



GREATER WEST BLOOMFIELD
**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

KEEGO HARBOR • ORCHARD LAKE • SYLVAN LAKE • WEST BLOOMFIELD

MINUTES

June 11, 2020

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Harvey Gersin, at 7:32PM via ZOOM teleconference.

2. Roll Call

Members Present:

Representing Orchard Lake: Anne Dziuba

Representing West Bloomfield: Harvey Gersin, Mark Kowalsky, Suzanne Levine,
Deborah Macon, Jonathan Warshay

Members Absent:

Representing Keego Harbor: Ronnie Dahl

Representing Orchard Lake: Dan Krause

Representing Sylvan Lake: Phil Ross

Representing West Bloomfield: Nada Jamoua

Others in Attendance:

Dave Scott (General Manager, Civic Center TV/Lakes FM), David Albery (Executive Director, GWBCCC)

The Executive Director asked commissioners to mute themselves unless they are recognized to speak or know that a roll call vote is occurring.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Warshay, support from Ms. Levine:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission approve the agenda as provided for the June 11, 2020 virtual meeting.”

The Chairperson noted that pursuant to the governor’s executive order regarding virtual public meetings, all votes will be via roll call.

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Voting YES: Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Warshay
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

4. Public Comment

The Chairperson stated that residents are provided an opportunity to address the Commission regarding cable-related issues at the beginning and the end of each meeting. Those unable to attend should contact the Commission at gwbcable.org.

No member of the public asked to address the Commission.

5. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Warshay, support from Ms. Levine:

“That the Minutes of the March 2, 2020 special meeting be approved as presented.”

Voting YES: Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Warshay
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

6. Acceptance of Financial Reports

In the absence of Commission Treasurer Phil Ross, the Executive Director presented the report for January through May of 2020 and the report of first quarter 2020 payments from cable operators.

Motion by Mr. Warshay, support from Ms. Levine:

“That the Financial Reports be accepted.”

Voting YES: Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Warshay
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

7. Committee Reports

The Chairperson stated that this portion of the agenda provides an opportunity for committees to report to the Commission.

Report of the Commission Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

Commissioners were provided a written report which was summarized by Mr. Kowalsky, the committee chairperson.

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Committee Recommendation:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission adopt the document entitled ‘Governance of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission’.”

Report of the Community Programming Committee

Commissioners were provided a written report which was summarized by Mrs. Dziuba, the committee chairperson.

Report of the Finance Committee

Commissioners were provided a written report which was summarized by Mr. Warshay, the committee vice-chairperson.

Motion by Mr. Warshay, support from Mr. Kowalsky:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission accept the reports of the Commission Operations and Strategic Planning, Community Programming, and Finance committees and consider committee recommendations under New Business later in this meeting.”

Voting YES: Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Warshay
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

8. Executive Director's Report

Civic Center TV

Mr. Scott addressed the Commission regarding the operation of Civic Center TV and Lakes FM, focusing on the support of the Commission as well as West Bloomfield Township and the other communities for the Megacast and other programming during the past several months. He characterized the entire initiative as a team effort and commended his Motown Digital staff. He provided on-line metrics for the programming, including the Civic Center TV web site as well as the Commission’s Facebook live daily partners and noted the upcoming unveiling of the CCT/Lakes FM mobile app as well as the virtual 2020 Michigan Week Community Awards on June 24. He also mentioned coverage of the recent march for racial justice in West Bloomfield.

The Executive Director stated that all full Megacast episodes are available at civiccentertv.com as well as each interview conducted over the past three months.

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Cable Operators

Commissioners were provided copies of several communications from Comcast, some regarding the company's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Cable Industry News

One of the hottest topics since March has been sports fees, specifically those being paid by subscribers while the sports programming is not being provided. Contracts between operators, like Comcast or AT&T, and sports leagues mandate a minimum number of games provided, which in some cases, was fulfilled before play shut down in March. The attorney general of the state of New York has called on operators to provide rebates, and most operators have stated that if the leagues provide relief, it will be passed along to subscribers. Analysts warn that any such relief will be minor and a long time in arriving.

Pay television continues to lose ground, dropping 4.9 million subscribers in 2019, 4.1 million of them being customers of AT&T's DirecTV and U-verse services. Losses in the first quarter of this year were 1.8 million or 7.6 percent, a 14 percent decrease for satellite and 4 percent for cable.

