



CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COUNCIL OF  
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT  
MEETING MINUTES

**June 24, 2009, Special Meeting, 5:30 p.m.**  
Groton Public Library, 52 Newtown Road, Route 117,  
Groton, CT 06340

IN ATTENDANCE: Jim Kelley, Shawn Greeley, Jerry Tobias, Bill Hakkinen, Steve Garmon, Roger Roy, Jim Loughlin

ABSENT: Art Barton, Shane Devine

COMCAST REPRESENTATIVES: Sharon Codeanne, Frank Facchini, Dan Glanville

THAMES VALLEY COMMUNICATION REPRESENTATIVE: Carl Andersen, Russ Dipallina

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT TELEVISION: Phil Butta and Dan Weaver

SPECIAL MEETING TO ADDRESS NARROW CASTING.

**I. Recognition of members of the public for public comments** – Former Ledyard Mayor, Mary McGrattan, and Stonington First Selectman, Ed Haberek, briefly addressed the council and cable television representatives and indicated that both Ledyard and Stonington are very interested in adding Ledyard and Stonington government and education Access channels to Comcast and TVC cable systems.

**II.** Hakkinen made a motion to suspend the rest of the regular agenda so that all the attention could be given to Dan Glanville's presentation and the community access issue. Tobias seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. New Business**

**A.** Dan Glanville's presentation on narrowcasting and other community access solutions: Glanville reported that Comcast's current infrastructure in the Groton franchise is not suitable for narrowcasting. Upgrading the infrastructure would be very costly. In addition, narrowcasting would limit viewers to seeing just their town's government and education access.

However, the cable industry is moving toward digitization of networks leading to new possibilities of delivering community access. In Vernon and Plainville, Comcast will be testing a new community access digitization. They will be delivering community access from both of those towns system-wide on digital B2 (digital basic tier) sometime in 2010. In Vernon and Plainville, the B2 tier and above would be digitize and the main B1 tier will remain analog. In those communities, Comcast will be offering one digital converter at no charge in order to see the B2 and above tier. Customers would have to rent boxes for second and third televisions in their house. Some third party "Digital to Air" (DTA) devices may or may not work on those second or third televisions.

Digitizing the entire Vernon and Plainville franchise should be completed sometime in 2010. If all goes well it will be introduced to MA and hopefully all of CT by 2012. The digitization would give Comcast the ability to provide a large number of Community Access channels franchise wide. Comcast is open to possibly digitizing PEG channels in the Groton system earlier than the 2012 if there is a demand. Glanville explained Comcast may set-up a PEG neighborhood on the channel line-up.

Glanville also stated that the transition into this digital technology is similar to cable ready TVs in 1990's. When cable started offering more than 20 channels a cable box was needed to view

them. The television manufacturing industry had to catch up with cable technology and eventually did as they started offering cable ready TVs. Today, the cable industry's digital technology is ahead of the TV manufacturer technology. In order to see all the digital cable offerings, a box is needed. Eventually, TV manufacturers will offer TVs that will not need a cable box.

**B.** Cable Advisory Council's consensus is that there is a demand for more community access in most town's in the franchises. Ledyard, and Stonington would like to offer similar channels that Groton runs for government and education access (2 and 19). The council would like to see Comcast begin digitization of channels.

Greeley asked if TVC would offer digital community access channels or stay with its current plan to offer narrowcasting in towns that they currently have return lines near town halls and school districts. Dipallina reported that they would offer narrowcasting. Currently they are near Stonington facilities and partially into Ledyard (but not near its Town Hall). The TVC system was designed with narrowcasting in mind (99% should get the appropriate town programming). Each town's infrastructure was designed with their own footprint.

McGratten stated that TVC attended a Ledyard Town Council in March and explained it was not fiscally feasible to run lines to the Town Hall or school district.

The council asked if Comcast could get return lines from Ledyard, would TVC be able to narrowcast? Dipallina stated that they do have an agreement with Comcast to do that, however some equipment would need to be purchased for the head end.

**C.** Kelly asked what is needed for Ledyard and Stonington to prepare for Comcast digital community access channels and TVC narrowcasting – what are the next steps?

Ledyard: Glanville - Comcast (Codeanne) could put together an estimate for running return lines to Ledyard. Hakkinen asked if TVC could also provide an estimate.

Town of Stonington: Glanville wants to look into equipment and cost that is necessary to get return lines up and running (through TVC). A meeting will be set up with both cable providers to discuss next step and cost.

Kelly also asked both towns to consult with the cable companies and Greeley (Groton's government access) regarding playback and messaging equipment.

Kelly asked Glanville about the lifespan of analog feeds. Glanville stated their commitment to carry 2 years after conversion, but he is not sure after that because it partly depends on consumer demand and where technology goes.

Hakkinen asked if the cable companies could put the estimates together by end of summer. He would like to see the additional community access channels move forward this fall.

**IV. Adjournment** – Tobias motioned to adjourn the meeting, Loughlin seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Shawn Greeley**