

Wellfleet Cable Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting on February 16, 2006 at 2:00 PM, Wellfleet Library

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TOWN CLERK

Attendees: Tom Cole, Betsy Williams, Susan Messina, John O'Hara. Tom served as chairperson.

Minutes of January 19, 2006 were accepted as printed.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of Friends Meeting on February 4, 2006

Producers expressed frustrations and shared experiences concerning the inadequate operation of the Comcast studio in Orleans, including unreliable and poorly maintained equipment, outdated editing software, and difficulty getting programs on the air. It was generally felt that Comcast does not intend to improve these conditions. Suggestions included that the Friends group might be able to invite consultants to provide options and legal advice toward supporting the six Lower Cape cable advisory committees.

Next Meeting of the Six Lower Cape Towns (LC6) on February 25, 2006

Cable advisory members of the six Lower Cape towns will meet to continue discussions of mutual interest. Rika Welsh, a nationally recognized cable consultant, will attend this meeting as an observer. Brewster has hired Ms. Welsh regarding implementation of their channel 18. The County of Barnstable will pay half of her fee and Rika will donate the other half.

Eastham's Request for Proposal

An RFP was recently submitted by Eastham to Comcast which asks for as many cable provisions as possible, including a town studio, three P.E.G. channels, Cape Cod Community College's channel 98, and all Barnstable county access programs. The section regarding regional channel 17 appears to allow for a future configuration yet to be determined.

Wellfleet Channel 18

The process to initiate a town channel could begin at any time, and our committee will start to brainstorm ideas for what this channel can offer Wellfleet residents. We will investigate programming which could include Town Events / Library Events / School and Sports Activities / Police and Fire Disaster Prevention / Discussion Forums / Selectmen Meetings / Town Meetings / Bulletin Board Announcements. Most archived programs are considered too technically primitive to be rebroadcast.

Discussion followed regarding the activation process and whether to advise the Town to start collecting the money now for the future, as some towns have done. The Selectmen would need to write a proposal to initiate this process with Comcast. Estimated gross revenue could produce \$23,000 per year, costing subscribers an additional \$3-\$4 per year. Additional funds needed to run a town channel might be available from existing grants or through Town Meeting. It is difficult to estimate costs at this point which will be one of the goals of this committee.

An 'ascertainment process', including research, a series of hearings, questionnaire and polling of subscribers will be used to determine if Wellfleet residents would be interested in a town channel. Residents may be disillusioned by the difficulties of the regional channel, including sharing prime air time with five other towns, and Wellfleet might benefit from the autonomy of its own channel. We will contact other towns to learn what they have done during their ascertainment process in order to clearly understand the entire process before recommendation.

The cost of a 'return feed' from Comcast to the 'node' nearest the Wellfleet Library is unknown at this time. This connection would be necessary to broadcast from Wellfleet. Our current contract states that we can have 3 nodes: at the Library, Elementary School, and a third location to be determined.

Meeting of the Wellfleet Cable Advisory Committee was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 23 at 2:00 PM in the Wellfleet Library.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Messina, Secretary