

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2016

Time: 7:30 - 8:20 PM

Place: City Hall - third floor

Present: Karen Spencer, Tom Manning, Robert McGillivray, Ryan Sawyer

Absent: Grant Harris (but Karen had spoken to Grant before the meeting and acted as his proxy).

Guests: Lucinda Seigel, Daniel Harling

Summary: Review and discussion of the Resignation Letter for City Council, where the members of the committee are all resigning and propose the committee be dissolved.

Decisions/Votes:

1. Vote to accept minutes from Feb 02, 2016 meeting.
Approved unanimously
2. Vote to submit the letter of resignation to the city council on May 24, 1016.
Approved unanimously

Action Items:

1. Karen to submit to the resignation letter to the City Council.

Details:

1. Karen provided a letter of resignation for all members of the committee for review. (see attachment).
2. The letter was discussed and a vote was taken to submit it to the city council.

Next Meeting: not scheduled

Attachments: Resignation Letter (including edits made by committee and attachments)

Submitted By: Tom Manning

City Councilors and Mayor Sefatia -

Part 1

The members of the Gloucester Cable TV Advisory Committee (CTAC) feel at this time that we have done all we can do for the city of Gloucester given the primacy of the Regional Cape Ann Committee led by Economic Development Director Sal Di Stefano that includes representatives from Rockport, Essex, Manchester, Cape Ann TV and legal counsel.

Consequently, our membership is submitting our collective resignation. We suggest the City Council acknowledge the reality of the Regional Committee (formed ad hoc in 2014) as the only group that is involved in the Comcast contract renewal process slated for March 2017.

Since January 2014, the Gloucester Cable TV Advisory Committee has:

1. Held public meetings with Cape Ann residents to solicit input regarding Comcast and Broadband experience. Those meetings included Comcast and other telecom representatives.
2. Listened to and logged citizen complaints about their experiences, offering assistance whenever possible.
3. Sent a representative to attend the Regional Committee meetings under the Open Meeting Law.
4. Submitted a list of questions for a citizen's survey to Sal Di Stefano, chair of the Cape Ann Regional Cable TV Committee, for consideration by that group.
5. Submitted suggestions for improving the Comcast contract and experience of residents to Sal Di Stefano, chair of the Cape Ann Regional Cable TV Committee, for consideration by that group.

All of our output is available on the city website accessible via the CTAC page.

Part 2

Our committee has also explored options for alternate broadband and telecommunications for the city. To that end we have:

1. Liaised with other Northshore residents and officials on the "Gold Coast," i.e. the Cape Ann and Newburyport regions.
2. Facilitated and participated in regional events that included Comcast and other broadband and communications professionals.
3. With the encouragement, support and approval of the Kirk administration, we researched opportunities and submitted a Roadmap for improved options and services to the former City Council as well as to both the Kirk and Romeo-Theken administrations. (see attached)

At this point in time, we'd like to re-submit that Roadmap to this City Council. What is necessary to move forward is the political will to finance a regional technical analysis in order to make our city "shovel ready" for opportunities that would benefit community safety, welfare and economy, as well as quality of life for residents. We would like to see Gloucester, as the largest community in the region, take the lead on securing those funds through grants or a line item on the state budget. Details of our work are available on the city website.

Once that technical analysis is in hand, there will again be work to do for our community based on the decisions made by our city government and its regional partners guided by that analysis.

