



Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission
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Regular Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

The Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 301 W. 2nd Street, Austin, TX, City Hall, Room 1101.

1. Call to order – February 11, 2009 – 6:35 p.m.

Commissioner members in attendance:

Chip Rosenthal
Jim Howerton
Wendell Ramsey
Arthur Sampson
Kedron Touvell
Lemuel Williams Jr.
Randall Kolb

City staff in attendance:

Rondella Hawkins
Sheena Harden
Jane Reina

2. Adoption of agenda.

The agenda was adopted on a 7-0-0 vote of the Commission.

3. Citizen Communication: General

The first 10 speakers signed up prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

Nick Papatonis presented a video and stated that the current public access managers were extorting money from public access producers and it has been reported to the policy. Mr. Papatonis provided a copy of his current grievance toward channelAustin, submitted to channelAustin 2/5/09.

Sue Ann Campbell stated that since the Commission is now tracking public access grievances the producers will also turn in their grievances to the Commission. She presented the Commission with a list called "Toward a Better Public Access Television Station". She also stated the producer elections will be soon.

4. Approval of minutes – January 14, 2009 Commission regular meeting.

The minutes from the regular meeting of January 14, 2009 were approved on Commissioner Howerton's motion; Commissioner Kolb's second on a 7-0-0 vote.

5. Invited Presentations

- a. Austin Free-Net update. (Dale Thompson)(wp5)

Dale Thompson, Financial Manager and Acting Executive Director, Austin Free-Net (AFN), reported that AFN provides community computer labs in low income neighborhoods and some tech support for other non-profits. She presented a PowerPoint of the recent activities of AFN which included a survey of their computer lab users. www.austinfreenet.net .

- b. Presentation on The HeliOS Project. (Ken Starks)(wp9)

Ken Starks, Founding Director and President of The HeliOS Project stated their mission is "A child's exposure to technology should never be predicated on an ability to pay for it". He presented a PowerPoint presentation which included, what is the Helios Project, project history, obstacles, what is Linux, why Linux, and the difference between Linux and Windows. For more information on this project go to www.heliosinitiative.org .

6. Staff Briefings

- a. Legislative, Regulatory and Policy update. (Rondella Hawkins)(wp7)

Rondella Hawkins, Manager, City of Austin, Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs, reported that Michael Copps has been appointed as Acting Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission.

She also reported that there is a petition for declaratory ruling. The petition is asking the FCC to declare that AT&T be required to treat PEG channels the same as other basic services tier channels by providing separate and discrete channels for each of the City's PEG channel with functionality and accessibility not less than that of other basic service tier channels. The petition also asked the FCC to declare that FCC rules require AT&T's PEG Product to pass through closed-captioning contained in PEG programming to subscribers.

She also reported that on February 4th, Congress passed the DTV Delay Act, which moves the DTV transition deadline from its original date of February 17 to June 12, 2009. About one-third of the stations nationwide have notified the FCC that they will still be converting by February 17.

- b. Public Access Television update. (Rondella Hawkins)(wp1)

Rondella Hawkins, Manager, City of Austin, Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs (TARA), reported that Time Warner has issued a purchase order to equipment vendor for public access TV equipment.

The TARA office is scheduling a meeting with Building Services on the roofing project for status, update and coordination.

channelAustin provided a chart to the Commission on the monthly activity of general violations and grievances filed by producers with channelAustin. This chart will be provided monthly to this Commission.

- c. Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) report. (Sheena Harden)(wp2)

Sheena Harden, City of Austin, Program Coordinator, requested Commissioner Rosenthal to present the GTOPs Review Committee with certificates, she provide, of appreciation from the City of Austin.

Ms Harden also reported that Knowbilty and SkillPoint Alliance 2008 GTOPs contracts ended in January. SkillPoint will extend their contract for another 2 months so they can full fill their obligations. TARA staff will be auditing Knowbilty's contract in the next few weeks.

