

Agenda

Iowa City Telecommunications Commission

City Cable TV Office, 10 S. Linn St., Tower Place Parking Facility, Level 3A

March 25, 2019, 5:30PM

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes
3. Announcements of Commissioners
4. Short public announcements
5. Post-franchise role of the Telecommunications Commission
6. REPORTS
 - Consumer Issues
 - Mediacom Report
 - Local Access Reports
 - City Cable TV Office Report
7. Adjournment

If you will need disability-related accommodations in order to participate in this program/event, please contact Ty Coleman at 319-356-5454 or ty-coleman@iowa-city.org. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

Minutes

Iowa City Telecommunications Commission

February 25, 2019 – 5:30 P.M.

City of Iowa City Cable TV Office, 10 S. Linn St. - Tower Place, Level 3A

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 5:30 P.M.

Members Present: Matthew Brenton, Paul Gowder, Adam Stockman

Members Absent: James Pierce

Staff Present: Ty Coleman

Others Present: Gerardo Sandoval, Bond Drager

Recommendations to Council: None

Approval of Minutes:

Gowder moved and Stockman seconded a motion to approve the December 17, 2018 minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcements of Commissioners:

Commissioners and access channel representatives exchanged introductions with the newly-appointed member, Adam Stockman.

Short Public Announcements:

None.

Post-franchise role of the Telecommunications Commission:

Brenton referred to the public broadband survey that was distributed to University of Iowa students and the results that were included in the meeting packet. He said that it seemed like most of the respondents were frustrated with the current options available and would be in favor of municipal broadband or another option for a provider of broadband services.

Gowder questioned the credibility of the survey if it was only distributed students. Brenton confirmed that the survey had been distributed to students via mass email, as stated by the UI Student Government liaison to the City Council in an email accompanying the survey results.

Stockman agreed that the survey results indicated that students were in favor of another option. He noted that some may have seen the success of municipal broadband systems in other communities.

Coleman mentioned the announcement made by ImOn in December that it would begin to extend its broadband network out to the neighborhoods of Iowa City later this year. He asked about the perceived need or desire for municipal broadband given that a legitimate provider is coming to town. Brenton said that he could foresee the Council having less of an interest in

looking into municipal broadband due to the addition of another Internet service provider.

Coleman asked what role the Commission might propose for its future if it is determined that Council is no longer interested in the idea of municipal broadband. Gowder said that without a big project for the group to work on, it may not be worth the time of the group or the City's resources to continue the Commission.

Brenton agreed with Gowder's comments, but suggested that the group continue its plan to propose a role of looking into municipal broadband. He said if Council is not interested, then there wouldn't be a reason to continue the Commission.

Coleman suggested consideration of other roles the Commission has been tasked with in the past, such as monitoring the activities of the local access channels. Gowder said he doesn't feel like the Commission has been particularly helpful in this area. Sandoval said it may be difficult to determine what the group can offer to those operating the access channels. He said that there is oversight by the City. Drager said now that there isn't a local franchise, the role of oversight of these channels by the Commission has been reduced and she said the question comes up of whether there is still a need by the Commission to receive reports on access channel activity.

Sandoval said that if PATV were to forego the cable TV channel it would further separate them from the Commission. He said that consumer issues that come up typically get resolved. Coleman said he has been impressed that there isn't a large volume of consumer issues or complaints from month to month and that the informal process of working with local Mediacom staff has been successful in resolving most of the issues. Coleman said there hasn't been an issue requiring mediation by the Commission for a long time.

Drager noted that the focus of the Commission has changed to having more interest in broadband issues, whereas the first Commission formed was concerned more about the local access channels.

Brenton said that at the last meeting the consensus was to propose a kind of exploratory group to look into municipal broadband and that the group would first need to see if the City Council has an interest in exploring it. Brenton said that Sue Dulek from the City Attorney's office suggested the group include some details in its proposal, such as the number of people to be a part of the group. Coleman said that determining the full list of duties would likely take place after the broader proposal is made and if the Council expresses interest in municipal broadband.

Consumer Issues:

Brenton noted that all of the issues listed in the consumer issues reports found in the meeting packet had been resolved.

Mediacom Report:

No discussion.

Local Access Reports:

Sandoval reported that since August, when the funding provided by Mediacom stopped along

with the expiration of the local franchise, Public Access Television (PATV) had hired a strategic planner to help determine next steps as the organization continues its mission of providing access to the community for producing content. He said they are working on a sustainability plan.

