

Belmont Cable Access Committee (CAC)
Minutes 11/19/2002 (APPROVED)
7:30PM, BCTV Channel 8 Studio

Present

Committee: John Verrilli, Todd Bloniarz, Sue Timberlake, Larry Kutner
AT&T Broadband: Mark Ventola

Call to Order: John Verrilli officially called the meeting to order at 7:47.

Contact List

Updated to include Cori Morris' correct e-mail address and the removal of Paulette Trout's information following her resignation from the CAC last month. Two other topics were discussed at this time: (1) a few names were suggested as possible new CAC members and John said he would contact these people to inquire on their interest in joining the committee; (2) Larry brought up the idea of an 'open house' at the Ch. 8 studio inviting members of Belmont organizations such as the town library, Council on Aging, historical society, police department, and fire department in an attempt to raise awareness of the station's resources and recruit new volunteer producers.

Review of 10/15/02 Minutes

Minutes were received and approved. No changes needed to be made.

Issues from the Community/Complaints/Concerns

Some studio operation issues were followed up from last month's meeting. Audio quality at selectmen's meetings is good on the selectmen themselves but poor involving people/organizations making presentations to the board. A suggestion was made to set up a microphone in the town hall room and have people walk up to it in order to ask their questions or make their presentations.

The audio quality at the school committee meetings continues to be an issue; it was asked if the community room at the Chenery Middle School (where the meetings are currently held) could be better wired to improve the situation. Larry offered to lend the station his own audio mixer and wireless mics on a trial basis to see if that would improve sound levels.

Obtaining a second front door key at the high school for Channel 8 staff remains an issue; John will speak to Abiodun when he returns from his vacation. A suggestion to expedite this issue may be to meet directly with school superintendent Dr. Peter Holland.

Larry said he would look into obtaining funds through the Belmont Cultural Council for a possible video contest or venture which would generate publicity for the station.

Report on Studio Operations

No new issues to report. No more video workshops scheduled through years' end.

Public Meetings Coverage

John suggested Channel 8 cover the 11/26 Planning Board public hearing regarding the Kendall property zoning issue (and as many subsequent meetings as possible). Mark said

he could cover the 11/26 hearing because there were no other town meetings going on that evening. Todd suggested that town hall groups try to use the selectmen's room as often as possible for meetings because it is set up best among all the town hall rooms for picture and sound quality.

Update on Cable Access Corporation/Public Information and Communication Committees

No meeting date has yet to be set by the ad hoc committee formed to study the establishment of a cable access corporation to run Channel 8. Sue pointed out that the timing of the recent AT&T/Comcast sale along with the expiration of the town's original 10-year cable license and the station's struggle to obtain the committed funding for new studio equipment has attributed to the need for this ad hoc committee to begin meeting soon.

John was recently contacted by Jennifer Page, Chair of the Vision Implementation Committee, to see if any CAC members were interested in getting involved with a Public Information and Communications Committee. Its primary purpose would be to attempt to get town government to communicate with businesses via webcasting and town 'chat rooms' on the net. John said he would act as a liaison for the CAC and attend at least the first meeting of this new committee.

It was also discussed at this time how the recent gubernatorial election could aid or benefit Channel 8.

Political Guidelines

Copies of Sue's Belmont Citizen-Herald editorial on clean elections and the 1995 CAC Policy for Political Messages were distributed to the committee. The issues of equal opportunity and free speech were discussed, including the ability of volunteer producers to produce any type of political program without needing to be fair to the opposing party or viewpoint.

It was also discussed whether the guidelines should apply to state, federal, and county offices. A Mitt Romney political message for governor was not received by Channel 8 until election day so it did not run on Ch. 8. No one from the Romney campaign called afterward to complain about it not running. If the guidelines are rewritten the airing of this tape would be a moot point since it did not involve a town election.

The CAC agreed that the guidelines should include a statement of purpose and possibly be revised to reflect the issues mentioned above. Possible future inclusion in the revised '95 guidelines would be the prelude 'we as a committee should make an appropriate effort to assure that all certified candidates and all organizations registered with the commonwealth are made aware of the time and facilities that are available through Channel 8'.

Finances and Capital Equipment

With the meeting running long this topic was deferred to a future meeting. The primary questions asked were what unspent capital would roll over to 2003, what is the exact amount of underspend available and is Channel 8 envisioning themselves as a digital station? If so, is the immediate need to upgrade camera/lighting or editing equipment? Following discussion of this topic, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Next Meeting

Tuesday December 17, 2002, 7:30pm at the studio.

Respectfully submitted,
Todd Bloniarz