7. Old Business

DTV Transition Task Force update. (Touvell)(wp4,6)

Commissioner Touvell stated that instead of this very complex confusing system of everyone switching to digital on February 17m 2009 we now have this very simple situation were everybody switched when ever they want to. This will help us in our efforts to help the community with the transition to digital.

8. New Business

- a. Discussion and possible action on 2009 GTOPs grant recommendations. (Sheena Harden)(wp2)

Ms. Harden stated there were 27 GTOPs applications this year.

Motion to accept the Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) Review Committee's 2009 GTOPs recommendations as follows: Austin Children's Shelter awarded \$15,000.; Austin Film Society awarded \$13,300.; Austin Group for the Elderly awarded \$5,400.; Austin Partners in Education awarded \$22,500.; Easter Seals Central Texas awarded \$24,800.; El Buen Samaritano awarded \$22,500.; Goodwill Industries of Central Texas awarded \$20,400.; Heart House of Austin awarded \$ 14,100. and Knowbility awarded \$12,000 was approved on Commissioner Ramey's motion, Commissioner Williams' second on a 6-1-0 vote. Commissioners voting aye were Chip Rosenthal, Jim Howerton, Wendell Ramsey, Kedron Touvell, Lemuel Williams Jr., and Randall Kolb. Commissioners voting nay were: Arthur Sampson.

- b. Discussion and possible action on convening a task force to investigate and make recommendations to council on future access television funding. (Rosenthal)(wp1)

The creation of a task force to investigate and make recommendations to council on future access television funding consisting of Commissioners Rosenthal, Howerton and Kolb was approved on Commissioner Williams' vote; Commissioner Ramsey's second on a 7-0-0 vote.

This task force will work with TARA staff and channelAustin management.

- c. Discussion on desirability of this commission going "paperless", and using electronic delivery for documents and backup materials. (Rosenthal)

Commissioner Rosenthal and Howerton attended one of City Manager Ott's budget meetings and were implored to come up with ways to save money for the City. Going paperless would be one way this Commission could make a small effort to save money. He would like to work with staff and see if he can come up with a proposal that may provide a solution for people who want to go paperless.

Commissioner Touvell stated we need to look at putting the links in PDF back-up so members of the public can also see it. Currently the Planning Commission is doing this.

- d.. Update reports on networking relationships with other boards/commissions and groups, citywide and Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission (ACT&TC) information items.

Commission Ramsey attending the African American Resource Advisory Commission meeting to see if there were any issues this Commission could collaborate with them on.

February 15, 2009 is Austin Black Family Technology Day at the Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex. Guy Benson with the FCC is scheduled to have a table at this event regarding the DTV Transition. www.austinblackfamilytechday.org .

Commissioner Rosenthal stated he had the presentations presented of Mr. Ott's budget meeting if the Commission had a need to look at them.

channelAustin extended an invitation to the Commission for a tour of the public access studios.

Commissioner Touvell is interested in finding out if the budget cuts will affect the Austin Go Project.

9. Discussion of agenda items for ACT&TC future meetings.

Items scheduled for March 11, 2009 regular meeting:

- Presentation on the City of Austin's Emerging Technology Program. (Jim Butler)(wp5,9)
- Presentation on the City of Austin's Small Business Development Program. (Vicky Valdez)(wp5,9)
- DTV Transition Task Force update. (Touvell)(wp4,6)
- Access Television Funding Task Force update. (Rosenthal)(wp1)
- Discussion and possible action of this commission going "paperless", and using electronic delivery for documents and backup materials. (Rosenthal)
- Discussion and possible action on creating the GTOPs 2010 Task Force. (wp2)
- Discussion on Digital Divide Forum. (wp2,4)

Items proposed for future meetings

- Presentation on Citizen's Task Force on alternative Travis County voting systems. (Touvell)

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

This is a summary of the activities at this meeting. To view the full meeting on DVD please visit the Austin History Center, 810 Guadalupe Street, Austin, Texas, Phone (512) 974-7480