Sandoval said that PATV is trying to better understand its reach on the Mediacom cable channel it occupies. He noted that there are no viewership numbers available from Mediacom. He said they plan to survey viewers via the channel in order to learn more about the number of people who watch PATV programming.

Drager reported that the Iowa City Public Library (ICPL) would soon be ending its use of cable channel 20 and will focus on making ICPL video content available online. She said that the channel's video playback server needs to be replaced and that with the high cost to replace it, the ICPL had determined the money could be utilized in other ways that would serve its patrons better.

Drager said one factor that influenced the ICPL's decision was the number and ages of people who have attended the ICPL's Cutting the Cable classes. She said it was a popular class at the Senior Center and noted that the people one might expect to get their content through cable TV were actually getting rid of their cable service. Drager said that when patrons request a copy of a Library program, they are more likely to want a link to watch, rather than getting a DVD.

Brenton asked if Mediacom had the ability to provide viewership numbers. Stockman asked if numbers weren't available because it wasn't possible or if Mediacom chose not to provide them. Drager said that the ICPL had asked Mediacom several years ago. Coleman said that a number of years ago, he had participated in a Nielsen ratings process using a journal that provided a place to indicate the viewing of any channel, including access channels.

Coleman said that the lack of viewership numbers for cable access channels had been an issue since the beginning of access channels. He said that while online views are available, it is difficult to derive anything from that in order to estimate TV viewership.

Drager said that the ICPL is in favor of access for all, but that the extremely high cost of replacing its cable TV distribution equipment led them to their decision.

Brenton said that Internet access was available at the Senior Center. Gowder asked if there was a category of people that would have greater access to cable TV rather than Internet. Drager suggested that those who are homebound, such as those in a care facility, or hospitalized would be more likely to have access to cable TV. Gowder noted that losing access to channels could pose an equity issue. Drager said she is finding that more facilities are offering Internet access to residents.

Drager said that Library programs will continue to be hosted on YouTube and embedded on the ICPL's website. Coleman said that using YouTube as a distribution tool for programs is beneficial, as most, if not all, smart TVs offer a YouTube app. He said that when a viewer subscribes to a channel's YouTube channel, he or she can easily watch on-demand programming on a television screen. Brenton said that YouTube provides viewing metrics and offers advanced metrics for non-profits.

City Cable TV Office Report:

Coleman referred to the report the Cable TV Office had submitted in the meeting packet. He said the second episode of the *Iowa City Matters* podcast was now available and that listeners can get to it through iTunes, SoundCloud, and the City's website.

Adjournment:

Gowder moved and Stockman seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. Adjournment was at 06:01 p.m.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION 12-MONTH ATTENDANCE RECORD

	Gowder	Bergus	Brenton	Johnk	
03/26/2018	x	x	x	x	vacant
					Pierce
04/23/2018	x	x	x	x	x
05/21/2018	x	o/c	x	x	x
06/25/2018	x	x	x	o/c	x
07/23/2018 Meeting not held due to lack of quorum.		vacant		vacant	
08/27/2018 Meeting not held due to lack of quorum.		vacant		vacant	
9/24/2018	x	vacant	x	vacant	x
		Paterson			
10/22/2018	x	o	x	vacant	x
11/26/2018 Meeting not held due to lack of quorum.				vacant	
12/17/2018	x	o	x	vacant	x
01/22/2019 Meeting not held due to inclement weather and lack of quorum.				vacant	
				Stockman	
02/25/2019	x	vacant	x	x	o/c

(x) = Present

(o) = Absent

(o/c) = Absent/Called (Excused)

March 21, 2019

To: Iowa City Telecommunications Commission
From: Ty Coleman, Media Production Services Coordinator (MPSC)
Re: Cable Complaints February 2019

1.)

Date: 02/04/19

Method of contact: Phone call to MPSC

Complaint/Comment Summary:

Customer reported that she had requested changes to her Mediacom service levels and that she was now not able to access her longtime Mediacom email account. Her husband was told by a phone representative that they had been given new email accounts and the old ones were gone.

Resolution Summary:

MPSC contacted Mediacom's Betty Hartman to investigate the issue. Hartman said she would send it to the Internet support team.

Customer called to report that she called the 1-800 number again and this time learned that when service changes had been requested, the customer service representative created a new service account and cancelled the old one. She said that things had now been moved over to her new service account and that she now had access to her longtime email account.

MPSC asked Hartman if the customer was charged any fees or lost any discounts as a result of creating a new service account. Hartman confirmed that the new account was set up with new customer discounts, resulting in greater discounts than before.

Date of Resolution: 02/06/19

2.)

