

Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission  
September 12, 2007 - Regular Meeting  
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/telcommission>

Minutes

***This is a summary of the activities at this meeting. To view the full meeting on DVD you can go to the Austin History Center, 810 Guadalupe Street, Austin, TX, Phone 974-7480.***

All items are for discussion and possible action:

1. Call to order.

Commission Chair Chad Williams called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Commissioners in attendance were Chad Williams, Chip Rosenthal, Wendell Ramsey, John Green, Pilar Sanchez and Lemuel Williams. Commissioners Jim Howerton, Arthur Sampson and Kedron Touvell were absent.

Staff in attendance was Sheena Harden, Terry Dyke and Jane Reina.

2. Adoption of agenda.

**Motion to adopt the agenda was made by Commissioner Rosenthal; seconded by Commissioner Ramsey. Vote 6-0. (Commissioner's Howerton, Sampson and Touvell absent)**

3. General citizen communications. (3 minutes to speak)

Nick Papatonis stated President Bush is in the war for his own financial gain and to vote for Ms. Clinton for President. He also stated he is streaming a TV station from his apartment. He has a second streaming site for Austin Public Access shows.

Sue Ann Campbell stated positive changes to Public Access Community Television can't happen unless there are some changes in the way the studios are being managed. The producers are not being treated equal.

4. Approval of minutes from the August 8, 2007 Commission regular meeting.

**Motion to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2007 Commission regular meeting was made by Commissioner Rosenthal; seconded by Commissioner Green. Vote 6-0. (Commissioner's Howerton, Sampson and Touvell absent)**

5. Austin Free-Net update.

Dale Thompson, Austin Free-Net (AFN) Financial Consultant, reported on their community computer labs and public access, Tech support & training for nonprofits, their efforts for disaster response and their needs in order to function in the capacity they would like. You can get more information on Austin Free-Net at [www.austinfreenet.net](http://www.austinfreenet.net) or contact them at 512/236-8225.

Ms. Thompson also stated they are in search of people to fill some AFN Board member positions.

6. Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs (TARA) Office Report.

Commissioner Chad Williams read a letter proved by the TARA office which stated that the FCC ruled effective competition in Austin and consequently removed the City's right to regulate Basic cable rates. Time Warner has notified the City of a scheduled rate increase.

7. Grant for Technology Opportunities Program. (GTOPs)

a. Update on current GTOPs grant programs. (Sheena Harden)(wp2)

Sheena Harden, Program Coordinator for TARA, reported that the City has approved \$150,000 for 08 grant budget cycle.

River City Youth Foundation just completed their 2006 grant and exceeded all their expectations.

TARA is about to complete Girlstart's GTOPs audit and are getting ready to conduct a GTOPs audit on BIG Austin and American Youthworks.

b. Possible resolution on recommendations from the 2007-08 GTOPs Task Force. (wp2)

GTOPs Vision Statement reads:

"A community where all citizens have access to the facilities and the necessary skills to participate in an emerging digital society."

GTOPs Mission Statement now reads:

"To provide matching grant funds to Austin organizations for projects that create digital opportunities and foster digital inclusion."

Timeline for 2007-2008 GTOPs is:

October 20 - Pre-Application Meeting & Grant Writing Seminar

November 7 - Review Board Applications Due

November 14 - Commission Regular Meeting, Appoint Review Board

December 4 - GTOPs applications due

December 7 - Review Board Orientation

January 18 - Oral Presentations

January 22 - Review Board Final Deliberation

January 30 - Commission Special Called Meeting

Sheena Harden, Program Coordinator for TARA, gave an overview with a PowerPoint presentation of the recommended changes from the 2007-08 GTOPs Task Force.

**Motion to approve the GTOPs Task Force recommended changes to the 2008 GTOPs process was made by Commissioner Ramsey; seconded by Commissioner Rosenthal. Vote 5-0. (Commissioner's Howerton, Sampson and**

**Touvell were absent. Commissioner Green left before the Commission took action on this item.)**

8. Public Access Community Television (PACT) contract review and extension.

Terry Dyke, Research Analyst Senior for TARA, provided the Commission with a copy of the annual review of PACT and the PACT 2007 Annual Producers' Satisfaction Survey. He reported that September 30th of this year marks the end of the first two-year term of the PACT contract. On the whole, PACT's performance has been very satisfactory, and the contract is expected to be renewed. The City will soon complete a financial and management audit of PACT, and based in part on the findings and recommendations of the draft audit, expects to initiate adjustments to some of the terms of the renewed contract.

Nick Papatonis requested the City talk with all the public access producers when PACT management is not present. He also stated that his shows are running more and that is an improvement from the last public access managers. He asked where is the 1.8 million dollars Time Warner is suppose to give public access TV for new equipment? He would like to see a grievance process at PACT and producers sitting on the PACT Board of Directors.

