

A meeting of the newly formed Cable Channels Utilization Committee of Upper Dublin Township was held in the Township Building on Wednesday, September 20, 2000; William Bryers presiding.

In attendance were Commissioners Bryers, Cassidy and Pesavento; Paul Leonard, Township Manager; Craig Pizer; Township Solicitor; Sue Lohoefer, Director of Parks and Recreation; Kathy Donnelly and Sue Waalkes, Upper Dublin School District; and Richard Conrad, General Manager of Adelpia Cable Company.

Mr. Bryers convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and asked those present to pledge allegiance to the flag.

Subjects discussed this evening included:

- Review of franchise obligations with Adelpia Cable for service drops and Channels 16 and 22.
- Summary regarding the current impact of Channel 16 messages.
- A brief discussion of the issues associated with its current use by staff.
- Discussion by staff and Comcast of current protocol and technical requirements of Channel 16.
- Discussion by Comcast of applications and use of similar channels in other townships.
- Discussion by Comcast of anticipated technology changes and how they may impact upon Upper Dublin Township.
- Establish future meetings for discussion and assignment information requests.

Mr. Bryers explained that the Cable Channels Utilization Committee was formed to determine whether or not Upper Dublin Township should make any changes on the government access Channel 16.

Mr. Pizer referred the Committee to Page 5, Section 7 – Access, of the Franchise Agreement between Adelpia Cable Company and Upper Dublin Township which reads as follows:

- (a) Adelpia will provide without charge one aerial drop of up to 200 ft. and, where appropriate, up to 5 outlets of full basic service without charge to the Upper Dublin Township Municipal Building, upon request, and up to 2 outlets of full basic service without charge to all public, private and parochial schools in Upper Dublin Township, upon request.

Underground drops and aerial drops in excess of 200 ft. shall be charged and paid for on a time and materials basis.

- (b) Grantee will provide technical advice and cooperate with the Township, provided it does not conflict with Grantee's other contractual obligations, to promote Educational and Government access programs. If the Township requests production assistance for programs carried on the government access channel, Grantee will make every effort to provide such assistance.

Mr. Pizer further informed that Section 8233, Sub-section A.2, of the Code sets forth that cable companies can provide local channels for government and educational uses only if they can be provided without taking anything away from the established cable stations.

Mr. Pesavento commented that the Township can make changes to the Ordinance itself as long as they are not substantive. At the present time, Upper Dublin uses Channel 16 for both Township and School District

messages. Due to the technical capacity of the system, it is better to have segregated channels – one for messages and one for video/audio programming.

Mr. Pizer was asked to study the Franchise Agreement and provide an answer as to whether the Township can make a change to the Ordinance if the Board of Commissioners deems necessary.

Mr. Bryers observed that the Franchise does not include colleges and universities, whereas the Ordinance does include them.

Mr. Conrad explained the purpose of the cable drops into most of the schools in the Township (except Philmont Christian Day School and New Horizons). Most of the programs are dedicated toward primary and secondary education and designed to be shown in the classroom. Teachers can obtain teaching guides for the shows from Adelpia Cable Company.

Mr. Bryers felt that the definition of a school (public, private and parochial) in the Agreement is vague. This issue will be dealt with at a future Committee meeting.

It was noted that the Code talks about a “public access channel,” while the Franchise Agreement does not. Adelpia Cable has three channels for public access, of which only two are being utilized. Channel 8 is still not being used.

Mr. Bryers felt that Channel 16 is overloaded because of the long wait for viewers to read through everything thereon.

Mr. Pesavento informed that senior citizens have complained of difficulty reading the messages due to the speed used. Ms. Donnelly interjected that the problem has been addressed, and the system is now more “reader friendly.”

Ms. Donnelly explained that the system is remotely operated and said it is impossible to put everything requested on Channel 16.

Mrs. Lohoefer provided a history of Channel 16 as follows:

A. History:

1. Early-mid-1980s to early mid-1990s: Ten years with step letter, 8 line/32 character, black and white program:
 - a. Equipment first housed in High School’s telecommunications center in Library.
 - b. Messages written on form and delivered to school staff to put on cable.
 - c. Late 1980s – character generator switched over to Township during summer months because no school staff available to change messages. Moved back in September.
 - d. District’s School/Community staff assigned to place messages on cable. No remote access.
 - e. Adelpia installed outgoing and incoming lines.

