

Cable Communications Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Administrative Conference Room
Meridian Municipal Building, Okemos, MI

November 4, 2015

Present: Commissioners: Chair, Walter Benenson; Vice Chair, Patrick Crowley;
Commissioner, Tunga Kiyak
Staff: Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director and
Andrea Smiley, Administrative Assistant
Township: None
Comcast: John Gardner, Comcast 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 **6:15 pm.**

Public Remarks: None

Approval of Agenda:

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

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Vice Chair Crowley moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2015**,
Seconded by Commissioner Kiyak.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Communications/Announcements:

Director Guthrie began the discussion by explaining the Township survey. The Township participates in the survey with the opportunity each year to present four questions to be included in the survey and this year one included a question about communications within the Township. It is sent to a small pool of people but it's still a great opportunity that a question about communications was included. Chair Benenson asked the question how the people are chosen to participate. Director Guthrie commented that she believed the people were chosen randomly, possibly from the phonebook.

Old Business:

1. Extension of Services

Director Guthrie stated that a meeting was held with Mr. Beyea, John Gardner, Commissioner Kiyak and Derek Perry, Assistant Township Manager to discuss the options that Meridian Township could offer the customer. Mr. Beyea stated at the meeting that he had

not approached his neighbor about splitting the costs yet. Director Guthrie stated that she feels he has a better understanding of what the Township can and cannot provide to the residents. John Gardner stated that Comcast is ready to provide services if and when the customer is willing to pay the cost as stated in the estimate for the construction costs. Commissioner Kiyak commented that the Township is unable to determine what part of the Township is not able to receive services for cable and internet. Vice Chair Crowley stated that the Commission should have a technical survey completed. John Gardner stated that Comcast provided, at the request of the Township, a map of where Comcast is currently able to offer services within the Township. Vice Chair Crowley asked the question of whether the map would be at the level of a house by house listing. John Gardner replied that it would provide that information and details. He also stated that there is no requirement by any video service provider in Michigan to provide services to new developments.

2. CCC Rules & Responsibilities – Broadband Clarification Memo

Chair Benenson, the Commissioners and Director Guthrie began discussing the verbiage for adding #12 to the Rules and Responsibilities document for the Commission. Chair Benenson clarified that the commissioners would make a motion on the verbiage for the added responsibility and then take a vote, then forward to the Township Board. Director Guthrie stated that the new verbiage would just be added to the document and would not need to go to the Township Board for approval. Commissioner Kiyak stated that the issue came about because Internet service was not part of the original Rules and Responsibilities document and with the advancement of technology, Internet related issues should be included. Director Guthrie asked Vice Chair Crowley if he wanted to make a motion in regards to what the verbiage should read. Vice Chair Crowley reworded the statement and made a motion TO ADD #12 TO THE RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DOCUMENT TO READ Commissioner Kiyak seconded the motion.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously

3. Communication Needs Assessment Memo

Director Guthrie began the discussion by asking the Commission about continuing with the Communication Needs Assessment. Director Guthrie stated that she would rather reallocate the money that was originally approved for the assessment to other needs, like equipment, etc. for the station. Commissioner Kiyak stated that it would be very beneficial to see what people think about HOMTV, broadband, etc. Vice Chair Crowley stated that premise is why the Communication Needs Assessment was originally approved. The assessment was to include a survey to the citizens to ask the questions 'where do you get your news, how do you use your internet, what stations do you watch, etc. Commissioner Kiyak stated that he didn't think it needed to be to the extent that was originally planned with focus groups etc. Director Guthrie stated that the assessment was originally approved to assist with the Comcast franchise renewal. She asked the question "What should the new focus be, if we continue with the assessment", since the franchise renewal is complete? Director Guthrie posed the option of doing a Communication Needs Survey with other PEG channels in the state of Michigan, and potentially reducing the cost, across multiple communities. Vice Chair Crowley stated that it would still be beneficial, especially with the development of the new website and branding campaign to see how the community accesses HOMTV or receive Township news and happenings. Director Guthrie asked the question of whether the Township and the Communications Department already knew the answer to those questions and Vice Chair Crowley stated that he disagreed, "I don't think you know the answer". Director Guthrie asked the question of whether everyone knew that the community accesses satellite and video from their tablets, cellphones and laptops and Vice Chair Crowley disagreed again stating that we need to know more about how the community is watching and accessing for example age groups, devices, etc. Director Guthrie stated that there are numbers stating click through rates, with percentages, etc. She also stated that there was no information on demographics, such as who is looking, where the click thru is coming from,

