

Cable Advisory Committee
Minutes of March 31, 2011

Present for the Cable Committee were: Chairman Christopher Ferguson, Louis Rousseau, Dan Picard, Ted Kosiavelon, Hank Noel, Kevin Willett and Lenny Proposki. Also present were: Dennis E. Piendak, Town Manager and Samantha Carver the recording secretary. The meeting was held at the Varnum Room in the Historical Society Hall located at 1660 Lakeview Avenue, Dracut, MA.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed Mr. Stan Usovich of Verizon.

Mr. Usovich stated he is the Regional Director of External Affairs for Verizon and covers areas up to Amesbury over to Wellesley and down to Worcester.

He stated that Fios is in 110 cities and towns currently and Verizon has no plans to expand. It takes Verizon three to five years to build out a community at this point. With fiber optic it cannot be directly buried so some build out is more complex. It costs anywhere from \$6 to \$15 million dollars to build out a community.

The decision to build out a community is driven by engineering. He also stated that some areas are easier to obtain permitting than others. He gave the example of Florida where it takes ten days to get a license and Massachusetts can take six months to two years.

The Committee asked whether Verizon's decisions are made on customer base, demographics and/or cost. Mr. Usovich stated they look at all those things but one does not drive another.

Mr. Picard asked if there was a distance formula used to decide where Fios is put. Mr. Usovich stated there is for DSL but Fios is a totally different thing. Just like cable and fiber optic are different.

Mr. Noel noted that Verizon must look at return on investment also when deciding which communities to go in. Mr. Usovich agreed.

There was a direct question to Mr. Usovich about whether Fios is coming to Dracut. He stated that right now Verizon has no plans to come into Dracut.

Mr. Usovich also explained that in some instances where if they are building out a community and they have to go through another community to achieve the build out then both communities get done however it is all based on engineering.

Mr. Ferguson asked Mr. Usovich about Verizon's call center and why when residents of Dracut call and ask why they are not bringing Fios in, Verizon Call Center states that Dracut won't let them in and that the Town is holding up Fios?

Mr. Usovich stated that they should not be saying that and he asked if we could forward him the email we received on that. He said he cannot fix a problem if he doesn't know it exists. In the future, that question can be referred to him. Staff will forward Mr. Usovich the email to review that was received in December. Although time has passed and he cannot track down this one, he stated to refer these issues to him in the future.

Mr. Ferguson asked Mr. Usovich if he could answer any questions about the Cable Franchising Bill that has been proposed to the Legislature by Verizon. Mr. Usovich stated he could. They have proposed a few bills in the Legislature. This bill would change the process for negotiating local cable franchises. The bill would provide for a 90-day negotiating window, after which, if an agreement is not reached, the cable provider could ask the State to issue a contract. Mr. Usovich reported that Mass P.E.G. Association is looking at the bill to maybe propose other changes to the bill.

Mr. Ferguson asked Mr. Usovich if he could supply a letter to the Town in regard to Verizon not having any plans currently to build out the town. Mr. Usovich stated he could do that.

The Committee thanked Mr. Usovich for taking the time to come to the meeting.

Mr. Ferguson asked Staff if we had received any answers to the questions posed to Mr. Tim Kelly of Comcast. Staff reported not as of yet and will reach out to Mr. Kelly again for the answers. Mr. Ferguson also wanted to know if there was an "opt out" with Comcast so that they do not sell your information to private contractors who then come knocking at your door to sell you Comcast products.

Mr. Ferguson asked how the Cable Advisory Committee could get the word out to the Committee that they are available for comments if residents had any. Mr. Piendak stated that they may want to get on the Selectmen's agenda to talk about the committee and there are general purpose type shows on the cable network that they could get on to discuss the role of the Cable Advisory Committee.

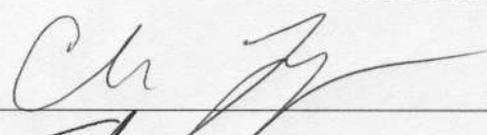
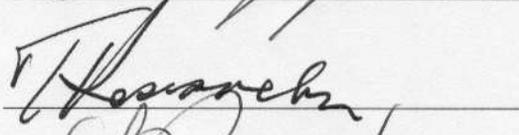
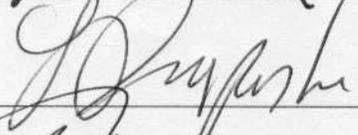
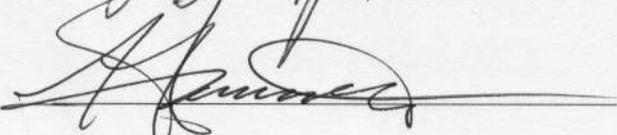
The Committee briefly discussed the merger of Comcast with NBC where Comcast will own 51% percent. Mr. Noel had a few issues with this and was going to try and find out if this merger is legal because they will have control and be the producer of content and he didn't believe that could be done.

Minutes

Mr. Picard made a motion to accept the minutes of November 22, 2010 as presented. Mr. Proposki seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Willett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. Mr. Rousseau seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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