Date: 02/15/19

Method of contact: Voicemail to City Manager's Office

Issue/Comment Summary:

Customer called to find out why there was no competition in Iowa City for cable TV and Internet services. Customer was concerned about being on a fixed and having to paying a high price, with no apparent alternative options.

Resolution Summary:

MPSC provided information to the customer regarding the unique challenge of attracting a second provider to a community of our size, noting that the extremely high cost of building a cable network makes it difficult for companies to justify the investment, especially when there is already a competitor in town. MPSC also explained the recent transition from having a local franchise agreement to our current situation where providers may obtain a franchise from the State of Iowa in order to provide services, resulting in a lesser amount of local authority and control.

MPSC also mentioned other current Internet provider options, including CenturyLink and mobile carriers. MPSC also informed the customer of ImOn's recently stated intent to build its Internet network out into the neighborhoods of Iowa City starting this year. Customer said she would use the information provided to educate her friends and neighbors, who had also wondered why there is not currently an alternative provider similar to Mediacom in its service offerings.

Date of Resolution: 02/15/19

3.)

Date: 02/19/19

Method of contact: In-person at Cable TV Office

Issue/Comment Summary:

Resident at Iowa City's Cross Park Place, complained he was told by Mediacom that service was not yet available at the newly constructed facility. Customer was frustrated because cable TV was said to be included with the living arrangements.

Resolution Summary:

MPSC contacted Mediacom's Rick Karnes to learn about the status of service availability at the resident's location. Karnes reported that it was a new build project that will be a bulk account with Mediacom. He said the projected completion date is intended to be late March or early April, depending on the weather. Resident was informed of Mediacom's plans to make service available in the near future.

Date of Resolution: 02/19/19



February 8, 2019

Dear Mayor Throgmorton and the City of Iowa City,

We want to share with you, positive news about progress Mediacom is making to ensure that K-12 students in low-income families have access to low-cost home internet service through our **Connect2Compete** (C2C) program. C2C is a community investment Mediacom chooses to make by using one of our company's best assets - broadband. We know that the internet plays a key role in children's education and that it can also be a great resource for parents. Teachers increasingly incorporate digital tools in the classroom, assign online homework, use email to communicate with parents, and post grades online.

That's why our local Mediacom team has connected **15** families in **Iowa City** (25 families in Johnson County) to low-cost internet service to help K-12 students extend their learning from the classroom to home. As of January 31, 2019, there are **579** families in the state of **Iowa** who benefit from this program. Since the program's launch, we've seen steady growth and received positive feedback from community members.

Our C2C internet service provides families with reliable home internet that fits into budgets more easily than other options. Families pay a flat, low fee (\$9.95 per month) and Mediacom waives equipment and installation fees. Our technicians set up the home Wi-Fi system and instruct the C2C family on how to use it.

Connect2Compete was designed to remove financial obstacles to make it easier for low-income households with school-age children who are at a disadvantage without online access to do school work. The program is also available year-round, so families don't have to wait until the new school year starts.

If you have specific suggestions to help us bring low-cost internet to more eligible families with K-12 students in your community, please let us know. Generally, our outreach efforts include contacting local leaders for school districts, libraries and non-profit organizations. Additionally, we want to communicate regularly with community members like you so that you are aware of the benefits of Connect2Compete in your community and to let you know that the program is making a positive impact.

You may also find it interesting that as we closed the 2018 calendar year, nearly 10,000 Iowans were connected to Mediacom internet with speeds of 1-Gigabit-per-second. We're not easing up on the accelerator pedal – Mediacom is part of the latest 10G initiative that is in lab-testing today and will be ready for homes in the near future.

We hope to stay in touch with further information on these high-impact broadband initiatives. In the meantime, we wish you all the best.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding Connect2Compete outreach, please reach out to Emily Frimml with her contact information below.

For families interested in signing up, please direct them to www.mediacomc2c.com or have them call **855-904-2225**.

Sincerely,

Todd Robinson
Area Operations Director
Mediacom
trobenson@mediacomcc.com

Emily Frimml
Public Relations Coordinator
Mediacom/Community Relations
(515) 697-6690
efrimml@mediacomcc.com

P.S. Attached is a document that describes eligibility for C2C and highlights potential barriers we remove to make the internet accessible (for C2C families, there is no deposit, no contract, no installation fees). We will gladly provide copies of these fliers (English & Spanish) upon your request, and information is online at www.mediacomc2c.com

A simple, affordable way to get quality home internet.

