

**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA JOINT CABLE AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
MINUTES**

DATE: October 20, 2004
Wednesday, 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Urbana Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT:	CITY OF CHAMPAIGN Giraldo Rosales Karen Walker Brian Silverman	CITY OF URBANA Kevin Maxson Barb Gladney Peter Resnick
	PARKLAND None	UI None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Richard Atterberry, Tom McDonnell, Stan Yagi, James Hayes

STAFF PRESENT: Jeff Hamilton, Chris Foster

OTHERS PRESENT: Art Symbersky (Insight), Dave Treat (Insight)

Agenda

Modifications- None

Approval of Minutes

- July 14th and July 21st, 2004 meetings
- Unanimous vote for approval

Correspondence

- A lot of complaints to Insight - all resolved; no need to discuss

Old Business

A) Political Content on PEG channels

- Commissioner Silverman wanted further clarification from Steve Holz, about Urbana's policy on political programming.
- UPTV Coordinator Chris Foster said that Urbana needed to have there own policy for political programming.
- Commissioner Silverman wanted to have a policy on political programming in place by the elections in Spring of 2005.
- Commissioner Silverman added that policies are needed for each PEG channel, not including Parkland and the public needs to know what kind of things can be shown or not shown on the PEG channels

B) Rules and Regulations: Text Amendment

- Times of study sessions changed to 2nd Wednesday's at 4pm from 4:30 pm
- Unanimous vote for changing time

Reports

A) Mini Reports

PEG study session

- Barbara Gladney – recommended to the commission that Insight think about providing public access it's own channel
- Carl Caldwell is now the contact for PEG Advisory Committee (WILL Station Manager)
- Robert McChesney (UI Dept. of Communications) – said to be aggressive in the next franchise, PEG channels are a small payment for cable companies, public access needs to be independent and separate from government access
- Chris Foster – introduced UPTV and how to become a member and how to get programs
- Mr. Caldwell said there were problems with public access getting funding due to the some of the programming material aired
- Community member Randall Cotton spoke about the problems with getting Democracy Now aired and her urged the City of Champaign to provide public access programming

B) Staff

Citizen Watch case

- Chris Foster said that Martel Miller tape that documented police stops, has been aired on UPTV since the eavesdropping charges against Mr. Miller have been dropped
- Mr. Foster added that he and two other UPTV Commission members are meeting with Mayor to do a complete policy review, he hopes once the rules are completely revised that they can move forward and address the Democracy Now issue.
- Mr. Hamilton wanted to tell the Commission that we have not forgotten about compliance report
- Commissioner Maxson and Champaign City staff contacted Insight, went through material with Commissioner Atterberry and conducted a compliance check (report ready in January)

System Operator

Art Symbersky Custom Service Manager with Insight Communications – 3rd quarter report summary:

- July, August, September steady growth in basic customer accounts, September strong month
- August & September increase in customer accounts for digital and high speed internet access
- Customer Service did not meet expectations in August, close in July and Sept, and hit every week in October so far
- 29 drops to be buried
- 2 channel additions NFL Network digital sports and lifestyle pack and Comcast Sports Net added to classic line-up on channel 69 done on 10/1/04
- Melody has called the company trying to group like-content together, can't group these channels with ESPN or other sports channels due to contractual reasons (channel location important matter to broadcasters; wouldn't be happy with that channel location change).
- Art said that in 2005 they are going to look at trying to group like-channels together
- Commissioner Gladney thanked Insight for mailing out the PEG inserts

New Business

A) NATOA 2004 Teleconference Review

- Commissioner Walker - discussion about what communities are doing with government access TV (marketing, advertising, bigger staff), we should be moving towards doing that; stronger identity for channels we have
- Look into grants and extra funding that can increase facilities
- PEG programs fighting for air time; marketing ideas: having a website with a variety of things (Central Website for all Champaign County PEG channels for everyone to go to instead of separately)
- Need production facilities, promos, big emphasis on voice over IP Technologies at NATOA conference was great and very informational and stimulating
- Commissioner Resnick asked what the staff at other PEG channels looked like? There are communities like us that have a full-time marketing, advertising and outreach person, at least 3 employees per station
- Mr. Hamilton told NATOA that he would like to learn more about what the smaller PEG channels are doing, instead of the bigger markets
- Commissioner Resnick asked what it takes to get listed in TV Guide and the Newspaper? Commissioner Gladney mentioned that Parkland's been in the News-Gazette for the last 2 years but it's taken a while to get to that point. Chris Foster said that UPTV would look into getting programming in the newspaper and the TV Guide

B) Future Study Session Topics

- Commissioner Gladney suggested looking into Franchising – it is a long process maybe we could have an expert come in to address the committee about franchise agreements
- Commissioner Maxson suggested we look into communities that have more than one cable operator
- Commissioner Walker suggested an update on Digital HDTV
- Commissioner Maxson suggested we look into the possibilities of a new PEG channel

