

Cable Advisory Committee  
Minutes of November 22, 2010

Present for the Cable Committee were: Christopher Ferguson, Chair, Louis Rousseau, Dan Picard, Ted Kosiavelon, Hank Noel 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.

Absent: Kevin Willett

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. The Committee reviewed the minutes. Mr. Picard made a motion to approve the minutes of October 25, 2010 as presented. Mr. Rousseau seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Committee reviewed items in their agenda packets:

- Letter from Comcast to the Board of Selectmen regarding the Telecommunications Technology Funding amount for the third quarter
- Comcast Connections – Third quarter newsletter

The Committee welcomed Tim Kelly the liaison from Comcast to the Town. There was a discussion on whether there is a contact for each community to look at their contract with their cable provider. Mr. Kelly mentioned that the Department of Telecommunications which can be accessed through [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) has all the licenses with all the communities which can be viewed.

Mr. Kelly went on to explain that he is the government relations representative of Comcast. He explained that about three years out the Town will receive a 626 Letter from Comcast which reserves the right of Comcast and the Town to negotiate. There are usually two paths that Comcast takes when negotiating, formal and informal discussions. On the formal end when the Town is notified to negotiate the Board of Selectmen have 120 days to either grant or deny the issuance of a formal license. The negotiations involve what the cable related needs of the community are and how much the community is willing to support their local cable programming.

Mr. Kelly explained the recent upgrades to the Comcast system with Xfinity and that they use a hybrid fiber collapse network which allows them more band width to support faster downloads and uploads. The more band width a company is requiring the more they would pay for it. This would be a digital network upgrade or enhancement.

They are working on convergent technology which allows you to continue to watch a program from your home to your phone. They are also in a merger with NBC where Comcast will own 51% and NBC 49% which would allow them to expand their on-demand library.

Mr. Kelly stated that content is the name of the game currently and they are trying to keep up offering the most content.

Some of the other questions asked of Mr. Kelly were:

- What's new on the horizon for Dracut?  
He stated there was nothing new, they just currently completed the digital network enhancement and are letting the dust settle on that.
- What are other communities looking for when it comes to negotiating?  
Mr. Kelly stated that they are looking for financial support for local access
- Is there any future plan for a customer service operation to be put back into Dracut?  
Mr. Kelly stated that the customer service offices are based on volume. And a lot of those customer service centers were there before Comcast.
- Is Direct TV an issue for Comcast?  
Yes, Direct TV is a real competitor with Comcast.
- Does Comcast have an "opt out" option so that customer's names do not get sold out to contractors?  
Mr. Kelly was not sure and would have to look into this.
- What kind of issues does Dracut have compared with other communities? Are they easy to deal with or difficult?  
Mr. Kelly stated that Dracut is one of the easier communities to deal with. A community such as Concord is more difficult because they want all their service lines underground.
- How many communities still work with an INET system?  
Mr. Kelly stated of the 39 communities he works with there are three. They do not offer INET systems any longer, they have VRL's (Video Return Lines) which do video only no data. Other networks are LAN (Local Area Networks), Metropolitan Ethernet (ME) and SLE.
- What streaming media does Comcast offer?  
Video on demand, currently they are not set up with a "sling box" to watch videos on your laptop
- There was a question asked about what Comcast offers to low income, senior citizens, schools etc.  
Mr. Kelly stated they allow for a courtesy video service residential grade to be given to the schools in a community which is basic service. The issue with schools using this is too many people are on one line and then it becomes an issue. In order to upgrade to a commercial grade, static IP it costs money and most communities do not have it.
- Mr. Kelly stated that the basic service tier will eventually be digitized and it will no longer be available.

The Committee thanked Mr. Kelly for coming to the meeting. Mr. Kelly asked if he could be copied on the minutes from the Cable Advisory Committee meetings also.

The Committee discussed whether they would like to nominate a Vice Chair for the Committee. Mr. Picard nominated Mr. Hank Noel for Vice Chair. Mr. Proposki seconded the motion for discussion. No further discussion or nominations were made. The motion was moved to a vote and it was unanimous.

Discussion on the next meeting date took place. There was an issue meeting on Monday nights so the Committee discussed other nights. The Committee decided to try Thursday night. It was determined that the **next meeting would be March 3, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.**

Mr. Picard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m. Mr. Rousseau seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

	
	
	
	