

Telecommunications Commission Meeting Minutes January 24, 2008

I. Call to Order.

Jackie Hontz (chair in 2007) called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. in Conference Rooms A/B/C in the Administration Center, 1300 Courthouse Road.

II. Roll Call.

The following members were present: Alicia Knight, Terry Lottes, Thomas Kimbrell, Danielle Davis, Jim Minor and Edward Sullivan (John Johnson arrived at 8:20 p.m.). Marie Schuler and Tami Watkins with Comcast, and Alex Horwitz with Cox attended the meeting. Also present were Valerie Cottongim representing the Stafford School Board; Cathy Riddle and Michele Lansford, Public Information Office, and Jason Hill from Information Technology representing the County.

III. Election of Officers for 2008

Ms. Hontz opened the floor for nominations for chair. Tom Kimbrell nominated Terry Lottes to serve as chair; Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lottes opened the floor for nominations for vice chair. Ms. Knight nominated Tom Kimbrell; Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

County staff will serve as recording secretary to the commission to take minutes and post them on the County's Web site.

IV. Adoption of Charter and By-Laws

Mr. Kimbrell moved, seconded by Mr. Lottes, to adopt the charter and by-laws of the newly established Telecommunications Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Presentations by the Public

There were no members of the public in attendance.

VI. Approval of Minutes

Danielle Davis had one change to the draft minutes of the November 29, 2007 meeting. Mr. Kimbrell moved, seconded by Mr. Minor, to approve the minutes as amended; the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Members' Concerns

Ms. Riddle said she received a call from Steve Prida who said that when he called Comcast to report a service interruption, none of the customer service representatives could tell him what the

problem was or when service would be restored. When he visited the office in Garrisonville, none of those representatives had any information about the outage. Ms. Schuler said a major fiber trunk had been cut at approximately 7:30 a.m. on January 24th, and that service was restored in the early afternoon on the same day. She said the employees in the office on Route 610 only handle billing matters. Ms. Schuler said she would call Mr. Prida to be sure his service had been restored.

Danielle Davis asked Ms. Schuler to provide a status of service to the Kelsons on Montague Loop. Ms. Schuler reported that their home is more than 800' from the closest plant, so service will not be provided at this time.

Tami Watkins told the members that the Hunters' residence (inquiry from a previous meeting) doesn't meet the density requirement. Comcast will try to estimate the cost to run fiber to the home, and Mr. Hunter has indicated that he will talk with his neighbors to find out how many of them would sign up for Comcast service.

Alicia Knight said the Epsteins at 106 Hidden Lane (near Tacketts Mill) would like to get service; Ms. Schuler said she would determine if that subdivision meets the density requirements. Ms. Knight also said that C-SPAN "booknotes" programming is often pre-empted by sports (channel 126 and lower). Ms. Schuler said that C-SPAN2 is analog, and is the overflow channel for baseball games and other sports, primarily on the weekends. Digital programming, she said, should not be affected, but she will check to see what's happening and report back to the committee in February.

Mr. Lottes told Ms. Schuler that a resident on Kellogg Mill Road has requested a site visit to see if he can get service, and that the neighborhood association in the subdivision wants to meet with Comcast representatives. Ms. Schuler said that Rick Riley will meet with the residents.

Ms. Riddle requested an update on service to the Berea Fire Station. Ms. Schuler and Mr. Horwitz said they are still researching the issue, and will report back to her.

Ms. Knight asked both representatives if there is an overlap in their territories in the area around the Riverside Conference Center/Dinner Theater (Route 17) – they said they will check on that, and that Ms. Schuler will call the business owner who made the inquiry.

Ms. Cottongim thanked Ms. Riddle, Ms. Schuler and Mr. Horwitz for their help getting the education channels on the air.

Ms. Davis asked Ms. Riddle to be sure that any information the County distributes about the Telecommunications Commission emphasize that the group also provides help with cable television issues – Ms. Riddle said she would, and that the new charter would be added to the commission's Web site.

Ms. Davis told Ms. Schuler that residents on Coal Landing Road, who experienced a service interruption, were told by Comcast service representatives that the number of calls received from customers on that street did not meet the threshold for service. Ms. Schuler said that technicians

should have responded, no matter how many residents called. She said she has directed that some equipment be replaced at that node, which should solve the problem.

A general discussion ensued about the Comcast and Cox customer service reports, including how the companies can provide statistics on the same categories. There was a discussion about exactly what the “call wait time” statistics on both reports actually reflect – whether the times reported reflect time on hold, time until a person is transferred to the party that can actually address the problem, the time it takes for a caller to punch in numbers, or how long it takes an automated system to route a caller. Ms. Schuler said Comcast is setting up a new call center in Laurel, Md. with 400 employees, and that will lessen the time callers will wait for assistance.

Ms. Schuler and Mr. Horwitz said they would work together to refine the information in the reports, and make sure the categories listed reflect the customer service reporting requirements in the franchise agreements. Mr. Kimbrell said he will also compare the reports to the requirements in the franchises.

VIII. Agenda Additions

There were no additions to the agenda.

IX. New Business

Ms. Knight requested that Comcast and Cox offer “on demand” replays of programming on the government and schools channels. Both representatives said the companies are exploring this option. Ms. Knight also suggested that the County offer streaming video of the meetings via the Internet. Mr. Hill told the commission that there is not enough capacity from the Administration Center to offer this service at this time. Ms. Knight asked Ms. Riddle to provide a report at the February meeting detailing the amount of the telecommunications taxes the state has sent to Stafford County to date – Ms. Riddle said she would provide that.

Closed Meeting: At 8:08 p.m., Mr. Kimbrell moved, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, to go into a Closed Meeting on the following item:

Legal: To discuss negotiation of the Verizon franchise agreement.
Section 2.2-3711 A7
Code of Virginia

The voting tally was:

Yea: (6) Lottes, Knight, Davis, Kimbrell, Minor, Sullivan.

Call to Order. At 10:13 p.m., the Chair called the meeting back to order.

Closed Meeting Certification:

Ms. Knight moved, seconded by Ms. Davis, to adopt proposed Resolution CM08-02.

The voting tally was:

Yea: (6) Lottes, Knight, Davis, Kimbrell, Minor, Sullivan.

Resolution CM08-02 reads as follows:

**A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE STAFFORD
COUNTY CABLE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION IN A
CLOSED MEETING ON JANUARY 24, 2008**

WHEREAS, the committee has, on this the 24th day of January, 2008, adjourned into a closed meeting in accordance with a formal vote of the commission and in accordance with provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, as it became effective July 1, 1989, provides for certification that such Closed Meeting was conducted in conformity with law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford County Cable and Telecommunications Commission does hereby certify, on this the 24th day of January, 2008, that to the best of each member's knowledge: (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom Act were discussed in the Closed Meeting to which this certification applies; and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the said Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered by the committee. No member dissents from the aforesaid certification. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Adjournment

At 10:14 p.m., Daniel Davis, seconded by Alicia Knight, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.