2. Early/mid 1990s: Township and District joint purchase of new hardware and software (\$1,500 each) to upgrade appearance of cable messages. PC is dedicated to cable messaging.
 - a. First software program failed.
 - b. Second software program, Shereff Systems, Inc. "Deputy CG" (DOS driven) purchased and installed through Adelpia Cable and Pro Video of Broomall.
 - c. "PC Anywhere" purchased by District to allow their staff to have remote access (send messages from off-site location).
 - d. District installed and paid for dedicated phone line used to transmit from a remote location.

2. Current – Late 1990s: Township's computer system network is upgraded:
 - a. All hardware and equipment is housed in the Parks and Recreation Director's office.
 - b. New work station is dedicated to cable system, but added to Township network.
 - c. MicroSoft Power Point and Correll Gallery (1 million clip art images) are installed for use as the new messaging software.
 - d. Various Township and District staff trained in Power Point at a workshop.
 - e. Various Parks and Recreation workstations connected to the cable work station so changes to messages can be made off-line and then incorporated by macro.
 - f. "PC Anywhere" continues to connect District staff to the system from off-site locations.
 - g. FoxPro software allows a continuous loop ticker to run across the bottom of the screen to advertise specific information (emergencies or events).
 - h. A VCR and associated software are connected to the system to allow for broadcast of videotaped events and meetings.
 - i. The Township's main meeting room is equipped to broadcast live. Live events are taped.
 - j. Camera and tripod available for sports groups, etc.

B. Policies for Use - access to site – messages must be submitted in writing. Can be faxed, mailed, e-mailed or dropped off (Upper Dublin Parks and Recreation Department (UDP&R) or as directed by the School District). Editorial prerogative is exercised over content and appearance:

1. Upper Dublin Township.
2. School District of Upper Dublin.
3. Community agencies and organizations providing activities, services and opportunities available to the general Upper Dublin population.
4. NOTE: Those who do not qualify for UDTV Channel 16 are directed to Adelpia Cable for placement on local access stations.

C. Staff:

1. Township – Four Parks and Recreation staff members are trained in Power Point and operating the system. Four UDP&R work stations are connected to "prcable" in the network.
 - a. Keeping the messaging system updated is prime responsibility of UDP&R administrative assistant.
 - b. Liaison to Adelpia Cable and the School District is Susan Lohoefer, UDP&R Director.
 - c. Tammy Echevarri and Karen Hegedus also create and edit messages.
 - d. The Township slide show is updated weekly at a minimum.

- e. Combined, a minimum of 10 hours of staff time is dedicated to the cable system each month.
2. School District – Kathy Donnelly, School/Community Relations Coordinator, has full responsibility for school messages.
 3. Problems with the messaging system (occurring weekly: Loop kicks out to reboot, incomplete reboot; problem switching from tape to messages; freeze, bad pc Anywhere connection) are diagnosed and addressed by either David Fazio, Township Systems Administrator (if a network problem) or by Peter or Paul Blood (if a software problem).
 - Bright colors continue to be a problem. Adelphia cannot modulate color and maintain proper sound balance.
 - Homes without fiber optic cable do not receive a clear image on the Channel 16 screen.
 4. Problems with the live broadcasts (sound levels, buzz, colors) are diagnosed and addressed by Adelphia Cable.

D. Organization of Slides (recently revised):

1. Continuous loop.
2. "Welcome" message followed by Adelphia digital cable radio (background music; set to easy listening), acknowledgment message followed by Township, community, and School District messages.
3. No more than 100 slides will run at one time (50 slides per side).
4. Slides will average 8-10 seconds each which equates to a maximum 15 minute slide show.
5. Township slides are organized as follows:
 - a. General – Board of Commissioners' list, meetings, general information, administrative announcements, community health concerns.
 - b. Public Works – Holidays, yard waste pickup, leaf pickup schedule, street closings, snow messages.
 - c. Emergency Services – Police, fire, ambulance related messages.
 - d. Parks and Recreation – Registration, special events, tickets only, trips and tours, programs.
 - e. Library – Hours, special events, programs.
 - f. Community – Most active users are Youth Sports Organizations (soccer, baseball, softball, t-ball, basketball, ice hockey, football, lacrosse, swimming); Ambler Symphony; Red Cross bloodmobiles, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association; Community Day; Community 2000; Maple Glen Block Party; Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce; Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts; North Hills Health Center; Senior Adult –Upper Dublin Center (SAUDC); Fort Washington Office Park Advisory Council; community awards and recognition; Ambler area YMCA; various "-a-thons;" Montgomery County Waste System Authority; Montgomery County Health Department; LINK; PSU Cooperative Extension).
6. School District slides are limited to announcements, meetings, activities and events associated with specific schools or groups associated with the public schools.