Submitted by,

Karen Favazza Spencer, Grant Harris, Tom Manning, Ryan Sawyer, and Robert McGillivray

See CTAC Document Center and Minutes for details: <http://gloucester-ma.gov/index.aspx?nid=91>

May 24, 2016

From: Karen Spencer KFSpencer@comcast.net

Subject: Memo to Regional Committee Cable TV

Date: March 24, 2016 at 10:06 AM

To: Sal Di Stefano sdstefano@gloucester-ma.gov, bobrien@northshorecommunications.com, mvieira@rockportma.gov, pjermain@verizon.net

Cc: Sefatia Theken stheken@gloucester-ma.gov, Christine Pantano cpantano@gloucester-ma.gov

Bcc: Tom Manning tom@manningetal.com, Ryan Sawyer Ryan@Rsawyer.com, Grant Harris gharris@gloucester.k12.ma.us



To the Regional Committee:

Our Gloucester Cable TV Advisory Committee would like to bring up following items:

1. Contributions on behalf of the citizens of Gloucester to the proposed survey being created by the Regional Committee consistent with the complaint calls our members have received from Gloucester residents. Please acknowledge receipt and inclusion in survey of the following questions which are responsive to those complaints. These questions were originally emailed Sal on 2/21/16:
 - a. Given that Comcast does not have an office on Cape Ann, has dealing with equipment issues been a problem for you?
 - b. Have you experienced interruptions in Comcast service in the past year?
 - c. If you have your phone service through Comcast, do you have concerns about phone service during outages or experienced phone problems during outages that you feel have or could jeopardize your safety and well being?
 - d. Is your broadband/internet service satisfactory for your personal and business needs?

2. We'd also like to include better language in the contract to serve our residents.
 - a. Service Interruptions: Section 7.4
 - i. **Current Wording:** In the event that the Licensee's service to any Subscriber is completely interrupted for twenty-four or more consecutive hours, the Licensee will grant Subscriber a pro-rata credit or rebate upon request, on a daily basis, of that portion of the service charge during the next consecutive billing cycle.
Requested change to request: A pro-rated credit is automatically applied if a network outage is known to impair the subscriber's service for N or more hours. (4, 8 or 24 hours in sum for any given billing cycle)
Rationale: It is not scalable to have individual subscribers make requests for a rebate for a service outage. Comcast now has network monitoring that enables measuring service outages per customer, so the rebate/credit process can be automated. Furthermore, 24 hours of outage is too high given today's technology, even spread over several incidents.
 - b. Local Presence:
 - i. **OPTIONS:** A mobile facility (van) available at Cape Ann TV per a weekly schedule?
Cape Ann TV assumes role at their offices?
A monthly on-site presence at City Hall?
Note: This is a place where we should aggressively negotiate
 - c. Improve notification of planned TV services outages.
Scroll on Cape Ann TV 24 hours in advance
Posted on City Website
In City Paper
 - d. Low Income & Senior Citizens:
Do the Comcast service people inform new customer of the discounts?
Better advertisement/notification of discounts for low income families with children for Comcast internet services?
What Comcast TV (and possibly internet) discounts can be made available to the disabled, senior citizens and low income citizens with or without children?

3. As the Regional Committee has pre-empted our role and responsibilities under our charter, we suggest that our Gloucester committee is not fulfilling its charter. We'd like to point out that this is a different organization than in previous contract negotiations, where there was one committee. Although a Gloucester citizen member of our committee has attended most or all regional meetings under Open Meeting law, we feel there is a lack of transparency, collaboration, and inclusion. Consequently, we are considering disbanding and have reached out to the Gloucester mayor about this action.
 - a. We'd like to again remind the Regional Committee, that all of our work to date, including our interactions with the citizen of Gloucester, are included in the minutes and document center on the city webpage: <http://gloucester-ma.gov/index.aspx?nid=91>

NOTE: It is taking repeated attempts for me to "send" this email as my Comcast internet access is not responsive. This is not an uncommon occurrence in my Lanesville section of Gloucester. I just need to keep trying.

