



GREATER WEST BLOOMFIELD CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

KEEGO HARBOR • ORCHARD LAKE • SYLVAN LAKE • WEST BLOOMFIELD

MINUTES

June 13, 2024

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Jennifer Taylor Boykins, at 7:00PM at West Bloomfield Town Hall.

2. Roll Call

Members Present

Representing Keego Harbor

Ronnie Dahl

Joel Ross

Representing Orchard Lake:

Anne Dziuba

Representing Sylvan Lake:

Phil Ross

Representing West Bloomfield:

Jennifer Boykins

Stuart Dorf

Harvey Gersin

Mark Kowalsky (arrived at 7:02PM)

Suzanne Levine

Deborah Macon (arrived at 7:02PM)

Members Absent

Representing Sylvan Lake:

Pat Riney

Others in Attendance

Zach Dorf, Megan Tehako (WB Parks), Dave Scott (General Manager, Civic Center TV/Lakes FM), David Albery (Executive Director, GWBCCC)

3. Approval of Agenda

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

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission approve the agenda as provided for the June 13, 2024 meeting.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Levine, Joel Ross, Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Megan Tehako, Marketing and Communications Manager for WB Parks, addressed the Commission regarding a bond proposal on the August 6 ballot in West Bloomfield to fund park enhancements and expand the Recreation Activities Center on the Civic Center campus. She added that the cost of the bond to a resident whose home has a taxable value of \$100,000 will be \$35 a year and that additional information is available on the WB Parks web site at WBPARKS.ORG/BOND.

There were no other public comments, and the Chairperson invited all residents to communicate with the Commission at the Comments tab at GWBCABLE.ORG.

Mrs. Macon arrived at 7:02PM.

Mr. Kowalsky arrived at 7:02PM.

5. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Phil Ross, support from Mrs. Macon:

“That the Minutes of the May 9, 2024 meeting, the June 3, 2024 joint meeting, the June 4, 2024 joint meeting, and the June 7, 2024 special meeting be approved as presented.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

6. Acceptance of Financial Reports

The report of expenditures and revenue through May 31, 2024 and the report of first quarter 2024 cable operator payments were summarized by the Executive Director.

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

“That the Financial Reports be accepted.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

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.

Report of the Community Programming Committee

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

Mrs. Macon stated that the list of programming suggestions in the report was the result of brainstorming, not consensus among members. She added that the Commission will need to decide whether long-form programming should be included in the envisioned RFP for programming services.

Strategic Plan Implementation 2024

Commissioners were provided a written update regarding implementation of the Commission's strategic plan.

Motion by Phil Ross, support from Ms. Levine:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission accept the reports of the Commission Operations and Strategic Planning and Community Programming committees, as well as the strategic plan implementation update.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

8. Executive Director's Report

Civic Center TV/Lakes FM

Commissioners were provided a written report of programs cablecast on Civic Center TV in May and early June.

Mr. Scott addressed the Commission regarding the operation of Civic Center TV and Lakes FM, focusing on the work of CCT staff covering the many community events that occurred in May.

Mrs. Macon commended the Commission, CCT, and Michigan Digital for their involvement in the planning and execution of the annual Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast in May. Ms. Levine also applauded CCT coverage of the Health and Wellness Fair on June 11.

Ms. Dahl suggested providing shorter versions of long-form programming, such as the Michigan Week Awards and the Health and Wellness Fair, and Mr. Scott stated that Civic Center TV does provide those shorter versions on-line.

Cable Operators

No communication was received from AT&T or Comcast.

Cable Industry News

The Affordable Connectivity Program ended on June 1, and as a result, 23 million households in the United States, disproportionately military families, senior citizens, African Americans, and Latinos, will pay 40 dollars a month more for internet service. The chairperson of the FCC, Jennifer Rosenworcel communicated frequently to Congress during the final year of the program regarding its importance and the Commission's readiness for continuation if funding were provided. Several proposals for continuation have been introduced, including a lower subsidy and lower eligibility standards, but they have not been scheduled for a vote by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The effort to continue funding was led by the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, the National Association of Counties, the US Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities.

The Michigan Public Service Commission's annual video services report shows that less than one-third of all residents in Michigan are pay TV subscribers, that 190 thousand (13 percent) of subscribers cut the cord in 2023, and that customer complaints regarding cable service are up 200 percent since 2008.

Surveys have found that streaming subscribers over the age of 55, called "silver streamers", are reluctant to cancel their services despite price increases. Analysts point out that younger subscribers, who prefer less expensive FAST (free ad-supported television) streaming services will drive the growth of streaming over the long run.

A Pew Research Center study reports that local TV news is the most preferred news source, despite slipping from 41 percent in 2018 to 32 percent this year. Web sites, mobile apps, social media, and radio showed small increases.