In March, the FCC asked Internet Service Providers to a pledge to keep America connected, that connectivity being crucially important during the pandemic. Comcast has extended that pledge, continuing to waive the \$9.95 per month cost of service for Internet Essentials, and agreeing not to disconnect service or charge late fees if the subscriber contacts the company to make arrangements. In addition, Xfinity hot spots nationwide are available to everyone, and the company has paused its data plan, giving all subscribers unlimited data at no additional cost.

Communication

No communication was received.

Commission Assistance to Residents

The Executive Director stated that cable service concerns communicated to the Commission have increased over the past three months, perhaps because residents are spending more time at home and have time to notice and pursue service problems. Many of those concerns centered around difficulty contacting Comcast customer service.

A West Bloomfield subscriber paid her bill on-line, and either due to her mistake or a computer glitch, Comcast withdrew from her account 10 thousand dollars instead of 1 hundred. The subscriber had difficulty contacting the company, but when the Commission raised the issue, the funds were replaced.

Another subscriber had a second television receiver that was not functioning, and Comcast was able to resolve the issue without a service call.

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Comcast service in a residence was wired through a piece of AT&T equipment, which the company wanted returned. The resident had been unable to schedule a Comcast service call, but the issue was resolved and the wiring re-done after the Commission put the parties together.

A subscriber's bill for internet service nearly doubled, and, as often occurs, the increase was the result of the expiration of a promotional deal.

Preview

The Executive Director presented his agenda for the time period between this meeting and the next.

Mr. Kowalsky pointed out that Comcast subscribers can turn off the setting by which their modem is not only providing their secure home internet service but is also an Xfinity hot spot.

Mr. Warshay pointed out that the Comcast data pause seems to be odds with the company's position that it does not have bandwidth to allow everyone to use all the data they want.

9. Unfinished Business

No items of Unfinished Business were presented.

10. New Business

Recommendation of the Commission Operations and Strategic Planning Committee – Governance of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission

The Chairperson presented the recommendation.

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission adopt the document entitled ‘Governance of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission’.”

He noted one correction in Section 2 of the document, “serves as ombudsman for residents with questions or concerns regarding the cable companies or any aspect of their cable service”.

Motion by Mr. Gersin, support from Mr. Kowalsky:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission adopt the document entitled ‘Governance of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission’ as revised.”

Mr. Warshay asked for a clarification of Section 3, the vision statement, and the Executive Director read the statement, adding verbal parenthetical numbers to highlight the two ways in which the Commission strives to serve residents.

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Mrs. Macon stated that the Commission can control its programming resources and its dedication to public engagement but that the line regarding “an informed, involved community” is aspirational and not under the Commission’s control. The Executive Director responded that the Commission of course cannot create an informed, involved community but can aspire to do so, in the same way that any vision statement is entirely aspirational. Mrs. Macon commended the phrase “all residents of” in the statement.

The Executive Director stated that when he read the statement and added verbal parenthetical numbers, it was for the purpose of clarification, not to revise the document. As chair of the committee that made the recommendation, Mr. Kowalsky revised it to add the numbers to the text, and the maker of the motion, Mr. Gersin, agreed to the change.

Voting YES: Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Warshay
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

11. Public Comment

The Chairperson stated that residents are provided an opportunity to address the Commission regarding cable-related issues at the beginning and the end of each meeting.

No member of the public asked to address the Commission.

12. Commissioner Comments

Mr. Warshay stated that West Bloomfield Town Hall re-opened on June 10, with safety precautions in place for all employees and visitors. He reminded all in attendance and watching of the August 4 primary election and the fact that anyone can vote absentee. He also mentioned that the Library had re-opened with pick-up and drop-off services but no entry into the building.

Mrs. Macon also mentioned the many services available through the Library during the closure. She added that she attended the virtual Township Board meeting on June 8 and was able to present the Cable Commission update. She also announced the virtual Michigan Week Awards ceremony to debut live on Civic Center TV on June 24 at 7:00PM.

In response to a question from Mrs. Dziuba, Mrs. Macon stated that the awards ceremony will be available on Civic Center TV, WBTM, Lakes FM, civiccentertv.com, and live on the Facebook pages of the West Bloomfield, Walled Lake, and Bloomfield Hills school districts.

Ms. Levine stated that the Greater West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for the unsung heroes serving the community during these difficult times.

Mr. Warshay stated that he sent information regarding ZOOM backgrounds to the Commission during the meeting.

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13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 8:43PM.

The next meeting of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission is
THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2020, at 7:30PM via **ZOOM** teleconference.