

Cable Advisory Board Minutes

April 24, 2008

Members Present: Donna Behlen, Herb Friedman, Mary Herres, Jerrod Jaeger, Jim Johnson, Laurie Lee, Stuart Long, Herb Schimek, Art Zygielbaum

Members Absent: Jon Rehm (excused), Scott Young (excused)

City Staff: Steve Huggenberger, Diane Gonzolas, Connie Guillaume

Representatives of Time Warner: Ann Shrewsbury, Jamie Wenz

Meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by chair Art Zygielbaum. Zygielbaum announced that Scott Young has expressed the desire to resign from the board; he is very busy and doesn't feel he can continue to serve on the Cable Board.

Zygielbaum announced that he has invited Steve Huggenberger from the City Attorney's office and Ann Shrewsbury from Time Warner Cable to join us at the table during meetings as nonvoting members.

Minutes from the January meeting were read and approved.

COMMITTEES

Zygielbaum stated that he thinks our ability to get things done is based on our ability to get along with Time Warner Cable. Accordingly, he has met individually with each board member, and with Ann Shrewsbury and Steve Huggenberger to get some idea of where they want the board to go. He suggests four areas of subcommittees: competitiveness, complaints, public access, digital conversion.

Zygielbaum said that he has talked to Beth Scarborough from TWC, and she told him that TWC would not object to the board doing a study on competitiveness.

Zygielbaum said that the Complaints committee would work on a database of complaints, respecting privacy of the individuals, and could work with the City's Web site staff to set up an area where people could report complaints.

The committee on Public Access channels would talk about rules and needs of people working with the Public, Education, and Government (PEG) Access channels.

The Digital Conversion committee would focus on the upcoming conversion of broadcast TV signals to digital. Zygielbaum said that it won't affect cable subscribers immediately, however he thinks at some point that it will all go digital. He would like to find out more about that.

Lee stated that as part of the competitiveness study, we need to be aware of what other technologies might be coming into the market.

Schimek asked, with regard to the Complaints committee, who would be responsible for putting complaints on the Web site. Zygielbaum said that subcommittee could work with City staff to establish a mechanism for seeing that the site is maintained.

UPDATE ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH TWC

Huggenberger reported that TWC had agreed to look at the Web sites of franchises we'd asked them to look at as models for how they might set their own site up. Huggenberger has not heard back as to whether they have had time to do that yet.

The City and TWC have exchanged drafts of a proposed Cable Subscribers' Bill of Rights. Long distributed a retyped copy of the bill of rights which he had retyped after the last meeting of the CAB. Huggenberger will compare that copy to the one he had shared with TWC and see if there are differences. If there are significant differences he will distribute via e-mail and see if Board members have strong feelings about which way to word things.

On that point, Zygielbaum asked if board members are comfortable making some decisions via email. General consensus was that we're OK with using e-mail to make minor decisions.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Long distributed a handout called "Cable Complaints Reporting" which had been prepared by the Customer Service subcommittee. He said they would like to know whether TWC will give us a statistical report on types of complaints. Zygielbaum asked Shrewsbury if that would be possible. She said that it's not possible; they receive about 40,000 phone calls per month and it's impossible to categorize all of them. Behlen said she believes that a majority of people with service problems don't have the time to do written complaints or an e-mail.

Zygielbaum asked what we want out of this report. We are relying on the honesty of TWC in any case, because their compliance is voluntary. He asked if there is any way we could get a comparison of phone problems that have been resolved. Jaeger said we've already asked TWC, they determined that they aren't willing, he's not willing to harp on it anymore. Long asked Huggenberger if he would be open to talking to Beth Scarborough about this. Huggenberger said that Scarborough has declined on multiple occasions. The board could always approve the statement and we could see what happens; there will be a review of the process after a year of working on it.

Behlen asked how TWC responds to a callback. Shrewsbury said that it would be answered by customer service. Schimek asked what the regular business hours are. Shrewsbury said customer service is open 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.; other areas such as technical repair have other hours of service.

Long moved adoption of the Cable Complaints Recording report. Jaeger seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

Zygielbaum asked Huggenberger to discuss it with Scarborough and "see what happens."

A letter was distributed from Beth Scarborough, confirming that TWC has agreed not to engage Lincoln customers in "beta testing." Letter includes the TWC definition of "beta testing."

Schimek asked what this letter means. Huggenberger said that he thinks it means TWC will not beta test in Lincoln. Zygielbaum said that based on his discussion with Beth, he believes they won't. Long said he thinks it's not worth arguing the issue again. Friedman moved, Behlen seconded, that we accept the letter.

UPDATE ON CHANNEL 10 PROBLEMS

At a previous meeting, the board had recommended purchase of new equipment for scheduling the rolling ads on Channel 10. Huggenberger has a proposal for the cost. He said that some of the equipment would be housed at TWC so he thinks they should pay a portion of the cost. Total cost is about \$16,000. Jaeger asked what the special nature of this equipment is that makes it so costly. Jamie Wenz from TWC said that a server would need to be purchased and incorporated into their existing system.

PROPOSED CATV WEB SITE CONTENTS

Document entitled "Proposed CATV Web Site Contents" was distributed. Document listed proposed areas that the Web site for the Cable Board might carry. Zygielbaum said that in addition to the items on the list, he'd also like to see reporting of complaints. He would also like to have franchise information added to the list.

Shrewsbury said that the phrasing of item 4 on the list should be changed from "Complaint Form" to "Comment Form."

CONTENT OF CHANNEL 10

Guillaume had a question concerning the placing of items on Channel 10. She said that people often try to post things with a religious theme; promote commercial sales and/or persons. There are also questions of whether we should be advertising events that take place in a bar. Gonzolas said that we may want to have a committee consider them. Huggenberger said that we should review all of our policies.

Gonzolas said that in addition to board members, that committee should also invite staff Diane Gonzolas, Steve Huggenberger, Bill Luxford and Connie Guillaume to the meetings.

PROCESS

Zygielbaum asked about process; when the board does a motion which is supposed to affect City procedures, what happens to it. Huggenberger said that there is no fixed process; if we want City Staff to do something, we need to make that recommendation as part of the motion.

COMMITTEES

Zygielbaum appointed the following committees:

Competitiveness: Laurie Lee, Art Zygielbaum, Stuart Long

Huggenberger said that this committee also should talk to people at TWC, such as Ann Shrewsbury, for input on the scope of the study. Jaeger said that the committee should consider the cost of a study. He would like to see it done right, but there is a cost to do it right.

Public Comments: Donna Behlen, Herb Friedman
This committee was entitled "Complaints" in the initial agenda, but Jaeger thought it best to rename as "Public Comments" in light of Shrewsbury's earlier comment about that distinction under Web Site content. Stuart Long said that he may want to serve on the committee at some point; for now he just wants to see how it plays out.

Access Channels: Mary Herres, Jim Johnson, Laurie Lee

Digital Conversion: Art Zygielbaum, Herb Schimek
This committee will also work with Ann Shrewsbury.

REPORTS

Jamie Wenz distributed the Access Channels report.

City report had been distributed earlier.

Stuart Long commented that last meeting we had passed a resolution saying that we wanted our meetings to be televised and broadcast on channel 5. This is a meeting, and we're not being televised; why not? Gonzolas said that it's been decided that there isn't enough in the budget to televise all board meetings, and it can't be done for just one group. The cost of televising a meeting is \$40 per hour. They need one camera person if meeting is in Council chambers, two if in the studio.

ADJOURNMENT

Schimek moved adjournment, Jaeger seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Next meeting will be July 24, 2008 at the City-County Building, room TBA

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Johnson, secretary