

City of Cambridge

November 4, 1991

The Committee on Cable Television and Communications conducted a public hearing on Thursday, October 24, 1991, in the Sullivan Chamber City Hall beginning at 5:57 P.M.. The purpose of the hearing was to receive public testimony relative to the implementation of an audio supplement for Cable which could be delivered in diverse languages. Members present were: Councillor William Walsh and City Clerk Joseph Connarton.

Councillor Walsh opened the hearing and recognized Mr. Michael McDermott, 78 Berkshire Street, Cambridge who outlined to the Committee his request that an audio supplement for the visually impaired be implemented for Cable viewers. He further outlined his communication dated June 28, 1991 to the City Council in which he raised the point of equal access to the Cambridge community. Mr. McDermott briefly reviewed the Americans With Disabilities Act signed into law by President Bush which grants sweeping independence to millions of Americans who were previously denied equal rights under the Constitution.

Mr. Philip Ripa, General Manager of Continental Cablevision responded by stating that he had read with great interest Mr. McDermott's letter and frankly stated that he was moved by both the content and need for such a service to be provided. Furthermore, he stated that currently the Talking Information Center is operational through FM station 98.7 on the radio band which provides information from the Boston Globe, Herald American, magazines etc. Furthermore, he stated that Continental Cable is currently working to address the full audio supplement as suggested by Mr. McDermott, but that it will take some time to get it operational so that both the audio and visual segments will be synchronized.

George F. Welch, Jr.

At this time the Committee heard from ~~Mr. George Welch~~, 3 Woodrow Wilson Court, Cambridge, who spoke in support of the audio supplement and suggested that one of the most important factors of such a program is to have someone who is articulate working on this and recommended that Michael McDermott be hired by Continental Cable for such a purpose.

Also speaking in support of the audio supplement was Ms. Gail Enman, Executive Director of the Disabilities Commission who stated that she was very happy that the news readers program was in effect for the visually impaired and with Mr. Ripa's willingness to consider the implementation of an audio supplement for the regular cable channels. She further stated that the 1990 census indicates that 7 percent of adults in Cambridge are visually impaired.

The hearing was adjourned at 6:18 P.M.

For the Committee,

s/ William H. Walsh
Councillor William H. Walsh
Chairman

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For the Committee,

s/ William H. Walsh
Councillor William H. Walsh
Chairman

COMMITTEE REPORT # 2 S-1192

Report from the Cable Television and Communications Committee for a hearing held on Thursday, Oct. 24, 1991 relative to the implementation of an audio supplement for cable which could be delivered in diverse languages.

In City Council,

Nov. 4, 1991

11/4/91 No action taken
11/18/91 Amended report
Accepted &
Placed on file