

Cable and Telecommunications Advisory Committee Meeting
September 29, 2009

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Introductions.
*The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM.
Present were Abe Abramovich; Stanley Rose, Jim Williams, and N.S. Ramachandran.
Guests present - Town Manager Richard Krawczun, Tom Ervin of LTPS, Kathy Farinaccio of Comcast.*
2. Approval of Agenda.
The agenda was reviewed and approved
3. Appointment of Secretary for this Meeting.
Jim Williams was appointed Secretary for the meeting
4. Review and Approval of Minutes of the July 28th, 2009 Meeting.
Minutes of the July 28 2009 meeting were approved
5. Government Access Channel initiative
 - a. *Summary of September 16th meeting with Dr. Barry Janes of Rider University (Minutes distributed).
This meeting took place on Sept 16. Minutes of the meeting were distributed. An overview of the meeting was given by Mr. Abramovich.*
 - b. Discussion of next steps
 1. *The committee will revise the existing draft ordinance to add language regarding the scope of the project and acceptable nature and sources of programming content. The revised draft will be submitted to Mr. Krawczun.*
 2. *Discussed ideas regarding the building of a library of seasonal or annual topics which could be reused. Examples are: snow removal, flu shots, dog and cat licensing.*
 3. *Costs involved - Tom Ervin came up with a approximate equipment costs (Leightronics switcher and related items) of \$7600.00. This would be a one time purchase. In addition, based on the discussion with Dr. Janes of Rider University, there would also be an estimated cost of \$500.00 for each short subject produced with Rider's assistance. This would mean a yearly cost of \$6000.00 in order to produce a five minute presentation once a month.*
 - b. Interim options to improve current (power point) presentation (Voice-overs, More appealing visuals, Music)
Ideas regarding possible ways to improve the existing presentation should be submitted in as a memo to Mr. Krawczun. Examples include using different backgrounds for different slides such as scenes from Lawrence Township,

improve the nature of background music, possibly add voice-overs to certain slides where appropriate.

6. Communications.

a. Comcast

1. Notice of 7-28-2009 re: channel assignments
2. Notice of 9-1-2009 re: Notification of Comcast's interest in continuation of the Lawrence Township cable franchise agreement.
3. Notice of 9-1-2009 re: Notification of pricing changes
4. Notice of 9-3-2009 re: channel additions and relocations
5. Notice of 9-4-2009 re: Update to cable guide and DVR software enhancements
6. Notice of 9-9-2009 re: addition of two high-def channels

The above items were briefly reviewed for their informational content.

b. Verizon – none received

7. Public Comments.

- a. August 18: Complaint from Mr. Robert Guadagnino, Lawrenceville Point, regarding Comcast contractors leaving temporary cables on left on the surface for extended periods of time, and junction boxes being left after being services. The matter has been referred to Kathy Farinaccio.

Ms. Farinaccio stated that the matter has been resolved.

- b. September 9: Complaint from Ms. Phyllis Kownacki, Society Hill, regarding Comcast leaving a temporary cable on left on the surface for extended periods of time, and junction boxes being left after being services. The matter has been referred to Kathy Farinaccio.

Ms. Farinaccio stated that the matter has been resolved.

- c. September 10: Jack Kanarek, of Alyce Court, submitted the following question to Comcast:

“I just paid to get "digital boxes" from you that are not digital in that they do not receive HD channels, which are publicly broadcast by the networks. After receiving the so called "digital boxes" I was told by your "customer service" staff on the telephone that it would cost even more to get a box that receives HD channels which are publicly broadcast. This is a deceptive practice. Why are you asking people to pay more for reception that is not equivalent to what the networks are broadcasting?”

The question has been referred to Kathy Farinaccio for a response.

Ms. Farinaccio said that because Mr. Kanarek also submitted his complain to the PUC she was unable to comment on this matter.

Note: Mr. Kanarek's question indicates that the public is confused about the difference between “digital (boxes)” and “high definition”.

Ms. Farinaccio said that explanations for this terminology and requirements viewing High Definitions programs are found on Comcast's website.

- d. September 22: Complaint from Pat Moore, Paddock Drive, that while installing FiOS, Verizon technicians damaged his in-ground sprinkler system. The matter has been referred to Anna Lustenberg.

Ms. Lustenberg did not attend the meeting and no updated information on this issue is available.

- e. Timeliness and quality of property restoration after installation or service work by Comcast or Verizon technicians or contractors.

This point was discussed with Ms. Farinaccio who said that Comcast monitors the quality of their contractors' work to ensure customer satisfaction, and it's her job to follow up with corrective actions when there are issues and customer complaints.

8. Old Business Relating to Comcast.

- a. Status of plans to add additional channels.
 - New York HDTV Channels. – No change
 - Discovery HD – No change
 - Travel Channel – No change

Ms. Farinaccio said that Comcast is expected to add a significant number of new HD channels to its line-up in the near future (before the end of the year). She was unsure of the details.

- b. Request from LTPS, per Tom Ervin follow up email of September 25, 2008, for Comcast to provide 38 replacement digital converter boxes to replace the analog boxes currently in use.

Tom Ervin received correspondence from Comcast saying that Comcast is unable to provide the requested digital converters free of charge and that Comcast will be charging \$3.40 per month for each converter. Comcast has been charging that fee of other municipalities in New Jersey.

9. Old business related to Verizon – none

10. New Business – Other

11. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for November 10, 2009, at 7:30 pm.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.