

CABLE TELEVISION COMMISSION
Thursday, April 24, 2014
City Hall, 2nd Floor Council Chambers
7:00 PM

Committee Members in Attendance:

Mr. Tom Davis, Commission Chairman
Ms. Tricia Homer, Commission Member
Jim Sauer, Commission Member

Attendees:

Ms. Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney
Ms. Denise Palmer, Contract Secretary
Mr. Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager

1. Adopt minutes from January 9, 2014 Meeting

Chairman Davis opened the meeting at 7:08 p.m. and made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 9, 2014 meeting. Mr. Sauer seconded the motion and the motion was unanimous.

2. Possible Update from Comcast or Verizon and Report Review

a. Review Monthly/Quarterly Reports

The only report available was from Verizon. The commission members reviewed the report and Mr. Davis indicated that Verizon's response time was good as well as their on hold time. He also indicated that Comcast has done a good job (Ms. Walker Brown). Mr. Sauer inquired if the two representatives would be returning since they have not been present at the last few meetings.

b. Customer Complaints

Chairman Davis reported that customer complaints are relatively minor and that there is nothing that the Commission needs to get involved in at the present time. Mr. Davis reported on a problem he encountered with Verizon when two of his remotes in his home failed to operate. Verizon resolved the problem by shipping him two new remotes and attempted to charge a shipment fee of \$15.98, but the instructions included with the devices were not correct. The issue was resolved after having spent approximately two hours and 25 minutes on the telephone.

3. Review of request from Comcast in reference to Franchise Agreement and other correspondence.

Ms. Ferguson updated the Commission and reported that Comcast and Warner are planning a merger. A letter was received by the City of College informing them of the proposed merger and indicating we have 30 days to respond to the letter. The letter also states that we have 120 days to indicate whether we support and approve of the transfer. We received this request based on the type of franchise agreement we have. There was a phone conference held to determine if we were given adequate information on this action. There were other municipalities that have not received a letter informing them of the proposed merger. Ms. Ferguson recommends that the Commission request additional information from Comcast. If the city responds that we believe we have not been provided additional information, Comcast can respond that they have provided all of the information and the 120 days will start to run or they will provide additional information promptly and 120 days will run from that point on. Chairman Davis indicated that we should recommend to Council based on recommendation by our cable counsel that we request additional information and a course of action to take at this time.

Mr. Sauer made a motion to authorize the city attorney to recommend to City and Council that we take no action at this time until we request additional information from Comcast as recommended by our attorney. Ms. Homer seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

4. Update by City Attorney

Ms. Ferguson reported that cable as a means of receiving information is changing as the Franchise Agreement ends this year. Their goal is to get shorter franchises with less benefits and our goal is to hold on to what we have and receive additional benefits.

The question was raised, when do the PEG channels go high definition? Ms. Ferguson indicated that we have standard rights presently on the INET and we want to protect the INET and go high definition eventually – these are some of the big issues now. Ms. Ferguson reported that PEG funds can be used for INET related items and cable related items. The group of cable attorneys meets every two weeks at the County Administration Building. Ms. Ferguson suggested that we meet our deadlines because things are becoming complicated and keep the schedule of every two weeks and have everything wrapped up by September, 2014.

5. Schedule Next Meeting (Possible dates for next meeting – July 19th, 21st or 31st)

The commission discussed the various dates and decided that Thursday, July 31st at 7:00 p.m. would be the best date on everyone's calendar.

6. Other business

Chairman Davis indicated that the question still stands -- are we a "cable commission" since there is overlap with internet, Wifi, etc. Mr. Davis indicted our charge is cable television and if necessary we can go to Council in May and say we are getting involved with other things and if so, do we need to change our charge? He believes we need to discuss it when the full

Commission is present. Mr. Sauer indicated that Jane Hopkins and Clay Gump are more technical and we need their input. Mr. Davis would like to put this item on the next agenda.

Mr. Gardiner asked if the Commission get involved in the types of programming on the local channel. Ms. Ferguson responded that there is not much interest and that all of the Baltimore channels used to be available which was approximately four or five years ago which was basically only the news. The news in Baltimore is more Maryland- based than here because we also compete with the D.C. and Virginia markets.

Mr. Davis stated that the next meeting will be July 31, 2014 at 7pm. There being no other items on the agenda for discussion, Chairman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Mr. Sauer seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

Minutes recorded by Denise M. Palmer, Contract Secretary