps the customers contact information should be blacked out before including the information in the packet for privacy issues.
2. Video Service Provider(s):
John Gardner, Director of External Affairs for Comcast provided a handout on the Internet Essentials program. He stated that customers can access Netflix now through the X1 box and will be available on November 4, 2016 through the Apps icon.
3. Communications Director Report:
Director Guthrie provided a summary update on the 175th Anniversary events and sponsorships, the Meridian Cares Fundraising campaign, the Township Branding and the new Township Website. Commissioner Kiyak suggested that the new logo be shown to people outside of the committee before the final decision is made.
4. Chair's Report: Nothing to report
5. Township Information:
6. Programming:
Commissioner Kiyak asked about how to view the debates on the HOMTV website.

Director Guthrie explained that all the debates were on the YouTube channel now because the department was switching software for the on demand part of the programming. Commissioner Kiyak made the suggestion to have a link to direct customers to the YouTube channel.

7. Viewership/Promotions:
8. Finance:

Other Business & Announcements:

Public Remarks: No public present

Adjournment:

Commissioner Kiyak moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Vice Chair Crowley.

Hearing no objections, Chair Benenson **ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 7:36 pm.**

NEXT MEETING:

The next scheduled meeting is **December 7, 2016 in the Administrative Conference Room.**