etc. Director Guthrie then asked the question, if that information was provided, what would the Commission do with that information? Vice Chair Crowley stated that it would help with advertising, etc. Director Guthrie reworded the question, asking what would the Commission want to do with the information, what would be the goal moving forward? Vice Chair Crowley provided examples of raising revenue, finding out areas of the community not receiving services, finding ways to get service to those parts of the community, assisting with the development of the new website and assisting with the development of HOMTV programs. Chair Benenson asked the question regarding how many people watch the HOMTV channel. Director Guthrie commented that she has stats for the on demand, on line but not on the cable channel. Chair Benenson stated that if the department is looking for more money and staffing for the HOMTV channel, producing programs, etc. then it would be beneficial to see how relevant the channel is, who is watching, etc. He stated that if you believe the results will be very positive then the assessment will help sell the staffing needs that are being requested. Director Guthrie stated that staffing and programming needs were not a part of the original focus of the assessment, so adjusting that focus and setting up a new proposal would be beneficial. Director Guthrie proposed the option of rebidding the assessment out with a new proposal or having Vice Chair Crowley speak with the consulting group that was originally approved to perform the assessment. Commissioner Kiyak stated that it should be handled through Michigan State University (MSU) as a student class project and not spend the money on a consulting group. Chair Benenson agreed with that proposal. Commissioner Kiyak stated that he could reach out to a contact and Chair Benenson stated that he could contact Brad Greenburg, who used to sit on the Commission. Director Guthrie asked the Commission if they were all in agreement with approaching MSU and arranging the assessment as a student class project.

Commissioner Kiyak made a motion **TO ARRANGE A COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS ASSESSMENT WITH MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY AS A STUDENT CLASS PROJECT**. Chair Benenson seconded the motion.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously

Chair Benenson stated that he would contact Brad Greenburg and Commissioner Kiyak stated he would reach out to his contact, as well. Director Guthrie asked Vice Chair Crowley if he agreed to have Brandie Yates contact him to discuss the survey because she will be the point person assigned to the project.

New Business:

1. New HOMTV website

Director Guthrie talked about the Commission approving the possibility of advertising on HOMTV and stated that she wanted to pause on the topic for right now. John Gardner asked for clarification between advertising on the channel or the website. Director Guthrie and Chair Benenson both commented the website only. Director Guthrie also commented that it would be more of a sponsorship initiative rather than actual advertising. Director Guthrie stated that HOMTV needs a new website, which the commissioners all agreed to, so she asked the commission if she could propose that option to the website company to get a new website for HOMTV at the same time as the new website for the Township. Commissioner Crowley stated that the new website should include the ability for advertising, sponsorships, fundraising, etc.

Commissioner Kiyak asked the question about whether Director Guthrie had the opportunity to speak with the Township Manager about the staffing concern for the Communications Department. Director Guthrie stated that she met with the Finance Director and has also met with the Township Manager a couple different times. She now has to go back and present two to four different proposals on the staffing needs and develop a short synopsis on the

current duties that each person does in the department. She stated that the Township Manager continues to work with her and she is scheduled to meet with him more during the month of November. Director Guthrie stated that when the Communications Department was redesigned, it was redesigned without the consideration of producing programs for the HOMTV channel. The department needs designated people for the production of shows.

Vice Chair Crowley asked for additional information about the Lightspeed proposal from the September 9 Township Board packet. He clarified to say that it may have been the Okemos School Board packet. It concerned a one-time \$40,000 payment about overlaying the schools fiber network. Director Guthrie stated that she would need to check her notes and get back with the Commission concerning the exact situation, but that she was approached by the school. Director Guthrie stated that she would need to go back through the information because she didn't want to provide the wrong information to the Commission.

Reports:

1. Cable Compliments/Complaints: Nothing to Discuss
2. Video Service Provider(s):

John Gardner gave an update on the courtesy service that Comcast provides to the schools and libraries. He also passed out information about Internet being extended to more than 500,000 low income families. Also, Comcast will be hiring additional employees into customer care roles.

3. Communications Director's Report:

Director Guthrie stated that the new website will be handled by Vision Internet and the Township attorney is working on the contract, as well as the contract for the new branding campaign that will be handled by M3Group. The next step is selecting the committee as part of the rebranding process. Commissioner Kiyak asked for a timeline for the project. Director Guthrie responded that she was hoping to have the new website and the branding rolled out with the Meridian Monitor in May, 2016.

Director Guthrie commented that the audio project is 90% complete, just waiting on a few parts to finalize. She also provided a brief summary of the issue and all the repairs for the Commission.

Director Guthrie stated that the Communications Department is assisting the Fire Department with their communications needs at the New Central Fire Station in regards to setting up the command center and the cable requirements in order to go live on the HOMTV channel.

4. Chair's Report:
5. Township Information: Nothing to Report

6. Programming:

In regards to programming, Director Guthrie is working to bringing back shows like Coffee Break. However, additional programming is very time consuming and a strain because of the limited staff.

7. Viewership/Promotions: No discussion
8. Finance: No discussion

Other Business & Announcements:

Public Remarks: Nothing new to report

Adjournment:

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

Hearing no objections, Chair Benenson **ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 7:05 pm.**

NEXT MEETING:

The next scheduled meeting is **December 2, 2015 in the Administrative Conference Room.**