

Concord Cable Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes: June 21, 2011

Attendees:

CAC Members: Scott Anderson, Genine A. Tillotson, Frank A. Okurowski, Al Couvillon

Selectmen Liaison: Stanly Black

CCTV Board Members: Robert Mast, Mara Dolan

CCTV Acting Station Manager: Lindsay Alaimo,

Agenda:

- Planning For Annual CCTV Hearing
- Search For New CAC Members and Chairman

Discussion:

There was no CAC sponsored CCTV hearing in the Town House in 2010. A hearing for 2011 was originally planned for a date in Feb. but CCTV board members asked that the CAC hold off until a new station manager was selected, something originally anticipated to occur prior to June of 2011. That process is still not complete so CAC is now over a year overdue to hold the hearing. Discussion concerned whether to hold that hearing in early July with Lindsay Alaimo (Acting Station Manager) at the helm from CCTV. Robert Mast is the new board director. The CAC decided ultimately to postpone the annual hearing until a Sept. 2011 time frame. [This meeting was originally held for the purpose of planning the hearing to be held in late June or July.]

Notes on new Comcast contract:

1. Stanly Black stated that the CAC will oversee compliance by Comcast with the new contract, which will probably be valid for 10 years.
2. Scott Anderson stated that the contract should include legal language for regulation of all bundled services, including phone and internet service. These services have been added since the last contract was signed, and need attention.
3. Genine and Lindsay discussed the importance of the new contract supporting HD broadcast for CCTV, if at all technically feasible.
4. Genine then passed around a letter from Comcast with dates for review of contract content. This letter will be reviewed by the CAC. Genine recommended that Comcast should be notified with a formal request for a new contract with recommendations by the town. The memo from Comcast, dated May 26th, 2011 cited the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 and specifically differentiated between "informal process of discussion" and a "formal renewal procedure with specific substantive and procedural requirements." So, Comcast was formally notifying the town on May 26th that they were

requesting a renewal proceeding pursuant to Section 626 (a) (1). The bottom line is that within 6 months of that letter the town must afford residents an opportunity to” identify the future cable-related needs and b) review Comcast’s performance under the current license.” Within 4 months of a Comcast renewal proposal, the town must “choose to renew the license or issue a preliminary denial, which triggers a further formal process.” For this reason, Genine and Scott suggested that a hearing be held specifically to address the Comcast contract, separate from any hearing concerning CCTV. This would enable the town managers and the CAC to get a reading on the situation with all bundled services, from the citizens’ perspective..

5. According to Stan, Doug Meagher is designated as point man on the contract with Comcast by the Town Manager and Selectmen.
6. Lindsay Alaimo stated that Carlisle has a new contract with Comcast. William Solomon of Stoneham was the lawyer used in negotiations with Comcast and has expertise with these types of contracts. The CAC felt, as did the CCTV members present, that Solomon (or an equivalent lawyer) should be hired to oversee contract negotiations.
7. The Comcast contract with Carlisle should be obtained for review by the CAC. Lindsay offered to contact Bill Tice regarding getting a copy of this in print or online.

Notes on Planning for the CAC-CCTV Hearing

1. Stanly Black asked for a date for the hearing, and wanted an update on the CAC membership.
2. Robert Mast stated that a hearing in July is too soon. CCTV will not have time to prepare and there will be a minimal attendance by townspeople in the summer. Lindsay indicated that she thought students and teachers will also be unavailable then.
3. The hearing will be scheduled for a date in September. Scott Anderson will be acting chairman for CAC at the meeting.
4. There will be a CAC meeting on July 12th, called by Genine to welcome Mara Dolan to the committee and to review what Stan has learned about the town’s expectations for the CAC.
5. There was agreement that special effort should be made to attract the community to attend the CCTV hearing. Press releases, a PSA, and the internet should be used as well as the standard meeting notices.
6. CCTV should emphasize planning for the future including streaming shows and viewing of live outdoor events.

Mara Dolan is being nominated as a new member of CAC. However she is also on the board of CCTV. This may be a conflict of interest and could be unacceptable to the town. Stanly Black will look into resolving this issue. [Following the meeting, a memo was sent out from Anita Tekle, town clerk, suggesting that Mara or Genine could check in with the State Ethics Commission to see if there is any issue.]

Genine will be leaving CAC in July and Scott in September. This leaves only two members on the committee, with no designated chairman. It is then essential to resolve the Mara Dolan question, and to sign up new members ASAP. The group agreed to try and recruit new members.

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