

URBANA PUBLIC TELEVISION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES October 4, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT: UPTV Commission Members:
Ms. Barbara Gladney, Ms. Carolyn Kearns, Ms. Dana Mancuso, Dr. John Peterson, Mr. Joe Weidman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Angie Kingdon

OTHERS PRESENT: **Ms. Amy Rose, UPTV Coordinator, Mayor Tod Satterthwaite, Steve Holz, City Assistant Attorney**

Controversial Program Policies

Ms. Rose and Ms. Mancuso distributed research information about public access and precidedent court cases. They also included examples of policies from other access centers regarding controversial programs.

Ms. Rose said she had returned the episode that had inadvertently been televised. She did have a copy of the most recent episode which contained violations of commercial content and illegal use of copyrighted material. Ms. Rose said she thought this would be considered a major violation.

Mr. Holz said he would prefer to first discuss the episode which was televised outside of controversial programming hours.

Ms. Kearns said she sees it as three issues. One issue is the hours at which controversial programs can be shown. The second issue is whether to look at allowing public access on the channel. The third issue would be content violations. She added that the incident which caused the program to be played during the afternoon was a mistake and nothing is going to change that.

Mayor Satterthwaite stated he felt policies should be put in place so that mistake doesn't happen again. He also suggested that the time slot for controversial programming should be changed. He thinks that this type of programming should be played or be put at the latest time of night, when no child has the chance to see it. He pointed out the Cedar Falls has a policy of reviewing content.

Ms. Rose stated based on her knowledge of access regulations this policy would be unconstitutional and set them up for a censorship lawsuit.

The Commission discussed community standards, definition of controversial programming, potential censorship issues and first amendment rights of program producers.

The Commission decided to change the controversial programming times from 11 pm – 6 am to 1 am – 4 am.

Mayor Satterthwaite stated we need to look at what type of programs are being submitted by public access producers. If we are only receiving questionable content programs, then maybe public access should be eliminated.

Mr. Weidman stated he had not seen the program in question and did not feel comfortable discussing it.

A part of "Tha Session" was viewed by the Commission.

The Commission then discussed the content violations contained in that episode. It was decided to send a written warning to Mr. Sanders pointing out the violations and the course of discipline which will be taken with subsequent violations.

Mr. Holz stated that the issue must be looked at on broader terms as more than just looking at this particular program. Everybody must be aware that even worse content could be submitted at some point down the road.

The Commission discussed the scheduling policy of how many programs can be shown and how many times. Slots are given on a first come, first serve basis within a time zone. Programs are accepted until that time slot is filled. Series are also given priority.

Ms. Rose stated she would write an operational procedure which would require controversial programs to be ejected from tape machines at the beginning of the following day. If the UPTV Coordinator is not present to do this, he/she should contact someone else at the City to make sure the tape gets ejected from the machine. Ms. Rose will also report on the findings of the UPTV Commission to the Urbana City Council.