

Champaign's Cable Franchise Agreement

Mr. Hamilton reported that Champaign's City Council approved a cable franchise agreement with Comcast. Mr. Hamilton thanked Chair Atterberry for his participation the negotiations.

Annual Report

Mr. Hamilton reported the Commission's Annual Report went to the Champaign City Council on 8/19/2011. That report included the annual PEG channel reports.

Commissioner Folk asked if the report also went to the Urbana City Council. Mr. Hamilton responded that the report was shared with Urbana, but he wasn't sure if it went to their Council or not.

Broadband Access Committee Report

Chair Atterberry thanked Commissioner Folk for his PowerPoint summarizing the report. Commissioner Folk said the study session went well and seemed well received. He suggested that the BAC should coordinate efforts with others doing Digital Divide work in town.

Chair Atterberry asked for a motion to accept the report and to forward it to the City Councils and an informational item. Motion made by Commissioner Walker. Seconded by Commissioner Rosales. Approved 5-0.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

7. STAFF REPORTS

UPTV

Jake Schumacher reported that UPTV is reinitializing their Drupal-based Open Media website, which will assist local public access producers, and allow on-demand viewing & live streaming. A new UPTV intern was hired and they are also interviewing new camera operators. They are working with Urbana High School students on a weekly sports show and the C-U Safe Routes video was completed. UPTV filmed the Sweet Corn Festival concerts and there are several new public access shows being produced. They are also airing a new Spanish-language series. They will hold their next volunteer meeting in December.

CGTV

Mr. Hamilton reported that CGTV produced two new episodes of Champaign Connection. They also filmed the Unity Celebration/Boneyard ribbon cutting program and the 2011 STAR Awards. They are currently editing the C-U International Humanitarian Awards, which UPTV staff assisted with.

8. OPERATOR REPORTS

Comcast

Art Svymbersky thanked the Commission for their hard work on the franchise renewal. He explained Comcast's Internet Essentials Program, which launches this fall. He said this will help low-income families to better afford computers and internet service. Internet is \$9.95/month with option to buy a computer for \$150. Households must have a child receiving free school lunches.

Comcast wants to partner with schools and government agencies to get the word out about the program.

Commissioner Folk stated the Internet Essentials program is exactly the type of thing the BAC was hoping for & encourages.

Commissioner Walker said she was happy to read the MeTV channel was added to the digital basic package. She also asked if it was possible to organize the channel guide to just show the channel's you get. Mr. Svymbersky responded that you can set a favorites list or search by genre, but you cannot remove channels from the guide itself.

Chair Atterberry said he was impressed by the low \$9.95/month rate for Internet Essentials & the ability to lock in the rate for the duration of a child's education. Mr. Svymbersky said Comcast has made a strong commitment toward bridging the Digital Divide.

Mr. Svymbersky said some local high school sports are also available on Comcast's Digital cable now. Commissioner Folk said that the Urbana schools stream their football games and he is happy to see local high school sports on both TV and the Internet.

AT&T U-Verse

John Quinn reviewed U-Verse service changes, including the ability to pause live TV for the whole home DVR and a new troubleshooting application. He reviewed some statewide statistics and stated that 19,833 households are now passed in Champaign-Urbana, of which 10,706 are low-income. Mr. Quinn also discussed AT&T Mobile's services.

Commissioner Folk asked when AT&T would offer 4G in Champaign-Urbana. Mr. Quinn responded that he didn't know exactly, but that AT&T was trying to acquire T-Mobile's infrastructure and spectrum in order to expand services across the country. He reported that AT&T is working out issues with the Department of Justice regarding the acquisition.

Commissioner Folk invited Mr. Quinn to present on AT&T's Digital Divide efforts at the next meeting. Mr. Quinn said he's look into it and report back.

Chair Atterberry asked how much the U-verse infrastructure had been expanded in Champaign-Urbana during the latest construction season. Mr. Quinn responded he doesn't have specific figures to share.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers

Chair Atterberry stated that the election had been deferred at the July meeting for quorum reasons. He asked for nominations for Chair. Commissioner Folk nominated Rick Atterberry. Seconded by Commissioner Walker. There were no other nominations. Approved 5-0.