Respectfully,

Karen Favazza Spencer
Chair Gloucester Cable TV Advisory Committee
Gloucester, MA 01930
978.283.4606
Email: Seabreezes1@iglide.net



From: Karen Spencer KFSpencer@comcast.net
Subject: Re: Memo to Regional Committee Cable TV
Date: March 30, 2016 at 7:53 PM
To: Sal Di Stefano SDiStefano@gloucester-ma.gov
Cc: bobrien@northshorecommunications.com, mvieira@rockportma.gov, pjermain@verizon.net, Sefatia Romeo Theken SRomeoTheken@gloucester-ma.gov, Christine Pantano CPantano@gloucester-ma.gov, Tom Manning tom@manningetal.com, Grant Harris gharris@gloucester.k12.ma.us, Ryan Sawyer Ryan@Rsawyer.com, Sefatia Theken stheken@gloucester-ma.gov, Christine Pantano cpantano@gloucester-ma.gov

Sal -

The contract negotiation is or should be about more than discussing the PEG rate. The Cable TV Advisory Committee was created to fulfill the role required by M.G.L. Chapter 166A. This is to represent the citizens interests in order to advise and assist the Mayor in performance of the duties and responsibilities vested in the Mayor by law as the licensing authority for cable television franchises in the City.

That includes negotiating other elements of the contract, besides the PEG rate. The Gloucester group is undoubtedly in an uncomfortable spot given the direction the Regional Committee has taken, and this is not what has happened in the past. We are not comfortable in putting in the effort to investigate other contract options when they are not being requested, considered, or acted upon because of the current dynamics.

Karen Favazza Spencer
67 Langsford Street
Gloucester, MA 01930
978.283.4606
Email: Seabreezes1@iglide.net

On Mar 30, 2016, at 1:00 PM, Sal Di Stefano <SDiStefano@gloucester-ma.gov> wrote:

Dear Ms. Spencer,

Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention. I was out on medical leave due to illness and surgery but am back and happy to answer your questions.

Since we last met however, we were informed by attorney Bill Hewig that representatives from the Town of Essex denied Mr. Hewig permission to represent Gloucester. Due to this situation we had to postpone our next meeting until we hire new legal representation.

As for your survey suggestions, I am happy to consider them as part of our survey outreach effort.

As we discussed several times, the purpose for the Regional committee is to negotiate the PEG rate on the cable bill. This is the process that has happened in the past as you recall. We are not discussing anything else such as the study you have referenced below. The purpose is to discuss the negotiated agreement renewal for Cape Ann.

As you mentioned all meetings are open to the public, and are advertised. They have even been televised on public access in the past. Thank you for your assistance in formulating these survey responses. I hope to see you at our next meeting once our new legal representation is in place.

Sincerely,

Salvatore L. Di Stefano, Sr.
Economic Development Director
City of Gloucester
978-282-8017
sdistefano@gloucester-ma.gov

Cable TV Contract Considerations

Standard Benefits from TV franchise negotiations include:

1. increased franchise fee revenue by applying the franchise fee to all revenue sources,
2. a cash franchise grant,
3. free internet service to municipal buildings,
4. enforceable customer service standards,
5. a government access channel,
6. strong right-of-way protections.

Other Cable Renewal Considerations

1. Right of Way Cost Recovery
 - Pro: Look at city actual right-of-way costs to ensure you are recovering your costs.
 - Con: Cable providers can pass cost to the consumer as an itemized fee on the cable bill.
2. Municipalities can assess up to 5 percent of a cable operator's gross revenue, and are allowed to take 5 percent of the franchise fee itself.
3. Negotiate as a region instead of separate municipalities.

Social Benefit Clause: Any municipal cable franchise agreement or ISP contract should include "social benefit clause." Examples from a wireless contract:

1. Entire city covered, up to 98%.
2. Low income areas built first, with low internet fee for low income households, i.e.\$14.95 month for unemployed folks or senior citizens.
3. Guaranteed 5% of the population has free or low-cost access.
4. A hundred free wi-fi accounts available to non-profits for use in public areas.
5. Build non-profit computer labs and partner with Americorp
6. A percentage of the wireless income from the city goes to a community board of advisors who sit at a non-profit Foundation that accepts money. Board decides annually where the money goes. Funded 100% with private money from the vendor to benefit community.

