

City of Ann Arbor
CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

August 25, 2009
Regular Session

MINUTES

Call To Order and Roll Call: Chair R. Sutton called the Cable Commission Regular Session to order at 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following were present:

CCC: B. Clarke, J. Meyers, T. Ramirez, R. Sutton.

CC: M. Higgins, S. Smith

CTN Staff: L. Wondrash, R. Salmeron

Approval of Agenda: Chair R. Sutton asked for approval of the agenda. Motion to approve was made by B. Clarke and seconded by J. Meyers.

Approval of Minutes: Chair R. Sutton asked for approval of the June 23, 2009 Regular Session minutes as presented. Motion to approve was made by B Clarke and seconded by J. Meyers.

Public Comment: None provided.

Communications Report: L. Wondrash said her written report was included in the Cable Commission packet for members to review. She said specific highlights to note included:

- CTN continues to work with the City's Emergency Management Operations staff to identify a local emergency future broadcast plan. Our Local Alert System (LAS) does not work in Comcast's digital environment and the County's Emergency Alert System (EAS) only reaches 6 percent of the Washtenaw County population. It is clear there is an opportunity to educate residents about Code Red and Gov Delivery emergency notification tools. M. Higgins asked who was taking the lead on the EOC notification process. L. Wondrash stated that E. Dreslinski is the EOC manager but that she would assist in communicating tools to the public regarding emergency notifications.
- On August 21, 2009, L. Wondrash and R. Salmeron met with AT&T Government Relations Representative Brian Norman per his request to discuss why CTN would not be connecting to AT&T U-Verse at this time. R. Sutton noted that this decision was based on several variables, including AT&T burying CTN PEG channels in a channel 99 PEG menu that was not consistent with other commercial broadcast channels and the fact that at this time there were not sufficient AT&T subscribers to warrant CTN connection costs. R. Sutton asked L. Wondrash what AT&T's response was? L. Wondrash stated that AT&T wants to work with CTN and the City of Ann Arbor to address improvements to U-Verse, however, they are not going to be

changing the Channel 99 display options. However, they did recently improve channel 99 load times from 30 seconds to one or two seconds. R. Sutton asked that CTN staff visit the AT&T Ann Arbor store to verify.

CTN Report: R. Salmeron played several new public service announcements produced by CTN staff, including Huron Hills Golf Course, CTN's Video on Demand service, and smoke detector education via the Ann Arbor Fire Department.

R. Salmeron also reviewed several items from the CTN Monthly Report including:

- R. Salmeron attended the National Alliance for Community Media Conference in Portland, Oregon in August. He stated how important these conferences are to enable CTN staff to stay abreast of production trends, benchmark against other community access centers and stay updated on national legislative issues that could affect our community. J. Meyers asked what R. Salmeron learned at the conference in regards to the changing landscape of local media. R. Salmeron said he attended a track that involved one community partnering with their local newspaper, the Sacramento Bee, and that he was going to follow up with this community when this initiative was launched as CTN staff has discussed how to fill the local media gap since the closing of the *Ann Arbor News*.
- CTN has committed to hosting the 2011 Spring Regional Alliance for Community Media Conference in Ann Arbor, which will be for a four-state region.
- CTN's "Video on Demand" service saw 2,215 hits during the past two months.
- The new "Digital Business Card" workshop managed by L. Visovatti was launched for non-profits to great success. Six attendees learned how to write and produce their own PSA for use on radio, their website, You Tube and CTN.

Old Business:

- a) By-Law Quarterly Meeting Schedule Update: R. Sutton stated that at the last meeting it was recommend that the Commission update its by-laws to meet quarterly instead of monthly. He stated this change was recommended as a result of a quorum of members being difficult to achieve on a monthly basis as well as passage of Act 480 which removed the Commission's leverage in local franchise agreement negotiations. He moved to recommend to City Council that the Cable Commission by-laws be updated so that the Cable Commission would meet quarterly on the last Tuesday of every month in January, April, June and October. If a quorum was not available then a meeting would be scheduled for the proceeding month. B. Clark moved R. Sutton's motion. J. Meyers said that he believed it was premature to move to a quarterly schedule. B. Clarke moved to table this item. J. Meyers seconded.
- b) Disability Commission Captioning Request: R. Sutton stated that the Disability Commission requested closed captioning of City Council and Disability Commission meetings. He said that an in-house study found it could cost a minimum of \$20,000 to provide closed captioning of City Council meetings alone. He said that the FCC is currently discussing the parameters for closed captioning and it would be prudent for CTN to wait for an FCC ruling. He stated that there are exemptions, including 2 percent gross revenue and channels or entities of under \$3 million in revenue that would disqualify CTN from being required to provide closed captioning per ADA

guidelines. L. Wondrash stated that she attended a training provided by the Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services organization. The attorney present stated that there has been no legal precedent to require municipalities to provide closed captioning per ADA guidelines. The public meeting itself needs to be accessible. S. Smith recommended that CTN create a wish list in order to prioritize requests such as this should more funds become available. B. Clarke moved that L. Wondrash draft a response memo to the Disability Commission and R. Sutton and B. Clarke would review it. J. Meyers seconded.

New Business:

- c) CTN Media Role in Community: J. Meyers said he had been reflecting upon the Commission's diminished role as a result of passage of Act 480 and the future of the Cable Commission. He said that CTN had been a pioneer in cable television 35 years ago and he felt that CTN needed re-conceptualize itself in order to remain a valid technology in the future. He suggested that the Commission task itself with researching what other public access centers are doing around the country, explore the technology CTN offers and how its programming is delivered. He believed this endeavor would remove the need to move to a quarterly meeting schedule. B. Clarke agreed that a self assessment was a good idea. R. Sutton said he wanted to applaud R. Salmeron for reaching out to the annarbor.com and other media in the community. He said that the convergence of television and the internet are on the horizon and the delivery of CTN programming needed to be considered. R. Sutton asked if anyone wanted to volunteer to be on this task force? B. Clarke volunteered. J. Meyers recommended asking T. Bray, former Cable Commissioner, to volunteer. R. Sutton volunteered. J. Meyers moved to create a task force to explore CTN's future media priorities in relation to content. M. Higgins recommended M. Mouridian, former Cable Commission member, be asked to volunteer. T. Ramirez seconded motion.
- d) Online Program Format Discussion: R. Sutton said he believed this item could be explored by way of the task force to look at program formats to determine if there would be funds to move formats in-house and if that would increase CTN's capability to increase format offerings. B. Clarke recommended that R. Salmeron serve on the task force as well. R. Sutton said CTN would create a wish list and then determine the internal or external partnerships required. R. Sutton asked that the online program format discussion be reviewed by the task force. R. Sutton asked if anyone wanted to move to bring the quarterly meeting schedule back onto the table otherwise it would remain tabled. It remained tabled as no one moved it forward.

Commission/Staff Comments: None provided.

Adjournment: B. Clarke made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by J. Meyers. With no further discussion Chair R. Sutton closed the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by: Lisa Wondrash, Communications Unit Manager
Date Approved: October 27, 2009