7. Emergencies:

- a. School closings, late arrivals, early dismissals – emergency band runs across the bottom of the screen. Other messages continue to run.
- b. Declared snow emergencies, road closings, flooded areas – emergency bank runs across the bottom of the screen. Other messages continue to run.
- c. In extreme emergencies, all but specific emergency slides can be disabled so emergency slides dominate the loop.

D. Live and Taped Broadcasts – any live or taped broadcast interrupts cable messages:

1. Township Board of Commissioners' Stated, Subcommittee and Special meetings (as advertised) are shown live.
2. School District Board meetings are taped and then delay broadcast several days later.
3. PSI videos are run periodically (high water warning; fire prevention).
4. Upper Dublin High School football games, concerts, etc. are taped and then delay broadcast at a later date.
5. Upper Dublin School District student-produced class project videos are taped and then delay broadcast at a later date.
6. Upper Dublin Soccer Club videos – travel games, special games, coaching videos.

Ms. Donnelly complained that when Ms Lohoefer is absent or Township offices are closed, there is no way to access her office to fix problems with the system.

Mr. Pesavento suggested adding an enclosed area to the rear of the main meeting room to house all of the equipment associated with broadcasting.

Mr. Leonard observed that the proposed demolition schedule will force the removal of the equipment from Ms. Lohoefer's office.

As an alternative for people who do not qualify for Channel 16, Mr. Leonard suggested that they advertise on Channel 8 which is broadcast to the entire viewership.

Paul Leonard complimented Sue Lohoefer, Kathy Donnelly, Peter Blood and Adelpia Cable for their diligence in making the program a success. The introduction of broadcasting was a huge accomplishment on a "shoe-string" budget. Through the donations of Mr. Blood, the main meeting room has been equipped with a TV camera. In addition, Mr. Blood handles all software problems. The overall quality of the program has been good due to the dedication of many people.

Mr. Conrad commented that Upper Dublin Township has the reputation in many communities for doing a tremendous job with the channel.

It was noted that Channel 16 does not operate under a clearly defined policy as to what programming will be shown. Political advertising, however, has not been permitted at any time. There has also not been a line item allocated in either the School District's or the Commissioner's budget. Mr. Leonard suggested that one or both

of the entities must commit to paying for upgrades, etc. Thousands of dollars have already been spent for the sound system.

In 1999, the Board of Commissioners offered the School Board the opportunity to hold their meetings in the Township Building and make use of the television equipment. However, Dr. Brown indicated he wanted all School District meetings to originate from the High School. The resolution was a meeting between Peter Blood and Dr. Brown. The decision was made to broadcast from the Maple Glen Elementary School. An estimated 12,000 ft. of fibre optics were installed in that facility.

Because all three of the people currently involved with this program have their time filled up by their regular jobs, Mr. Pesavento suggested a part-time person be hired who would be in charge of web development and media.

With the advent of new technology, Mr. Conrad said the only effective way to maintain service is a point-to-point fibre option feed.

If there are changes to be made in the system, Mr. Bryers asked what the Township needs to be looking ahead into the future? Mr. Conrad stated that Adelfphia can do anything the Township wants, cost permitting. It is possible to show live meetings on one channel and messages on the other. In his opinion, analog for basic service is the way to go for Upper Dublin. He informed that 7,167 households in the Township are current subscribers to cable service.

Ms. Lohoefer commented that the demand to show school videos, soccer videos, etc. falls on Peter Blood. Sunday nights have been determined as the best time to run same. Mr. Blood has suggested the purchase of a bank of VCRs that can be programmed to be played back-to-back.

Ms. Donnelly submitted her "wish list" to the Committee and stated that if the School District had its own broadcast channel, the school children could help out. She stated that 82% of the homes in Upper Dublin Township have school age children.

Mr. Leonard was asked to ascertain from other communities whether they permit private schools to advertise on the government/school channel, and how they coordinate same. Mr. Leonard will also ask about protocols.

Mr. Conrad explained that private schools draw their children from other townships. Numbers would be very limited.

Mr. Pesavento opined that a consultant should be hired at some point.

Mr. Leonard said that the Township has a vision that there will be space for a multi-media meeting room sometime in the future.

