



Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission
www.ci.austin.tx.us/telcommission

Regular Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

The Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, June 10, 2009, 301 W. 2nd Street, Austin, TX, City Hall, Room 1101.

Please go to www.ci.austin.tx.us/telcommission/schedule.htm for backup material associated with this agenda.

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.

Shortcut to WINWORD.Ink

1. Call to order – June 10, 2009 – 6:39 p.m.

Commission 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

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.

Sueann Campbell – Read comments from Sue Cole regarding channelAustin’s grievance process.

4. Approval of minutes – May 13, 2009 Commission regular meeting.

Amendment One:

Correct 8(b) to read: Commissioner Rosenthal stated that Texas state law prohibits municipalities from establishing certain communication services.

Amendment number 1 offered by Commissioner Rosenthal to the minutes from the regular meeting of May 13, 2009 were approved on a vote of 7-0-0.

Amendment Two:

Correct 8(b) to read: Michael Chaney stated concerns with consumption billing proposed by Time Warner Cable.

Amendment number 2 offered by Commissioner Rosenthal to the minutes from the regular meeting for May 13, 2009 were approved on a vote of 6-1-0. (Commissioners Rosenthal, Howerton, Kolb, Ramsey, Williams and Touvell voted aye. Commissioner Sampson voted nay.)

The amended minutes from the regular meeting of May 13, 2009 were approved on a vote of 6-1-0. (Commissioners Rosenthal, Howerton, Kolb, Ramsey, Touvell and Williams voted aye. Commissioner Sampson voted nay.)

5. Invited Presentations

- a. Presentation from African American Resource Commission. (Dr. Chiquita Eugene) (wp9)

Dr. Chiquita Eugene, Commissioner with the African American Advisory Commission made a presentation on her Commission’s work regarding requesting Time Warner Cable to add Channel TV One to their programming line-up. She stated that this channel is for and by African Americans and would like the Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications help with their efforts.

Commissioner Rosenthal stated you can go to www.getTV1.com where you can let your local cable company know you would like this channel on their programming line-up.

Citizen Communications

Ruth Epstein – Objected to the speakers wanting and expecting us to approve positive programming. The term positive programming is not content neutral.

- b. Update on City of Austin web site project. (Gail Roper) (wp5)

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

6. Staff Briefings

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

Rondella Hawkins, Manager, City of Austin Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs stated there was no update at this time on this item.

- b. Public Access Television update. (wp1)

Ms. Hawkins gave an update on the public access television, grievance report, and facility repairs.

Citizen Communications

Sueann Campbell – Wants to know if the Commission is okay with channelAustin's grievance resolutions?

Ruth Epstein – Stated channelAustin is a private corporation and not obligated to follow the bill of rights like the City of Austin.

Gloria Morales – Distributed to the Commission a grievance she filed with channelAustin dated Oct 21, 2008.

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

Sheena Harden, Program Coordinator with the City of Austin distributed and gave an overview of the GTOPs 2nd quarter 2009 report.

- d. Discussion and possible action on creating the GTOPs 2010 Task Force. (Sheena Harden) (wp2)

Motion to create the Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) 2010 Task Force with Commissioners Lemuel Williams, Arthur Sampson, Chip Rosenthal and Wendell Ramsey serving on the task force was approved on Commissioner William's motion, Commissioner Kolb's second on a 7-0-0 vote.

This task force will review the GTOPs process, obtain community input and make recommendations for the 2010 GTOPs cycle.

7. Old Business

- a. Discussion and possible action on recommendations to Council for FY 09-10 budget. (wp8)

Resolution adopting the 2010 Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) recommended budget funding written as:

WHEREAS, the Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) was established to provide money to Austin organizations and citizens' groups for projects focusing on digital opportunities and bridging the digital divide; and WHEREAS, the City Council approved \$150,000 for the 2009 GTOPs program; and
WHEREAS, in its first eight years, the GTOPs program provided the means for more than 19,600 individuals to be served by a variety of technology-related programs, including training in computer skills, media production, Internet accessibility and organizational management; and
WHEREAS, GTOPs grantees have raised more than \$1,900,000 matching funds including 22,000 volunteer hours, \$900,000 in-kind donations and \$740,000 cash; and
WHEREAS, the GTOPs success rate over its eight year period averaged 125%; and
WHEREAS, GTOPs continues to be a successful economic development investment for the Austin community; and
WHEREAS, the Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission anticipates high demand for GTOPs programs due to the economic challenges confronting the citizens of Austin; and
WHEREAS, the GTOPs program has historically been funded by enterprise fund revenues, which may not be as adversely impacted by current economic conditions as other revenue sources;
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE AUSTIN COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION:
To recommend that the Austin City Council maintain current funding levels and approve \$150,000 towards the Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs) to be applied to approved applicants during the 2010 grants award period.

was approved on Commissioner Ramsey's motion, Commissioner Williams' second on a 7-0-0 vote.

Resolution adopting the 2010 Technology Ascertainment Study recommended budget funding written as:

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is committed to reduce the digital divide and create new digital opportunities for its residents and businesses, and a Technology Ascertainment Study would provide data to further this goal; and
WHEREAS, recent changes in broadband regulation and pricing models have the potential to greatly impact broadband availability and utilization in Austin, but the lack of a recent Technology Ascertainment Study means we do not have the baseline data to completely assess the impacts of these changes; and
WHEREAS, the City of Austin historically has followed best practice and based its community media and access television strategy on the needs and data that emerge from a Technology Ascertainment Study; and
WHEREAS, the City of Austin last conducted such a study in 1996, and the local technological landscape has changed dramatically since then; and

WHEREAS, the current public access television management contract ends in 2011, and new data are needed to determine the appropriate future direction for community media in Austin; and

WHEREAS, City of Austin staff have indicated that a current Technology Ascertainment Study that achieves these goals could be conducted at a cost of not more than \$75,000;

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

To recommend that the Austin City Council approve the funds necessary to conduct and support a Technology Ascertainment Study to be administered through the City's Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs (TARA);

and

To recommend that the City's Office of Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs (TARA) work to identify possible partners and grant opportunities, to participate in the funding of a Technology Ascertainment Study.

was approved on Commissioner Ramsey motion, Commissioner Touvell's second on a 6-1-0 vote. (Commissioners Rosenthal, Howerton, Sampson, Ramsey, Touvell and Williams voted aye. Commissioner Kolb voted nay.)

- b. Discussion and possible action on broadband internet issues. (wp6,9)

Commissioner Rosenthal reported that a local group, Austin Broadband Interest Group, filed comments with the FCC regarding metered internet and broadband caps.

He requested a presentation from City staff on what the City can and can not do in terms of provisioning and providing network services.

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

Guy Benson, FCC Representative, and City TARA staff along with Dale Thompson with Austin Free-Net set up a DTV Walk-in Center at the DeWitty Center in East Austin. The Walk-in Center received good press coverage and a good response from the community.

- d. Community Media Future Funding Task Force update. (Rosenthal) (wp1)

Commissioner Rosenthal reported on the June 8, 2009 Community Media Future Funding Task Force. The state franchise scheme provides funds only for access television capital equipment and the task force see the lack of operation funds as the primary challenge. They also talked about a needs assessment as a priority issue. They compiled a list of communities around the nation they would like to get specific information on including their service model, funding mechanisms and copies of their need survey.

8. New Business

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

Commissioner Rosenthal and Rondella Hawkins met with Greg Canally, City Budget Officer to discuss the stimulus funds program.

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

There will be no regular meeting for the month of July 2009.

Proposed items scheduled for the August 12, 2009 regular meeting:

- Discussion and possible action on the African American Resource Commission request to work with Time Warner Cable on adding TV One to their cable line-up.(wp9)
- Discussion and possible action on recommendations from GTOPs Task Force. (wp2)
- Staff presentation on latitudes municipalities have with broadband services. (Clarence West, Rondella Hawkins) (wp6,9)
- DTV Transition Task Force update. (Touvell) (wp4,6)
- Community Media Future Funding Task Force update. (Rosenthal) (wp1)
- Discussion and possible action on broadband internet issues. (wp6,9)
- Update on City of Austin web site project. (Gail Roper) (wp5)

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.