Chair Atterberry asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Rosales nominated Commissioner Walker. Seconded by Commissioner Folk. There were no other nominations. Approved 5-0.

Future Role of Broadband Access Committee

Chair Atterberry said the Committee's report and assignment was now completed. He asked Commissioner Folk for his thoughts on the BAC's future role.

Commissioner Folk said he feels the BAC needs to become a bigger consortium and include the local schools and others doing Digital Divide work. He feels it would be fine to keep it as a Committee of the Cable Commission; or it could be a new group outside the Cable Commission. He would prefer an open group with lots of people at the table and contributing. He wants it to still be subject to Open Meetings Act requirements.

Chair Atterberry asked Commissioner Folk to ask other groups if they were interested in joining and whether they feel it should continue under the Commission or not. Commissioner Folk said he wasn't sure of the various pros and cons of keeping the BAC under the Cable Commission or making it a separate entity.

Mr. Hamilton provided information about Committees as outlined in the Commission's Rules & Regulations, and the Open Meetings Act. He stated that if it remains under the Cable Commission, then Committee members have to be approved by the Cable Commission; as opposed to having an open group. He stated the Open Meetings Act would apply, including rules regarding quorums, majority of quorums, meeting notices, minutes, etc. If the BAC evolved into an ad hoc group then the BAC could establish its own rules and wouldn't be subject to the Commission's Rules and Open Meetings Act.

Chair Atterberry said he could see either format working.

Commissioner Folk will discuss it with others over the next few months and discuss it again at the next meeting.

Commissioner Rosales asked if other Committees can be added. Mr. Hamilton answered that the Commission can establish Committees as needed.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the Commission doesn't have to dissolve the BAC simply because it has completed its assignment. It can remain open ended so long as the Commission feels the Committee is necessary. He did point out that Clerking for the Committee adds to staff's responsibilities and workload.

Chair Atterberry said he doesn't think the Commission plans to disband the BAC but that it should discuss how it will operate in the future.

Amendment of Rules & Regulations

Chair Atterberry said that earlier in the year there was a discussion about disbanding the Cable Commission. He reported that leaders at both Cities had reconsidered. He explained that as a result of some upcoming changes, some changes to the Commission's Rules and Regulations were being requested by staff.

Mr. Hamilton reported that the City of Urbana will begin serving as the Commission's Administrative Agent and Clerk on January 1, 2012, so Section B of the Commission's Rules & Regulations need to be amended to reflect that.

Mr. Schumacher pointed out that the Rules and Regulations require seven affirmative votes in order to be amended. He said that the Commission currently only has seven members, but not all seven members have been present at one meeting in over a year. He stated that changing the rules will be difficult until that changes. He said multiple other changes will need to be made as Urbana takes over as Administrative Agency. Urbana will want to streamline the Commission's responsibilities to lower staff and budget pressures.

Chair Atterberry said there are three open seats on Urbana's side. He appealed to the public to apply to join the Commission.

Commissioner Folk asked about the residency and other requirements to serve on the Commission. Mr. Hamilton responded that the Rules and Regulations require appointment by the Mayor and approval of the City Council only. They don't have residency or age requirements. He offered that City Code could have more specific requirements.

10. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - None

11. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Folk recapped some Digital Divide resources available in our community; including Comcast's Internet Essentials, the IMC's free computer helpdesk, Brian Bell at Parkland College (computer classes), public libraries, low-cost computers from Volo, and church computer labs. He will continue to update the Commission as he learns of new services.

Commissioner Lukeman reported he is settling into his job as the new UI-7 Coordinator. He provided information about UI-7 programming and news and said they're always looking for new content.

12. NEXT MEETINGS

Mr. Hamilton reported that the Commission is scheduled to meet for a study session at 4 pm on January 11, 2012, in the Champaign City Council Chambers, and for a regular quarterly meeting at 4 pm on January 18, 2012, in the Urbana City Council Chambers. Mr. Hamilton said there wasn't a study session topic yet, and to send suggestions to Chair Atterberry.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Hamilton
Telecommunications/AV Technician
City of Champaign