Susan Waalkes, Director of Technology for the School District, said it is time to fund some type of video curriculum in the High School. She would like portable equipment to be used by the students on a daily basis. She has started a video club after school hours to keep the interest up among students. In addition, she has created digital medial I and II classes. However, they are limited because of the lack of video equipment. The idea of being able to produce videos and have them seen by an audience is really an incentive for the students.

When Mr. Bryers asked about the costs involved to expand into the educational channel, Mr. Conrad replied that it depends on what is required. Adelpia would be willing to absorb the \$7,000-\$10,000 set up fee. Any end-use equipment would be the responsibility of the School District or the Township.

Mr. Cassidy asked who would ultimately be responsible for the content of the educational channel? Mr. Pizer answered that scheduling and programming would be under the authority of the School District. The Township channel would be managed exclusively by Township staff.

Mr. Leonard suggested that announcements could be "flipped" between the two channels. He stressed the need of separating out decision-making. Committees should be formed.

Mrs. Lohoefer commented that the only down-side to splitting the channels is that viewers will never get messages 24 hours a day as is the present case. The plus side is that messages will be seen more frequently in the loop. A banner could be run stating that certain videos are being shown on the other channel. It would be a daily responsibility to update the messages.

Mr. Pesavento suggested devising a way of taking the feed and putting it on the web, but does not know how it would be done technically.

Mr. Bryers asked the three ladies to draw up a written report about the pros and cons of splitting the information between two channels.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Pesavento motioned, with Mr. Bryers seconding, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

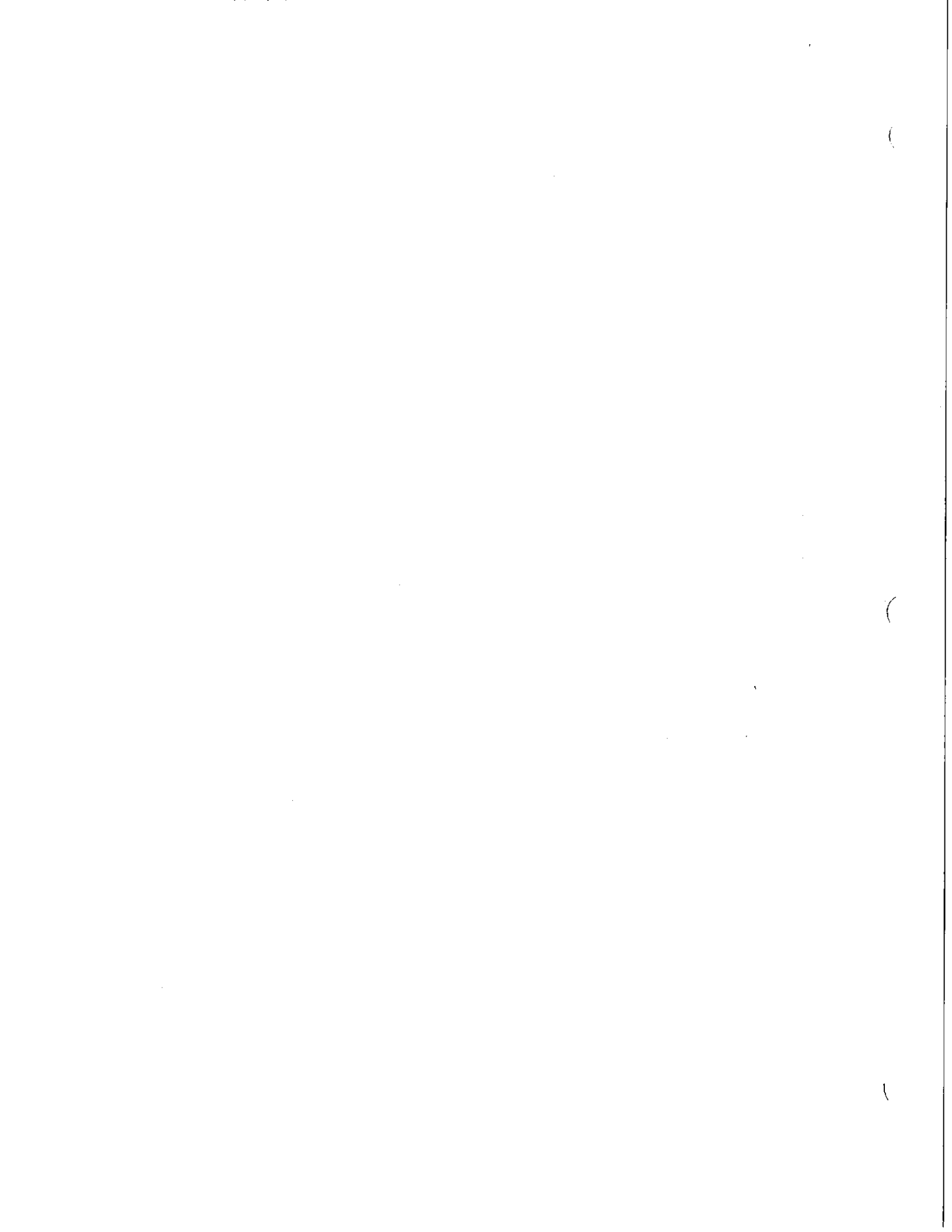
VOTE ON MOTION ALL YES MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Louise S. Birett
Louise S. Birett, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

