

**AUSTIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
RETREAT – NOVEMBER 10, 2004
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/telcommission/>**

MINUTES

1. Call to order

Commission Chair Wendell Ramsey called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.
Commissioners in attendance were Wendell Ramsey, Chad Williams, Chip Rosenthal, Deborah Hill, John Green, and Jim Howerton.
Staff in attendance was Rondella Hawkins and Jane Reina.

2. Adoption of agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda was made by Commissioner Rosenthal; seconded by Commissioner Howerton. Vote 4-0. (Commissioner Hill and Williams arrived late)

3. Discussion and possible action of the following:

- a. Review the accomplishments of the Austin Telecommunications Commission Workplan for FY 2003-2004.

Motion to accept the accomplishments of the Austin Telecommunications Commission Workplan for FY 2003-04 as discussed was made by Commissioner Rosenthal; seconded by Commissioner Green. (Commissioner Hill off the dais).

2003-2004 Workplan accomplishments:

- Held joint meeting with the Austin Music Commission to discuss, hear feedback from public and make recommendations to the Council Committee for Telecommunications Infrastructure on the operation of local music and cultural arts channel by Austin Community Access Center in conjunction with Austin Music Network.
- Held joint meeting with the Austin Music Commission to discuss, hear feedback from public and make recommendations to the Council Committee for Telecommunications Infrastructure on the operation of the Austin Music Network by private partnership (Austin Music Partners).
- Continue to support and participate in South By Southwest.
- Continue to support initiative on wireless hotspot mapping.
- Publicized and supported Republic Square Park going wireless.
- Presentation from River City Youth Foundation.
- Presentation on City of Austin's Economic Development by Jim Butler.
- Visited IC**2 digital Media Collaboratory.
- Update from Hannah Gourgey on Community Technology Training Center Program.
- Budget recommendation to Council on \$90,000 for GTOPs 2004.
- Provide content on the City of Austin's Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs River City Tech News webzine.

- Presentation on plans for deploying wireless Internet access in city parks from Jay Stone.
 - Discussion on recommendation to the Council Committee for Telecommunications Infrastructure on policies encouraging development of wireless industry.
 - Presentation on study of Austin's WiFi landscape from UT Telecommunications & Policy Institute.
 - Reviewed and approved changes to GTOPs application recommended by 2004 GTOPs Task Force.
 - Monthly GTOPs updates from staff.
 - Assisted in recruiting GTOPs reviewers.
 - Tour of Combined Transportation & Emergency Communications Center.
 - Joint meeting with the Austin Music Commission.
 - Reviewed and made recommendations to the ACAC public access producer's fees policy.
- b. Develop the Austin Telecommunications Commission Workplan for FY 2004-2005.

After some discussion the Commission will come to their December regular meeting and vote to accept their workplan for FY 2004-2005.

Workplan items suggestions:

- Expand the terminology for support of digital media (IC2 – training opportunities)
- Revisit digital divide issues (wired to wireless opportunities)
- Digital arts spotlight (colleges/university); partner with “Austin Now” for more visibility; Promoting specific projects: get city to submit all boards agenda to local papers (Statesman, Chronicle, NOKOA, Villager, La Prensa, wireless) – city's public information office (what's required to get stuff posted); More public viewing of what we do (ACC, City of Austin, ACTV, Channel 8, internet web casting, Travis County).
- Provide quarterly list of feedback at infrastructure committee meeting with Time Warner Cable, Grande Communications public hearing
- Community outreach and education forums – town hall meeting (HDTV, wireless, voice over internet) – Time Warner Cable, Grande Communications, Verizon, SBC, user groups
- Requesting expanded usage of the City's Public Information Office to inform about all boards & commission meetings (to local print media); http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/agenda/boards_comms.htm
- Austin Energy BPL (Broadband over power lines), wimax
- Continue to enhance community networks and community technology centers.
- Continue to assess the GTOPs program and review ways to sustain and improve the program
- Review other city models; sponsor public hearings; work with staff to possibly revise the contract; provide education on new process

- Add film as technology being worked; digital media => workforce development and training opportunities (Hill/Howerton)
 - What's required to get free wireless at convention center (world conference will provide hot spots – but will they be free?); parks access is nice, but what about business connections?
 - Media archiving process requires additional review; history center now has digital images center from Austin Music Network on loan for digitizing (future process of digitization)
 - Technology museum should be revisited as well as the Community Technology Centers; Revisit/review the latest Seaholm projects and consider projects for usage of the Holly Power Plant after decommission.
- c. Policy recommendations on ways the City of Austin can support the development of the wireless industry. (workplan item 3)

Commissioner Rosenthal stated that there are three actions the Commission is putting forth in this recommendation and they are:

- What the City can do in terms of reviewing the permitting process, infrastructure, and access.
- Resource mapping issue.
- Technology Incubator.