C) Annual Budget Request

- Jeff Hamilton said that the City of Champaign puts budget together; requests due in early January
- \$5,329.00 for this commission; would like to send 2 reps to NATOA conference annually (\$2600 per person all expenses paid)
- Champaign pays 2/3 and Urbana pays 1/3
- Commissioner Resnick and Silverman asked that we ask for an additional \$2,000 or for enough money to cover the cost of two people to go to the NATOA conference
- Unanimous vote for budget request increase

D) Possibility of New Public Access Channel

- Barbara Gladney (Proposal for new resolution) – “addressed to Champaign and Urbana recommend to request Insight Comm. to provide communities with an additional public access channel to be used for public access; requirements that PEG channels play an average of 12 hours per day for the proceeding 3 months and at least 75 hours per month for the proceeding month of new unduplicated video programming or its equivalent; Each channel meets 12 hours per day requirement but not the 75 hours of new programming requirement; they all operate 24-7 and have made substantial investments in their channels and provide quality programming to the community; an interest in separate public access channel for Champaign, Urbana and Parkland is needed, Insight seems to have the channel the capacity and the PEG channels can be seen as a marketing tool since they are only available on cable; waiting ‘til ’09 will keep us from expanding and Commissioner Gladney asked the Commission to join her in asking Insight Communications to provide another PEG channel solely for public access.”
- Commissioner Silverman opposed the recommendation because cable did not want to provide 8 channels at first; contract involved and a lot of negotiation involved it’s not fair to not honor a contract a deal is a deal, not a groundswell of support from community (supporting groups are small but vocal); we’re not meeting those goals of 72 hours per month; re-programming and broadcast programming on PEG channels is not exactly what the community or Insight wants or has in mind for public access programming; we should meet our goals before we request additional channels.”
- Commissioner Gladney stated that the channels prefer quality programming as to just filling the channels to meet the 75 hours of new programming
- Commissioner Resnick stated that 4 hours of new programming a day would help us meet our goal, and he asked how much government programming is on the channels and what does that add up to.
- Chris Foster said UPTV is not meeting monthly hours because reruns don’t count towards monthly hours only the first time something airs
- Commissioner Silverman said if we can’t fill up our current channels, how are we going to fill up additional channels?
- Commissioner Gladney said that we fill the channels it is not with new programming, new programming is hard to get and producing new material takes a while
- Commissioner Resnick said that each type of channel (Public, Education and Government) has different requirements. Devoting channels to each type of programming may help; Education & Government is run by City Administration, and the public is run by public.
- Commissioner Maxson said that a separation between the 3 genres may help. An informal request was made in the last session for a separation of the channels; we need to helping people distinguish between the 2 channels. He added that we will need an organized public body to help oversee the channel. Non-profit groups in other communities run the boards or commissions. Given all the information Commissioner Maxson felt the resolution was coming a little early in the timeline
- Commissioner Gladney said that she just wanted to get things out on the table
- Commissioner Silverman said that Chairman Atterberry needs to propose the idea to Insight
- Commissioner Resnick stated that we need to find out if the cities is interested first. If Champaign and Urbana are on board, Insight may be more interested.
- Commissioner Maxson felt it would more appropriate if we told the cities that we interested in giving public access it’s own channel and see what they thought

- Commissioner Rosales said alleviating one of those channels from the other two would be a good thing
- Commissioner Silverman suggested combining Champaign and Urbana's Educational & Governmental program into one channel and Public on another
- Mr. Foster said that to may meetings would conflict
- Mr. Foster said that there are no prime time- slots available for public access because city meetings take precedents
- Commissioner Walker said that the cities need a staff. Need somebody creating the demand; Holding workshops, seminars and training."
- Commissioner Gladney said that an Outreach Coordinator position has been created in Urbana. Maybe Champaign can make a similar commitment, and the we can approach Insight after hiring the Coordinator's
- Commissioner Maxson said we should use next study session to discuss things further for this topic.
- Mr. Foster said we need to find out if this is possible before building public support? We don't want to pressure Insight into changing things."
- **Need to gage City Council, other Commissioners and community support** (need and/or want channel).
- Next Study Session on Jan. 12th will discuss how other non-profit public access channels are run
- Commissioner Gladney, Walker, and Mr. Foster volunteered to put the session together
- Commissioner Gladney said that the PEG channels should be important to Insight
- Commissioner Maxson said that we should work on putting something together to send to both cities about this possibility
- Commissioner agreed that it may be good for Chairman Atterberry to meet with Melody from Insight to gauge interest

Audience Participation

A) Randall Cotton (508 E. Clark St. Apt. 404, Champaign)

- Lack of programming locally for public access: "not really a public access channel because it's government controlled; controlled by a single local politician; He encouraged the Commission to informally ask Insight about the chances of another channel and to research community support; Mr. Cotton also asked if Insight has lived up to there end of the deal regarding the franchise agreement.
- Commissioner Silverman stated that Insight has lived up to their part of the contractual agreement

Further Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Resnick wanted to thank Professor McChesney for speaking
- Commissioner Gladney thanked the commission and public for discussing the new channel resolution.
- Next Study Session Jan. 12th.

Adjournment