William Bryers
William Bryers, Chairperson



A meeting of the Cable Channel Utilization Review Committee was held at the township building on October 25, 2000, William J. Bryers presiding.

In attendance were Commissioners Michael W. Cassidy and Robert Pesavento, Kathy Donnelly, Upper Dublin School District, Peter Blood, Paul Leonard, Township Manager, Susan Lohoefer, Director of Parks and Recreation, Franco DiAngeli and Ed Sickles.

Mrs. Donnelly advised that a cable utilization questionnaire was sent with the school district's "Cardinal Notes." She reported that she made contact with four PA school districts and townships that are within one municipality. Each one operates two different cable stations; one solely for school district use and one solely for township use.

Mrs. Lohoefer reported that a contact was made with Tom Quinn of the Centennial School District. He advised that they are currently looking to upgrade to digital as he feels it: provides higher quality video; allows for better production by students; provides students with experience; allows for easier use and editing and the price has come down. Mr. Quinn advised he would be happy to come out and look at our current set up.

Mr. Sickles advised that CNN has a Students Bureau and may be willing to spend some money on a digital update. He also advised that Adelphia (who will be Comcast shortly) currently has a Governmental Affairs Staff member available for consultation.

Mr. Blood reported on his Radnor investigation – wonderful, but expense program. He also advised that Radnor is unique inasmuch as Adelphia provided all the equipment, personnel and studio.

Mr. Leonard said that buildovers might be coming and issue is to whether to invest in resources and equipment. Our system can be put together with good results.

Mrs. Donnelly suggested including a survey in the P&R Brochure asking if there was any interest in two separate dedicated channels (one for the township and one for the school district.)

Mr. Leonard reported that he felt that a dedicated cable committee would be needed, as decisions have to be made regarding Channels 16 & 22, including investments in equipment, content, etc.

Mr. Blood feels that broadcasting is much better and his vision includes Channel 22 as a pure video with community messages (to include school and township) in one place. His vision also includes the high school video club reforming and becoming more involved. He also suggested moving our current equipment to the Main Meeting Room. Peter also suggested that since our website also needs constant updating, perhaps future-staffing plans should include a technology coordinator.

Mr. Leonard stated since we are very interested in long term quality issues that \$10,000 be budgeted for a media consultant (costs to be matched by the School District.)

Mr. Pesavento suggested regularly scheduled times for township and school district messages.

Suggestions from Mr. Leonard included a Cable Advisory Board, working under the authority of the Board of Commissioners and Mr. Bryers stated that we need to get out solicitor's advice on using channels 16 (for the township) and 22(for the school district.)

Mr. Leonard advised that we would be happy to provide staffing and budget figures if we: do nothing; have Channel 16 for the township and Channel 22 for the school district or have Channel 16 for messages and Channel 22 for video. This, of course, is keeping in mind that it is the Board of Commissioners decision to bring in Channel 22.

Questions include: can ordinances and franchise agreements be changed to define schools; can franchise agreement be changed to add Channel 22.

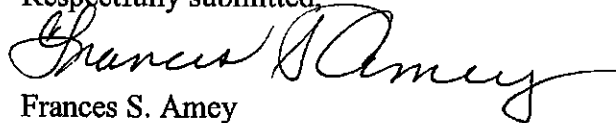
Mr. Sickles suggested that we look into the Pottstown set up. In addition, Bill Bryers suggested the preparation of an RFQ for a consultant.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 13, 2000 at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

Mr., Pesavento motioned, with Mr. Bryers seconding to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Frances S. Amey
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:



William Bryers, Chairperson