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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER



**Continental
Cablevision®**

November 25, 1991

Mr. Robert Healy
City Manager
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

I am writing in response to requests for information from the City Council: Order #1, dated August 7, 1991, and Communications # 45 dated August 7, 1991.

Both of these items were addressed at a public meeting on October 24, 1991, conducted by Councillor William H. Walsh.

Mr. Michael McDermott, who requested an audio supplement on Channel 3 be provided for the sight impaired, and Mr. George Stanizzi, who requested our cable guide be reinstated, were also present.

As to the request of Mr. McDermott for an audio supplement, we did add T.I.C. (Talking Information Center) to the Cambridge system effective October 25, 1991. (See Attachment) We also committed to providing an audio supplement (background reader of our Bulletin Board) to Channel 3 by January 1, 1992. I have also scheduled a meeting with Ned Casey to discuss the viability of adding a "background reader" to the City's Channel 37.

The second request, from Mr. Stanizzi, was to reinstate our cable guide because he believed it was part of our license. I discussed this point with him and expressed our view that in Section 6 of our Final License, changes to programs and service offerings are prone to availability, content, quality and cost.

Mr. Walsh decided that he would have the City Solicitor review our license and make a determination if the guide was in fact required as part of our service offering. I did agree to offer the guide again to our customers if I was incorrect with my understanding of the Final License.

If you should need any additional information on these items, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. S. Ripa", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Philip S. Ripa
General Manager

II. Background and Purpose

2.1 Background

T.I.C., whose offices and studio are in Marshfield, is a non-profit, non-commercial service available throughout Massachusetts on closed circuit radio, cable television audio, and stereo television side channel. The majority of T.I.C.'s 7 day a week, 17 hour broadcast day is prepared in the Marshfield station, adjacent to WATD FM Radio, and read on-air by volunteers. T.I.C. has 300 volunteers reading in Massachusetts.

T.I.C.'s on-air readings include: newspapers, i.e. *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Wall Street Journal*; supermarket and department store ads (i.e.

Stop & Shop, Bradlees) from the Sunday newspapers, unavailable to blind persons any place other than T.I.C. programming; Wire Service News; Sports; Sunday Comics; Medical Update; periodicals, i.e. Business Week, Parents Magazine, Boston Magazine, The New Yorker, People, Sports Illustrated; Early Bird News (includes horoscope, Ann Landers, Dear Abby, what time the sun rises and sets); Corner on Religion; Best Sellers; Senior Hour; Consumer Hour; Storybook Shop; Black Publications; Poetry Now; Job Listings; Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Horizons, a live telephone link-up with Commissioner for the Blind Charles Crawford, where blind-related issues are discussed; Weekend Outlook, which gives the weekend activities and cultural events in Boston.

Since its original broadcast June 19, 1978, T.I.C. has expanded to include stations in Boston; New Bedford/ Fall River; Worcester; Springfield; Amherst; Pittsfield; Falmouth; North Dartmouth; Dalton. A microwave link, funded by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, connects satellite services throughout Massachusetts. T.I.C.'s major source of funding is the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. T.I.C. is also funded by corporate grants and donations.

Councillor Sheila Russell

Dear Councillor Russell:

July 24, 1991

Whereas Continental Cablevision of Cambridge were issuing Cable guide free of charge.

As of May 1991 they have stopped issuing a Cable guide. They said they have stopped issuing the guide because of cost.

Under the Contract with Cable the guide is part of the package that was sold when Cable first came into Cambridge.

The Manager of the Continental Cable office on Sherman St. said that Contract was with American Cable systems and not Continental.

I would like to see the Cable guide issued again.

Sincerely,

George Stanizzi

15 Holmes St.

Cambridge, Mass.

CONSENT COMM. # 45

Comm. from George Stanizzi, 15 Holmes
Street, in opposition to the removal of the
cable gude from the cable services.

Cassey
+ Higley
(Consent legal for
Continued cable vision
to discontinue cable?)

In City Council,

August 7, 1991

*Referred to Cable
Committee and
Referred to City
Manager for report*



City of Cambridge

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1.

