



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300
FAX 349-4307



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

September 28, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 18, regarding a report on Media One's marketing practices, received from Consumer Council Executive Director Paul Schlaver and License Commissioner Benjamin Barnes.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



CAMBRIDGE CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

831 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA 02139

Tel. (617) 349-6150

349-6153

City Of Cambridge

Paul J. Schlaver
Executive Director

TO: Robert W. Healy
FROM: Paul Schlaver
THROUGH: Benjamin Barnes
DATE: September 8, 1998

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

98 SEP -9 PM 12:44
serving the
residents of:
Cambridge
Boston

RE: Council Order #122, dated 7/27/98 RE: Report on Media One's Marketing Practices...

Last fall, winter and early spring saw a series of City Council orders regarding various activities of Media One in regards to marketing, new fibre optics wiring throughout the city, billing practices, etc. The Consumers' Council and other city departments responded to these various orders.

The Consumers' Advisory Commission held a televised public meeting with Media One representatives last December following some of the complaint mediation and investigation done by the Consumers' Council staff. I testified before the Cable TV Division of the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy in March in an effort to express the City's desire to have strong consumer protection measures in place for the Cable TV industry.

Since this past spring, the Consumers' Council has had very few telephone inquiries or written complaints regarding Media One. Any inquiries made to our contact person, Tim Murnane, Manager of Government Affairs for Media One, by the Consumers' Council have been promptly answered.

I believe that Media One has certainly heard the call from the City of Cambridge to heed the concerns repeatedly raised over the past year. Media One, it would appear to me, has tried to develop a less aggressive marketing strategy than the one displayed last year and also been quick to respond to any individual complaints brought to their attention.

As has been stated before, The City's contract with its Cable TV provider and the DTE are the two means of legally imposing any standards or requirements on Media One or any other potential Cable TV services provider. Consumer protection laws in Massachusetts emphasize that the disclosure of all information the consumer needs to make a purchase decision must be given PRIOR to the decision or agreement is made. Consumer laws do not outlaw commission sales, telemarketing sales or other pro-active business practices. Evidence and factual information that can withstand court scrutiny must demonstrate claims of deceptive practices.



This is Broadband. This is the way.

September 8, 1998

Mr. Paul Schlaver
Cambridge Consumers' Council
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Schlaver:

Pursuant to your request I am responding to the July 27, 1998 Council Order 122., which makes allegations of MediaOne using aggressive and deceptive business practices.

As you know, there was an allegation of problematic sales practices lodged against MediaOne last Fall. At that time, MediaOne attended a forum at the Cambridge Consumer Council to addresses any questions or issues raised by the public regarding our new products and services. Additionally, MediaOne wrote to Mr. Healy, City Manager on April 6, 1998 and outlined the extensive quality controls which are in place to monitor the activities of our salespeople. As we indicated last Fall, we are not using aggressive and deceptive business practices. The appointments scheduled by our representatives are purely voluntary and in no way is a customer forced to purchase services. In regard to the Council inquiry of commission-based selling, as in most sales environments, our representatives are compensated for certain services sold to a customer. In order to ensure the highest level of quality service for our customers we conduct random surveys in which we assess the experience the customer had with our representative. Our statistics are quite impressive for customer satisfaction. They have consistently netted results where better than 9 out of 10 customers surveyed are satisfied with the information they were provided and the interaction they had with our personnel.

As we discussed during the past few months, I am not aware of specific complaints with regard to our business practices. I would be interested to hear of the particular cases referenced in the Council Order.

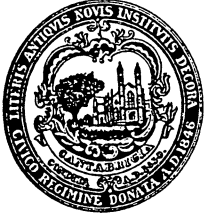
As always, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Timothy G. Murnane
Manager of Government Affairs

330 Billerica Road

Chelmsford, MA 01824-4193



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Sincerely yours,

Timothy G. Murnane

Manager of Government Affairs

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

September 14, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 23, regarding a report on Media One's marketing practices, received from Consumer Council Executive Director Paul Schlaver and License Commissioner Benjamin Barnes.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment

Consent Agenda #10

5768

Relative to a report on Media
One's marketing practices.

In City Council September 14, 1998

No Action Taken

SEP. 28 1998

PLACED ON FILE