Stefan Wray stated the needs to be a holistic analysis and a holistic view to review and analyze what is going on at PACT.

Rodney Cole stated he appreciates the learning experience from the professionals at PACT. He became a producer in April 2007. Some of the problems he is hearing of are with old equipment and some problems are with personalities and believes that they can be worked out. Staff is being cooperative and professional. He would like to see new equipment.

Garry Wilkison stated that their problem at PACT is the facility. The building is still in serious disrepair.

Sue Ann Campbell stated there needs to be amendments to the PACT contract that allow for oversight, accountability and more producer input on how producers will be served regardless of who gets the contract.

Commissioner Ramsey moved that Chair Williams provide a letter of support on behalf of the Commission to support staff recommendation to extend the PACT contract while also stipulating actions needed to assist in conflict resolution and would cause findings as well as clarifying follow-up and feed back procedures process with all producers; seconded by Commissioner Sanchez.

Commissioner Rosenthal offered a friendly amendment. He stated as part of the review cycle he would like to take a look at the utility cost of the PACT facility.

Commissioner Ramsey accepted the friendly amendment.

After the friendly amendment the motion read:

**Commissioner Ramsey moved that Commission Chair Williams provide a letter of support on behalf of the Commission to support the extension of the Public Access Community Television (PACT) contract while also stipulating actions needed to**

assist in conflict resolution and would cause findings as well as clarifying follow-up and feed back procedures processes with all producers and requesting a review of the city's policy of making PACT financially responsible for the monthly utility costs of the city-owned building at 1143 Northwestern Avenue (the public access studios building); seconded by Commissioner Sanchez. Vote 5-0. (Commissioner's Howerton, Sampson and Touvell were absent. Commissioner Green left before the Commission took action on this item.)

9. Technology Ascertainment Study Task Force and Possible Co-sponsoring Partners update. (Howerton) (wp1)

Postponed until this Commission's October 2007 meeting.

10. Discussion on potential topics for a City of Austin "Community Forum 2007". (wp4)

Postponed until this Commission's October 2007 meeting.

11. Task Force on SXSW Interactive update and possible Commission resolution. (Rosenthal) (wp4)

The Task Force on SXSW Interactive consists of Commissioners Rosenthal, Ramsey, Howerton and Touvell.

**Motion to accept a resolution in support of the South by Southwest Interactive Festival was made by Commissioner Rosenthal; seconded by Commissioner Ramsey. Vote 5-0. (Commissioner's Howerton, Sampson and Touvell were absent. Commissioner Green left before the Commission took action on this item.) The Resolution reads as follows:**

**WHEREAS** South by Southwest (SXSW) Interactive festival is an annual event held in Austin that celebrates the creativity and passion behind the latest in new media technologies; and

**WHEREAS** the most recent SXSW Interactive held in March 2007 was the largest and most successful with over 100 keynote speakers and 6,400 badges issued; and

**WHEREAS** SXSW Interactive brings international attention to Austin and showcases our dynamic digital culture and the citizens who create it; and

**WHEREAS** SXSW Interactive provides a venue that brings together the interests and concerns of those who are creative and socially concerned; and

**WHEREAS** SXSW Interactive has actively supported local community technology efforts, with programs such as the Dewey Winburne Community Service Award; and

**WHEREAS** anticipated continued growth of SXSW Interactive presents some significant challenges both to the festival organizers and the host city;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE AUSTIN COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION;**

To congratulate the producers, volunteers, and community supporters of SXSW 2007 for their success and contributions to the City of Austin;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission recommends that the City of Austin and the Austin Convention Center management work closely with SXSW Interactive organizers to ensure the support necessary for the success of this growing event, especially in the area of wireless network access and other technology infrastructure;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission recommends that the organizers of SXSW Interactive work with community groups to provide additional programming in support of community technology initiatives.

12. Update reports on networking relationships with other boards/commissions and groups, citywide and Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission information items. (wp4)

Commissioner Chair Williams reported that in his report to the Emerging Tech Council Sub-Committee he reported on this Commission's budget resolutions and the resolution on Time Warner's capital equipment fund and request of the 1.4 million dollars for PACT and Channel 6 needs as well as potential funding revenue source for PACT and the mobile production vehicle.

13. Future agenda items for the Austin Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission regular meeting scheduled for October 10, 2007.
- Technology Ascertainment Study Task Force and Possible Co-sponsoring Partners update. (Howerton) (wp1)
  - Discussion on potential topics for a City of Austin "Community Forum 2007". (wp4)
  - Election of Officers for FY 07-08 for the Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission.
  - Update on Broadband Over Power Lines project, City Wireless Mesh and City website. (Pete Collins) (wp1)
  - Council Committee for Emerging Technology and Telecommunications report. (Chair Williams)
  - Presentation from Maker Fair on their 2 day event.

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

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