

Kenneth Marks
30 Dover Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts
02140
547-8217
491-0961

September 18, 1975

The Honorable Walter J. Sullivan, Mayor
The Honorable Members of the Cambridge City Council
% Paul Healey, City Clerk
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Councillors,

With the formation of a committee to investigate the possibilities of Cable Television for the residents of Cambridge, the City Council has taken the first step toward providing citizens with a valuable media service. Now, the major responsibility of the Council is to write a detailed enabling ordinance that 1) eliminates the possibility of poor or non-existent community service or community control, and 2) eliminates the possibility of abuse of privacy. It should be the responsibility of the committee to advise the Council on these points.

My interest in Cable comes in large part from the possibility of direct and meaningful control of portions of the programming by the community and by individuals. Because the primary regulatory agency is within city government, local control is much easier and more direct than with broadcast television, where individual stations answer only to advertisers and the F.C.C.

National regulation of Cable does exist, but primarily to insure local control. It will be the Council that writes, grants, renews, and enforces franchise provisions, sets rates, and forms citizen "watchdog" committees to monitor service.

Among services generally provided are the retransmission of all local broadcast television and FM radio signals (at near studio quality), 24 hour time and weather display, Want-ad display, and retransmission of selected distant television signals. More importantly, it is well within the Council's power to;

- Require citizen access channels (imagine being able to watch a group of Cambridge elders performing original teleplays rather than "S.W.A.T.", "On the Rocks", or "Medical Center"),
- Designate a channel for use by the High and Technical Schools and the School Committee,
- Designate a channel for use by the city government (to transmit Council meetings, a Voter Information Series, or tabulation of votes in local elections), or
- Designate a channel for foreign language programming (Portuguese, Italian, French, etc.).

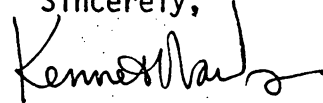
It is also very much in the Council's interests to control possible abuses of individual rights. While the possibility of electronic abuse (snooping) is far less feasible than with the telephone, designed for two way communication, (we have all heard of the bug that can be installed in a standard telephone to monitor conversations in a room even while the phone is hung up), with local control and citizen watchdogging, the installation of complex electronic monitoring devices can be forestalled very effectively. What is possible and available, is the ability of the Cable company to monitor a simple "binary" (on-off) device in a subscriber's home for breaking and entering or fire control. Such a device, monitoring 25,000 homes every two minutes, could

hardly eavesdrop. But, again, the control is in your hands, and the hands of an individual subscriber.

Abuses that are far more likely to occur are in the areas of "corporate interests"; sale of subscriber mailing lists, repair contracts, rate inequities, and the like.

All of the decisions required to present the Council with meaningful recommendations require a broadly based committee of Cambridge residents, including those knowledgeable in Cable, in Neighborhood and Community needs, in legal considerations, city jurisdiction, and business requirements. If non-councillors can be seated on this committee, I would very much like to be included.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth Marks", written in dark ink.

Kenneth Marks

P.S.) If I can brief any of you individually on Cable, please feel free to call me.

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

SEP 19 9 07 AM '75

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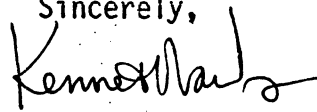
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7. *S-339*
Comm. received from Kenneth Marks, 30 Dover
St., Cambridge, relative to Cable Television

In City Council,

September 22, 1975

9/22/75

Placed on File