Communication

No communication was received

Commission Assistance to Residents

The Commission referred a subscriber whose promotional rate had expired to Comcast, who offered another promotion which, although not as good as the original, was accepted by the resident.

Comcast responded quickly to a request from the Commission to bury exposed underground cable at the back of a lot in West Bloomfield.

The burial of the cable which was lying across the safety path on 14 Mile Road has been completed.

The Commission is working with a West Bloomfield condominium owner and Township Code Enforcement regarding wiring in her basement storage area.

Preview

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

Mrs. Macon stated that the Commission needs to better communicate its availability to assist subscribers with service issues. She added that the Commission's role in acting as ombudsman for residents was created in its original bylaws in 1985.

9. Unfinished Business

No items of Unfinished Business were presented.

10. New Business

Request for Proposals to Provide Programming Services

The Chairperson presented her recommendation.

Motion by Ms. Boykins, support from Mr. Dorf:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission issue a Request for Proposals to Provide Programming Services.”

Mrs. Macon stated that the motion was premature since the Commission has not answered the questions raised at recent committee meetings regarding who the Commission serves and how it intends to provide that service. The motion needs boundaries, a clear statement of the basis for the RFP, and how it will meet the expectations of the Commission going forward.

The Chairperson stated that the Commission will address governance issues in the future as it proceeds with the RFP process, enlisting and legal and technical assistance. Mr. Dorf stated that with the last RFP having been issued in 2013, the Commission needs to move forward to exercise due diligence in its fiduciary role.

Phil Ross stated that he is opposed to the RFP at this time as the Commission works to solidify its financial position.

Ms. Dahl stated that she is uncomfortable with annual renewals of the Commission's independent contractor agreements, that the best proposal will win, that the Commission is spending public funds, and that Commission should open its contracts for bids every year even though it is not easy and takes a lot of time.

Mrs. Dziuba stated that firming up the programming component of the RFP, including the Commission's current programming resources document, as revised, is difficult.

Mrs. Macon stated that she agrees with a due diligence rationale for the issuance of an RFP but that necessary clarifying language is not included in the motion.

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Kowalsky, Levine, Joel Ross

Voting NO: Gersin, Macon, Phil Ross

The motion was approved.

Establishment and Membership of Select Committee

The Chairperson presented her recommendation.

Motion by Ms. Boykins, support from Mr. Dorf:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission establish the following select committee:

- SELECT COMMITTEE ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE PROGRAMMING SERVICES

Dorf (chair), Dahl, Boykins, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Macon

Mrs. Macon stated that the motion is in violation of the Commission's pledge in its bylaws to conduct its meetings pursuant to Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, and the Executive Director stated that Section 50:10 of Roberts specifically prohibits the creation of a select committee that duplicates the responsibilities of a standing committee. Mrs. Macon added that the Community Programming Committee has already begun work on the RFP and added that the proposed Select Committee constitutes a quorum of the Commission and that an action of that committee would be an action of the Commission.

The Chairperson stated that in the interest of time, the Commission will kill the motion on the floor, and Mrs. Dziuba stated the need to co-ordinate the efforts of the Select Committee and the Community Programming Committee.

Motion by Mrs. Macon, support from Mr. Dorf:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission withdraw the motion regarding the creation of a Select Committee on Requests for Proposals to Provide Programming Services.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Joel Ross, Phil Ross

Voting NO: Dahl

The motion was approved.

11. Commissioner Comments

Ms. Dahl referenced the recent embezzlement of funds from the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and advocated that the Commission open its books and be more transparent in its financial reporting. Mr. Kowalsky suggested that Ms. Dahl be appointed to the Commission's Finance Committee. At the invitation of Phil Ross, the Executive Director stated that cable finances are mentioned, albeit ever so slightly, in the annual audit of West Bloomfield Township conducted by Plante Moran.

Joel Ross stated that in the process of issuing the RFP that that was just approved, members might take advantage of the opportunity to re-evaluate and define what they want the organization to be as a Commission or a public access channel. He added that it could be time to take another look at the model that has been in place for many years, that public access television is about community engagement, and that giving the public access to a studio will bring about a level of interest and excitement. He stated that he supports going back to a public access model, which will engender the kind of community involvement which will sustain the Commission and Civic Center TV.

Mrs. Macon stated that the Commission should choose which governance model it wants.

The Executive Director stated that the Commission has never supported a public access model.

The Chairperson stated that with the formation of the tax-exempt non-profit organization, the sense of community becomes even more important.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 8:09PM.

The next meeting of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission is **THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2024, at 7:00PM at WEST BLOOMFIELD TOWN HALL, 4550 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, Michigan.**