Commission Rosenthal made a friendly amendment to broaden the scope of his draft resolution to include vocational issues referred to in Commissioner Williams draft resolution; seconded by Commissioner Green.

Rondella Hawkins, Manager of the City of Austin's Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs, stated that she envisioned what the Council Committee is looking for is action orientated detailed policy recommendations for how the City of Austin can promote, support and develop the wireless industry. The City needs a master plan. Perhaps there is a way of exploring the feasibility of using the City's INet for a wireless application.

Motion to table the WiFi resolution with said changes until the December 2004 regular meeting of the Austin Telecommunications Commission was made by Commissioner Hill; seconded by Commissioner Howerton. Vote 5-0. (Commissioner Green left meeting early).

Draft resolution with changes:

WHEREAS, The City of Austin strives to be a leading community in the use and development of emerging technologies; and

WHEREAS city and local leaders continue to ensure that public access to wireless sites continues to expand; and

WHEREAS small and medium size businesses that offer a range of wireless services and products continue to grow in Austin, Texas; and

WHEREAS, wireless communication technologies, such as Wi-Fi, Wi-Max, and other wireless metropolitan area network technologies, offer significant economic and social benefits to our community; and

WHEREAS, national surveys consistently identify the Austin metropolitan area as one of the leading *unwired* communities in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has processes for entities to acquire permits for infrastructure such as roof top access and mounting equipment to provide wireless access, and the City possesses property that may be useful for hosting such wireless infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, new wireless technologies offer new opportunities to bridge the digital divide with high-speed broadband connections, which may be provided with overhead and costs much less than existing, conventional technologies; and

WHEREAS, a skilled workforce is necessary to develop a robust wireless communications product and services; and

WHEREAS, the incubator model has been demonstrated as a successful way to encourage the commercial development of new technologies, and the City has had previous success in facilitating these endeavors,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE AUSTIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION:

To recommend that the Austin City Council initiate a review of the City permit processes and properties and identify ways in which the City can facilitate the development of a robust wireless infrastructure; and be it further

RESOLVED, to recommend that the Austin City Council should initiate a survey to determine how our community uses existing technologies such as conventional, wired broadband Internet access, to map the current utilization of these technologies, to quantify the impact of the *digital divide* on our community, and to identify opportunities that may be served by new wireless technologies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Telecommunication Infrastructure Committee should promote/support the training of wireless installation, troubleshooting, and technical support skills through the CTTC sites.

RESOLVED, to recommend that the Austin City Council should direct the City to join with other organizations in our community, and offer support and resources toward the enhancement of wireless technology incubator opportunities.

- d. Austin Telecommunications Commission name change.

Tabled

- e. Participation with Austin Community Access Center Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. (Ramsey)

Henry Calderon, Austin Community Access Center (ACAC) Board Member, stated that Amy Mok would chair the ACAC Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. This committee will have a representative from Austin Music Commission, Austin Telecommunications Commission and a representative from the Producers Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Williams volunteered to represent the Austin Telecommunication Commission at the ACAC board meetings and the ACAC Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.

4. Council Committee for Telecommunications Infrastructure report. (Ramsey)

At the October 10, 2004 Council Committee for Telecommunications Infrastructure meeting Commissioner Ramsey reported that the Austin Telecommunications Commission (ATC) officers for the next fiscal year are Wendell Ramsey, Chair; Chad Williams, Vice-Chair; and Chip Rosenthal, Parliamentarian.

Future work session planned to discuss the 2005 Request for Proposals for public access television management services.

ATC toured the University of Texas IC2 Institute's Digital Media Collaboratory earlier this month. They met with representatives and discussed how the technologies behind gaming media are keyed towards better training tools in multiple disciplines. This discussion also addressed whether there are access issues to these digital opportunities (who doesn't have access via dial up, cable, or wireless?).

Thanks to the Austin City Council for the allocation of \$90,000 for the fifth year of the Grant for Technology Opportunities (GTOPs) program. Applications and information are available on-line at www.ctiaustin.org/gtops/application. Reviewers will be needed. The Review Board application is available at the same web address as the applications.

At the Commission's Retreat planned for Nov. 10, 2004 they will discuss the coming year's work plan, which includes future discussion topics/speakers under consideration. The Austin History Museum's archiving. Austin Energy's thoughts on Broadband over Power Lines and Wi-Max. Revisit liaisons to other boards and commissions (i.e., ACAC Board, Music Commission)

Commissioner Ramsey reported that he attended the Nov. 1st Music Commission meeting where Henry Calderon, ACAC Board member requested participation of Music Commission on an ad hoc committee for producers.

5. Future agenda items for the Austin Telecommunications Commission regular meeting scheduled for December 8, 2004.

Speakers/Topics for Upcoming Commission meetings. (Ramsey) (workplan item 5)

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.