Massachusetts Cable Licenses in electronic format

<http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/government/oca-agencies/dtc-lp/competition-division/cable-tv-division/municipal-info/cable-television-licenses.html>

Tips:

Focus on Broadband ADOPTION, not just infrastructure.
Leverage for social good.
Consider workforce development.
Address the "digital divide" regarding Internet access.



From: Karen Spencer SEABREEZES1@IGLIDE.NET 
Subject: Regional Broadband Opportunity
Date: February 19, 2016 at 3:51 PM
To: Sefatia Theken stheken@gloucester-ma.gov
Cc: Ari Herzog ariherzog@gmail.com, Sal Di Stefano sdistefano@gloucester-ma.gov, Ryan Sawyer Ryan@Rsawyer.com, Tom Manning tom@manningetal.com, Grant Harris gharris@gloucester.k12.ma.us

“Any economic development this century has to include technology, and technology requires a robust and scalable connectivity infrastructure.” ~ Gloucester Cable TV Advisory Committee, 2014

Mayor Sefatia -

The first necessary step to bring an improved broadband infrastructure to Gloucester that not only will offer competition to Comcast, but more importantly provide an economic foundation for 21st century business, is a **regional technical analysis of “The Gold Coast.”** The desired outcome is a plan for building out a sustainable open-access infrastructure that will allow our communities to thrive.

Think of it like the MBTA, i.e. a spur from Beverly going to Rockport and another going to Newburyport serving all the towns in between. It can certainly be expanded based on interest. The North Shore Fiber Forums our Gloucester team has attended (founded by Newburyport former councilor Ari Herzog and myself) have attracted people from Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill.

As you know, former Mayor Carolyn Kirk approved the beginning of our Vision re attached Roadmap. I contacted a high-tech organizations that do the technical analysis we need, CTC, for a preliminary conversation over a year ago. The ballpark estimate was \$75k for Cape Ann. Double that to include Newburyport, with whom we’ve already had some conversations, maybe a bit more given inflation and/or possible expansion. Per attached, the estimated population served in this regional approach is over 100k. Regional approaches tend to be easier to fund for implementation, i.e. the Open Cape project.

Consequently, what is needed from you is:

- Achieving political support from mayors and politicians to get state funding for a technical analysis.

I suggest now is a particularly good time to proceed given:

1. Boston News (*Feb 2014*): <http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2016/02/14/build-fiber-network-boston/43EXv7sUeuVnKU6zVrG21L/story.html#comments>
2. Other New England Town initiatives (*Jan 2016*): <http://www.thewesterlysun.com/news/latestnews/8291271-129/kennedys-grand-vision-building-a-fiber-optic-network-in-westerly.html>
3. Gov. Charlie Baker’s attention to financial responsibility in broadband expansion (*Feb 2016*): http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/02/wiredwest_and_mass_broadband_i.html

Per our December conversation, here is more detail regarding

- **Roadmap:** <http://gloucester-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3324>
- **June 2014 City Council email:** <http://gloucester-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2930>
- **Oct 2014 Open Cape presentation:** <http://gloucester-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3139>
- **CTC cheat sheet:** technical analysts CTC <http://www.ctcnet.us>
-

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We advise clients on a broad range of communications, technology, and energy issues. Our engineers, analysts, and scientists offer the experience and analytical agility to engage virtually any strategic, technical, or business issue regarding communications infrastructure. And we deliver truly independent analysis. We are not affiliated with equipment manufacturers, communications carriers, cable operators, or construction contractors. Our consulting philosophy is focused solely on meeting our clients’ needs and protecting their interests. For our work on **Gigabit Communities**, click here:

- [Understanding Broadband Performance Factors](#)

