

Fairhaven Cable Advisory
Tuesday, November 20, 2018
7:00 PM – East Room

PRESENT: Chairperson Barbara Acksen, Robert Espindola, Ronnie Medina, Michael Merolla, John Methia, and Maria Carvalho

ABSENT: Kenneth Souza

Director of Cable Access, Derek Frates was also present.

Meeting opened at 7:05pm.

Ms. Acksen announced that the funding to the town by Comcast will be divided based on previous contract.

Review of September 25, 2018 meeting minutes. Bob Espindola made a motion to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Mike Merolla. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of the Open House held October 25, 2018

Chairperson praised the results of the open house, as well as Derek's preparations for the event. Many people came, including many young people showing interest in the event. Derek Frates explained about the activities, such as a magician, photo booth, new logo, as well as the feedback being very positive.

Mr. Espindola also praised Derek Frates about the previous outreaches held before the open house.

Cable Director's Report

- Derek Frates spoke about the coverage such as the Veteran's parade which was videotaped to be shown on public access.
- PSA with Vinnie Furtado about water flushing by the Water Department; also the Harvest Day event.
- Plans for a presence in the Old time Holiday event being considered.
- The Town Meeting was covered by public access via live stream.
- He said the focus now towards public access and possible sponsoring of shows.
- Beth could possibly publish a blurb on Neighborhood News.
- Ms. Acksen suggested that Derek Frates do a PSA about possible public interest suggestions about Christmas greetings from the public and local business.
- Ms. Acksen also suggested coverage of sing along on Old Time and other attractions/activities.
- Suggestion was made to tap into Mass Access in order to get shows, but needs a sponsor.

Discussion and Motion of Access Cable as a Town Utility

Mr. Espindola explained that Town Administrator brought the information to them in a goal-setting session—quite extensive but something that relates to this committee. It would fulfill a goal of health and welfare for the town's population—study ways of communication in case of an emergency, such as a storm alert, about shelter, etc.

Mr. Frates mentioned that in case of emergency, the reference point is the fire station. Mr. Espindola counted that if the communication is operational, people can get information in a shorter span of time; Mr. Espindola called for a fully operational cable.

Mr. Espindola noted that a study of the pros and cons of making public access a non-profit entity;

Mr. Espindola also noted about a memorandum of understanding of the schools. Continuing on the topic of fiber optic, Mr. Espindola talked about RFP's for a consultant; requesting comments to evaluate strategies used in different communities re: fiber optics system; the committee to make a recommendation after working with the consultant; the feasibility to building a fiber optic network. Mr. Espindola stated the pros/cons would be to decide how to go about the system.

The major object is to open up competition and save the residents and business money. Mr. Merolla asked for clarification.

Mr. Espindola explained the point of the matter is to do a study and he is advocating for the said study; while Mr. Methia assed that the study could find that it may be available over the air.

Mr. Merolla asked how the infrastructure works, Mr. Espindola stated that a company would do that and the Town would be the biller.

Mr. Merolla added that we need to publish that Channel 95 and all other channels are available. Mr. Frates explained that link is published on Facebook for people that want to watch our town meetings.

Mr. Espindola mentioned that we have the opportunity for the committee to find ways to publicize cable access. Mr. Espindola stated that it would be the residents that opted into it.

MJ Carvalho stated that there are folks that don't have the technology of cell phones and applications, she would like the technology to stop and get her to catch up.

Mr. Methia stated that it would be built through wireless.

Ms. Carvalho just reiterated that some people are not up to speed with technology.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Medina asked if it could connect backwards from the fiber optic that is currently used. He wondered where they were building the fiber optic now through the School department, if it could be built on from there.

Mr. Espindola stated he was not the expert and that's why he was bringing the representative in.

Mr. Merolla stated he wasn't even aware on how to inform people to review meetings.

Mr. Frates told him how to access meetings that have already been taped on fairhaventv.com.

Discussion on how to get the word out to residents on how to get the word out on how to access meetings, etc.

A discussion among members of what people are watching, what they would watch and how to count who is watching.

Mr. Methia thinks that the Committee should look past the next ten years of the Cable Contract, he feels that this last contract might be the last “bite of the apple”.

Mr. Merolla spoke about how we could have a non-profit company who hit the pavement to get advertising; like the Wanderer and others. He believes we should be speaking about the non-profit structure now.

Mr. Espindola stated that was one of the goals of the Selectmen’s – to review the non-profit management model of Cable Access, which he believes this committee would have immediate hands on to help create and advise.

Discussion on a survey to residents about what they are interested in, watching or shows for Channel 95.

Discussion of Mission Statement

The Committee throughout the meeting discussed what the mission statement should be, conducive to perhaps the non-profit model. Mr. Espindola advised what the Mission Statement should include – what the Committee’s responsibility is. More discussion on objectives. Mr. Espindola stated that at the last meeting they discussed having sentences/objectives written for this meeting; and it wouldn’t matter what the committee wanted to discuss a mission statement should be produced on what the Committee wants to review.

Ms. Acksen will post the agenda for the next meeting, December 12, 2018 at 6:30pm for the Fiber Optic Discussion.

Ron Medina made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Merolla. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectively,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary

