

MICHIGAN NATOA

Chapter Meeting • October 22, 2007

SWOCC Studios, Farmington Hills

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

In attendance: MI-NATOA Board of Directors: Caren Collins Fifer, Pres.; Leslie Helwig, V.P.; Mike Ager, Treasurer; and Linda Badamo, Secretary. Members and Guests: Kermit Potter, Chris Milia, Dave Alberty, Zack Florance, Steve Rota, Jon Kreucher, JoAnne Gurley, Sue Ward, Ralph Salmeron, Diane Griffiths, Janet Christian, Lowell Peterson, Evelyn Goudreau, Rosanne Martell, Greg McDonald, Eric Angott, John Brooks, Bill Irving, Mike Watza, David Sommerfeld, Paul Niehaus, Shawn Watts, Mark Monk

DISCUSSION

PEG Test Report: Linda Badamo, Director of Cable TV and Communications for Clinton Township, spoke on the PEG Test with AT&T, how it came to be, the Memorandum that preceded it, the quality of the audio and video (audio is good, but wasn't coming through during the weekend; video is sub-par, worse than all the other U-verse channels, worse than our existing channels on cable systems, and contains compression artifacts: "Mosquito Noise" along figures' edges, choppy movement, especially with graphics and crawls, edges of graphics jagged). The video problems are due to extreme compression, per AT&T's low quality specification settings, and what is likely occurring at their Video Hub Office (VHO). Another major problem and difference: when one tunes to Channel 99, they do not automatically see the content they seek; they must scroll through two menus listing all participating public, educational and government access channels. Making viewers look for us poses problems for the dissemination of emergency messages, as well as finding our regular programming. The purpose of the test was to further our research into AT&T's PEG "Solution". The first community to have a Government Channel on U-verse was Foster City, CA.

ACM Complaint: Jon Kruecher, attorney for the Alliance for Community Media and Mark Monk, Michigan Chapter Chair of the ACM Central States Region, updated the members on the PEG discrimination complaint they brought before the Michigan Public Service Commission. The MPSC said the complaint had no standing because it did not come from a franchising authority. Mark is seeking participation from municipalities.

Broad Challenge to P.A. 480: Attorney Mike Watza was asked to summarize his efforts on behalf of a mid-Michigan consortium of communities seeking to overturn Michigan's Statewide Video Franchising law, Public Act 480 of 2006. Mike's approach would encourage a lawsuit with participation from many Michigan communities and ask for support from the Michigan Municipal League's defense fund, and the Michigan Townships Association.

Motion Item: To help communities to speak on and recommend appropriate courses of action to their local decision makers, Dave Alberty made a motion, seconded by Evelyn Goudreau, to request the formation of a sub-committee comprised of persons representing the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Townships Association, the Alliance for Community Media and MI-NATOA, and to include attorneys of their choosing, to discuss and determine available courses of action related to the discussions that took place and to recommend which may be better for MI-NATOA communities to embrace collectively. The sub-committee was urged to compare state law versus federal law as part of the research. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion Item: To assist communities that are being approached by AT&T for the implementation of PEG on U-verse, Chris Milia made a motion, seconded by Linda Badamo, to ask the MI-NATOA Board of Directors, or a designated sub-committee, to provide the membership with a clear, concise statement of our issues with AT&T's PEG Solution, and provide a list of guidelines to follow should a franchising authority wish to consider adding a PEG channel to U-verse. Motion passed unanimously.

ROW Ordinance Update: Leslie Helwig gave an update on Right-Of-Way Ordinance revisions in Bloomfield Township, also adopted by Novi.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.