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- *Understanding Broadband Performance Factors*
- *Technical Strategies for Facilitating Public or Private Broadband Construction in Your Community*
- *Broadband Strategies Checklist*
- *A Brief Assessment of Engineering Issues Related to Trial Testing for IP Transition*

Contact Info

Our headquarters is located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area:

CTC Technology & Energy
10613 Concord Street
Kensington, MD 20895

Tel: 301.933.1488

E-mail: info@CTCnet.us

Our satellite offices are located in:

California	Colorado	Columbia, MD	Illinois
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Our Clients include:

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.... and over a hundred more

<http://www.ctcnet.us/what-we-do/>

“Any economic development this century has to include technology, and technology requires a robust and scalable connectivity infrastructure.”

~ Gloucester Cable TV Advisory Committee, 2014

Purpose & Benefits:

- I. Attract New Industry:
 - Position Gloucester, Cape Ann, the Gold Coast to be on par with the newly installed MA 123 and Open Cape broadband infrastructure.
- II. Workforce Development:
 - Transition displaced workers from the fishing industry to good paying fields.
- III. Economic Development:
 - Establish an economic foundation based on 21st century technology.
- IV. Public Good:
 - Improve communications in emergency situations.
 - Improve educational opportunities.
 - Improve hospital services.
 - Increase options to residents.

Regional Plan:

Gloucester is the largest economic municipality on the “Gold Coast” between Manchester and the NH border. Most of the grants have been given to regions. The other Cape Ann town administrators are supportive. Newburyport is also currently wrestling with this same dilemma, holding “Fiber Forums.” We have reached out to them, and they are interested in any solution to the current limited broadband options.

Proposal:

We propose that we (city or city non-profit) solicit grant funding for technical and strategic analysis of broadband possibilities. Address geographic specific bandwidth, reliability and redundancy issues:

- A. Areas to Pilot in Gloucester
- B. Achievable Steps
- C. Sustainability and Thrivability

Operational Objectives: Route diversity, scalability, extensibility, quality of service, availability, and affordability.

Behavioral Objectives: Business growth, job creation, improved public safety, increased education and training opportunities, and new industry.

Resources:

- CTC Technology & Engineering - Serves the Public Sector. <http://www.ctcnet.us/what-we-do/>
- Gigabyte Communities Paper: <http://www.ctcnet.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GigabitCommunities.pdf>

Needed:

1. Consensus that this is worthwhile
2. City or Non-profit ownership for initial grant, and ultimate solution
3. Anchor Institution buy-in

Other Initiatives:

1. Leverett MA is installing Fiber to Home (FTH), now. [Click here](#) and [here](#).
2. New England Board of Higher Education on Gigabyte Innovation. [Click here](#)
3. [Cape Net](#), [Mass Broadband 123](#), [Network NH Now](#), [Maine Fiber projects](#).

Addendum

Rationale: The North Shore, with its down-east Cape Ann peninsula and 20,000 acres of protected Great Marsh, has depended on a marine economy for the past 400 years. Directly and indirectly involving thousands of small businesses, the fishing industry has contracted by as much as 70% in the past 15 years. This downward cycle is expected to worsen. Possessing a higher than average COL and some of the highest unemployment figures in Massachusetts, (check sources & get current figures) Gloucester, in particular, has missed out on the technological advances of the past 25 years. Our geography, once the biggest advantage, has become our biggest disadvantage.

List of the coastal towns in the Cape Ann and Newburyport groupings, plus Ipswich:

Municipality	Population
Gloucester	29
Rockport	7
Manchester-by-the-Sea	5
Essex	3
Newburyport	17
Newbury	6
Salisbury	8
Amesbury	16
West Newbury	4
Ipswich	13
TOTAL	108

Other Nearby Towns	
Hamilton	8
Wenham	5
Rowley	6
Topsfield	6
Georgetown	8
Boxford	8
TOTAL	41

There is a bigger potential within northeastern MA and Essex County - perhaps a later phase.