The internet is essential for successful learning and Mediacom wants to help families with K-12 students get connected. Mediacom Connect2Compete is offered as one of the ways our company works to close the “digital divide.”

We participate with “EveryoneOn,” a national non-profit program. Our goal is to make home internet access simple and affordable so that students have a reliable connection to participate in a digital curriculum and extend the learning experience from school to home. Mediacom makes this service available to eligible families in all areas where Mediacom’s broadband network is present.

YOUR HOUSEHOLD MAY QUALIFY IF:

1. Mediacom offers internet service in your community or area
2. You have at least one student in grades K-12 living at home
3. At least one child qualifies for free or reduced-price school lunch through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
4. You are not a current Mediacom internet customer and have NOT subscribed to our internet service in the past 90 days
5. You do not have an outstanding Mediacom bill or unreturned equipment**



Up to 10 Mbps

\$9.95*

A MONTH

Plus taxes and fees;
includes wireless
connection

No deposit

No contract

No installation
fees

No equipment
rental fees

Wi-Fi modem via
no-cost lease

To learn more about the C2C programs,
visit www.mediacomc2c.com or call 855-904-2225.

* Offer is available in Mediacom residential areas to K-12 student families who have not subscribed to Mediacom Internet services within the prior 90 days, do not have an outstanding Mediacom balance or unreturned equipment and meet the eligibility criteria. Monthly price of \$9.95/month (plus tax) is available so long as the eligibility criteria are met; if at any time customer no longer meets the eligibility criteria, the then-standard rates for Internet service and equipment shall apply. The service includes Internet service with download speeds up to 10 Mbps on a single outlet and one WiFi modem. Modem remains the property of Mediacom and must be returned upon termination of service to avoid charges. Mediacom Connect2Compete is a residential Internet service intended for educational use. Participants must conform to requirements of the Mediacom Online® Internet Access Service Customer and User Agreement and Mediacom’s Acceptable Use Policy. It is not a school program, and is not endorsed or required by your school. Your school is not responsible for Connect2Compete accounts. No school funds were used for this notice or website. Call 1-855-904-2225 for more details or to visit with a Mediacom Connect2Compete representative. Offer, prices and eligibility criteria may change from time to time.

** Families with an outstanding bill or unreturned equipment can discuss payment options with Mediacom customer support representatives to determine how a resolution can be met. Call 1-855-904-2225 for more details.

Date: March 21, 2019

To: The Iowa City Telecommunications Commission

From: Ty Coleman, Media Production Services Coordinator, City of Iowa City Cable TV Office

Re: City of Iowa City Cable TV Office report for the March 2019 meeting

Media Production Services

Recent production activities:

- Recorded the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet
- Recorded the 2019 Prairie Preview event, which included a keynote speaker and a panel discussion with University of Iowa Wildlife Camps and Macbride Nature Recreation Area speakers
- Recorded the Johnson County Local Food Policy Council's Annual Public Forum
- Recorded two programs from the 2019 One Book Two Book children's literature festival
- Recorded and live streamed the State Historical Society 'Iowa Stories' program, which was on Iowa Women's Clubs and the promotion of Iowa composers.
- Created a short video to encourage public input for the City's Public Art Program Strategic Plan
- Created a short video to promote the upcoming "Paint a Rain Barrel" event

Upcoming productions:

- Creating a promotional video for the Parks & Recreation's Underwater Egg Hunt
- Recording and live streaming the Clean Energy Forum, sponsored by the Iowa City groups of the Sierra Club and Mighty Earth
- Recording the next episode of our podcast series 'Iowa City Matters'. The episode will feature a discussion on transit options in our community.

Programs Completed by the Cable TV Office in February 2019

- 2019 Climate Action Grant promotional video
- 2019 PIN Grant Program promotional video
- Civil Rights Trip - City Day feature
- Iowa City City Council Meetings
 - February 5, 2019
 - February 19, 2019
- Iowa City City Council Work Sessions
 - February 5, 2019
 - February 19, 2019
- Iowa City Fire Department Badge Pinning Ceremony
- Iowa City Foreign Relations Council Presents
 - Plastic in the Oceans
 - Saving the World's Coral Reefs
 - Updates for Immigration Issues
- Iowa City Matters podcast: Crisis Intervention

- Iowa City Update:
 - 2019 Freeze Fest
 - 2019 Polar Plunge
 - Climate Action Grant
 - One Book Two Book
- Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County Urbanized Area Policy Board Meeting of 02/06/19
- Sidewalk Ordinance Reminder
- Snow plowing short - Meet Dave Gillham, dedicated snow plow driver