IN CITY COUNCIL

August 7, 1991

COUNCILLOR WALSH
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
MAYOR WOLF

WHEREAS: The attached correspondence from Michael McDermott of Berkshire Street, Cambridge conveys a compelling and convincing argument for the City's Office for Cable TV to work with Continental Cablevision to bring about the suggested adaptation and thereby assure presence of an audio supplement to information disseminated via the various Cable TV channels as referenced on page 2 of Mr. McDermott's letter; and

WHEREAS: It would be an appropriate time to give consideration to having this audio supplement delivered in diverse languages since, as Mr. McDermott notes, "Due to Cambridge's diverse culture we have in our city many people who do not know how to speak or read English. Perhaps, they could take advantage of this new audio idea."; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Director of Cable TV to contact the Manager of Continental Cablevision and undertake the preliminary steps necessary to implement this change in policy; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager report back to this City Council with data on this request by September 9, 1991; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Clerk, upon receipt of the requested response, schedule a public hearing on this matter before the City Council's Subcommittee on Cable TV and Communications as soon as possible.

In City Council August 7, 1991.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton

Joseph E. Connarton
City Clerk

June 28, 1991

FOR: Cambridge City Council

FROM: Michael J. McDermott

SUBJECT: Equal access to Cambridge community information i.e. School department news, Council affairs, and Public events

I. INTRODUCTION

As I am a life long resident who has a strong interest in our city's politics I find it very educational as well as interesting to view the proceedings of the Cambridge City Council (CCC) nearly every Monday at 6:30 P.M. Because I am a blind citizen I greatly value the audio portion of the broadcast. Additionally, I also enjoy having announcements, events, and other communications pertaining to both the (CCC) and Cambridge School department (CSD) brought to my attention by the help of my parents who generously read such data to me. As well as a variety of public events. The supplementary information I am referring to can be found on the following cable television channels. 1. Community Events Bulletin Board (3,19,66) 2. School Department News (36) and 3. Cambridge Municipal T.V. (37). The communications appearing on these channels are not accessible through an audio format. It is my goal as a blind individual with a strong interest in city events to have these extra notices read aloud. So, not only the blind can benefit but, also those who are illiterate, elderly, visually impaired, and have other types of disabilities that limit a persons ability to gain access to important information stored in a visual format can too!

II. SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL

When President George Bush signed the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) into law, he granted sweeping independence to millions of Americans who were previously denied equal rights under the Constitution. Now persons who suffer from all sorts of disabilities can enjoy equal rights under Federal mandate, as the ADA will reinforce previous edicts regarding benefits for the handicapped, such as providing all persons equal access to important community news. As I have said before my objective in bringing forth this proposal is to not only help members of the

disabled community. But, to also afford persons who can not read, do not wish to read, and do not have enough vision to read the news indicated on the above channels the ability to hear it.

Due to Cambridge's diverse culture we have in our city many people who do not know how to speak or read English. Perhaps, they to could take advantage of this new audio idea.

Before putting my thoughts together on paper I took the opportunity to query many residents from all walks of life about having such a system in place. The responses I received from fellow residents was favorable! So, tonight I ask the council's help on implementing just such an audio system.

III. CONCLUSION

It is my hope that with the assistance of the Cambridge City Council and Continental Cablevision an agreement can be reached which would allow all persons to benefit from the exigent information appearing on the following television channels. 1. Community Events Bulletin Board (3,19,56) 2. School Department News (36) and 3. Cambridge Municipal T.V. (37). Perhaps, affording more citizens with this knowledge can help to bring the inhabitation of Cambridge closer together. And thus broaden our knowledge of different cultures with in our little melting-pot!

Michael J. McSernot

4.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

December 2, 1991

To The Honorable, The City Council:

With reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 15, relative to the removal of the cable guide from the cable service and Awaiting Report Item No. 17, regarding audio supplement for the sight impaired, please find attached a response from Philip S. Ripa, General Manager of Continental Cablevision, concerning this issue.

Also, please be advised that this response does not answer Awaiting Report Item No. 36, of November 18, 1991, which has been sent to the Law Department for a legal opinion and will be forthcoming.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachments

Consent Agenda # 4 S-10A

Awaiting Report Item Number 15, regarding the removal of the cable guide from the cable service, as well as Awaiting Report Item Number Seventeen, regarding audio supplement for the sight impaired.

In City Council,

December 2, 1991

Places in file