

PEG Access Advisory Committee

February 11, 2021

Virtual Meeting, 9:40 AM

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the PEG Access Advisory Committee convened in a virtual meeting on February 11, 2021 at 9:40 AM.

Present were: Karlen Reed, Chr; Court Booth, Vincent Carlson, Ruth Lauer
Absent: Scott Hopkinson,

Also present were: Matt Johnson and Terri Ackerman, Select Board Liaison; Jeremy Romanul, Select Board Administrative Assistant; Phil Lupsiewicz, Station Manager; Frank Breen, Carol Cushing COA Observer, David Allen, Pat Nelson and Dawn Guarriello, CMS Building Committee Co-Chairs; Brooks Read, Lois Suarez, Judith Zaunbrecher

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Reed called the meeting to order with a quorum present and announced that it was being recorded.

MEETINGS AND MINUTES

Meetings are scheduled, virtually, for the remainder of 2020-2021 season on March 11, April 8, and May 6. The Enterprise Fund Hearing will be on May 11 and Annual Town Meeting will convene on June 13.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: to approve the January 14, 2021 minutes.

Court Booth	aye
Vince Carlson	aye
Ruth Lauer	aye
Karlen Reed	aye

CMS SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE DESIGN

Pat Nelson and Dawn Guarriello, CMS Building Committee Co-Chairs, were present to update the Committee regarding design options for the proposed middle school. A feasibility study was approved by annual Town Meeting and a Building Committee Charged by the Town Manager began work on a schematic design. In January the School Committee approved the Educational Plan that identified the program requirements the building needs to serve and this will be adapted into construction plans. The architect and Owners Project Manager have been hired and the team is hard at work on finding the appropriate sizes to fit the educational plan. Fit and financing are some of the issues for a building that is estimated to cost \$80-100,000,000 and for which the community has suggested additional components.

Karlen Reed stated that one additional community need is the possibility of a second studio. This might fit within a middle school where students have demonstrated an interest in creating videos in the formation of a very popular media club. Another way to fulfill this need

Call to Order

Meeting/Minutes

CMS Design

is by a mobile studio van. Court Booth of the School Committee and the CMS Building Committee stated that middle school youngsters have an interest in video while students at the high school have an interest in radio.

Locating a studio in the middle school could diversify access and if planned early could be integrated into the ed plan. It was stated that some Comcast Franchise funds were used in the high school studio. If similar funds were made available, the second studio could be accomplished through subscriber funds and not taxes. On January 1, 2021, current capital obligations in the contract agreement show \$238,000 available for this purpose.

There was discussion regarding the possibilities, benefits, limitations, and access issues in the proposal, including: whether the Comcast funds are for Carlisle as well; whether the fit within the likely building footprint is doable; how much space is required; there are potential conflicts in both school and community uses; while space and functionality seem appropriate, cost seems the central issue and the question is whether the current 5,000 subscribers should bear the costs of a community asset; it is currently difficult for the community to use the studio at the high school during the school day, why would we choose to do it again; there is probably a better retail space available; the community needs more ability to live stream events; fiber is very expensive; perhaps PEG funds should be used to correct access issues at CCHS rather than create the possibility of repeating them in a new site. Public access and security are the primary issues in the agreement between the School Committee and the Town regarding use of the CCHS studio. The Co-Chairs agreed to consider the PAAC proposal and express it to the sub-committee during the process of finetuning design.

COMCAST COMPLAINT

Judith Zaunbrecher of Border Rd. was present to alert the PAAC to a complaint that she has made to the Select Board and Comcast regarding the Comcast Basic Cable package. In her opinion, Comcast is facilitating the spread of disinformation by including the Fox News channels in the basic cable package. Ms. Zaunbrecher stated that as a subscriber to the basic package she is being forced to pay as much as \$20 per year to support the Fox News organization that she believes has propagated disinformation in the past several months that is detrimental to democracy and is endangering her and unreasonably interfering with her life. She has asked the Select Board what recourse the Town has and whether Comcast is in compliance with Article 2 Section 2.1 of the franchise agreement.

Court Booth expressed his thanks for bringing the matter forward. Vince Carlson stated that this is a hot topic, and that legal decisions have confirmed that freedom of the press applies to the internet. The First Amendment indicates that all political viewpoints may be expressed. Fake News is a totally new discussion. Karlen Reed stated that this would fit within the Committee consideration of *a la carte* cable pricing when engaging with Comcast negotiations. Ms. Zaunbrecher stated that she was not asking that Fox News be prevented from airing their views,

but that she be freed from financially supporting them by the fact of Comcast being the only cable carrier in Concord.

MMN UPDATE

Station Manager Phil Lupsiewicz updated the Committee on the services and activities of MMN in the past month. There have been governmental, civic, school sports activities. He stated that the Beede Swim Center could be set up to broadcast swim meets, but it is not ready at this time. MMN is currently able to live stream from remote locations such School Committee meetings and he is investigating alternate ways of providing service in the community with poor wi-fi. Mr. Carlson stated that he would circulate viewership materials and the platforms used. Matt Johnson commended the MMN team for their efforts regarding archived videos. He was able to make use of this in a Planning Board matter.

LIAISON REPORT AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Matt Johnson reiterated the tight financial situation and noted that the Town Manager may not be able to provide the new hiring that PAAC anticipates in the tight fiscal environment. Carole Cushing stated that she has been able to get the cooking programs listed in the COA Bulletin; this may help us learn how widespread local cable watching is. She noted that COA successfully hosted a drive through vaccine clinic for seniors.

David Allen of Heath's Bridge Rd. asked about the technology being used for archiving. Mr. Lupsiewicz summarized the situation. Many of the older broadcasts have not yet been digitized.

Frank Breen of Philip Farm Rd. noted that in an earlier meeting the Comcast Representative announced an offering of 1.2 terabytes of data for \$30/mo. This will begin in July.

ADJOURN

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED:	to adjourn the meeting and conclude business at 10:55 AM.
Court Booth	aye
Vince Carlson	aye
Ruth Lauer	aye
Karlen Reed	aye

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth C. Lauer, Clerk

Approved: March 11, 2021

MMN UPDATE

Liaison report &
public comment

Adjourn