

Worksession

MEMORANDUM

January 15, 2013

TO: Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee
FROM: Dr. Costis Toregas, Council IT Adviser
SUBJECT: Enhanced consumer outreach on cable and broadband

Expected to attend:

Eric Friedman, Director, Office of Consumer Protection
Mitsuko R. Herrera, Cable and Broadband Administrator, DTS
Marjorie Williams, Franchise Manager
Keith Watkins, Chief Investigator
Derrick Kenny, Web Manager
Donna Keating, Media Service Manager
Richard Wells, Chair of the Cable Communications Advisory Commission
Merlyn Reineke, Chair, PEG Governance Board and Executive Director, MCM

Staff Recommendations:

1. Review actions taken and suggested by Executive branch organizations and give additional direction and advice regarding enhanced consumer outreach.
2. Discuss a strategy to address industry norms and consumer privileges and rights in this domain, where not only County, but State and Federal jurisdictions sometimes come into conflict with County intent.

Background

Councilmember Ervin wrote to Eric Friedman, Office of Consumer Protection, and Mitsuko Herrera, Cable and Broadband Communications Administrator, on November 2, 2012, requesting additional community outreach on how Montgomery County and/or other regulatory entities can help residents regarding cable and broadband issues (see ©1-2). This followed a GO Committee worksession on October 8, 2012, where the lengthy response of cable operators to service interruptions was noted.

The Cable and Broadband Communications Administrator provided a response to Ms. Ervin's letter (see ©3-11). In this response, statistics on consumer complaints are provided, and strategies are laid out in terms of follow up. These strategies will be explored during the worksession.

The Cable and Communications Advisory Committee has provided comments (see ©12-13) and represents a very useful community resource that can assist the County's exploration of new outreach strategies.

In addition, Eric Friedman provided the following information; he will be present at this worksession to amplify on these thoughts:

As you know, the Cable Division of DTS handles all the cable complaints.

While our office does not directly handle cable complaints, we do have experience with consumer education and outreach.

Perhaps the GO Committee would like to consider and discuss:

- *Use OCP's Cable TV show "Consumer Compass" to produce and focus one segment on cable issues.*
- *Have the Cable providers distribute a "bill-stuffer" to let consumers know they can contact MC to complain.*
- *Conduct an "On-line Chat" with the Director of the Cable Office regarding cable issues.*
- *Schedule a Town Hall Meeting regarding cable issues and concerns.*

Please see examples of our Cable TV show and our On-line chats below.

Below is a link to our first episode for the New Year of our Cable TV Show Consumer Compass

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FPXwFEnB2Q>

This consumer news magazine show contains the following topics and public service announcements:

- *Predatory & Aggressive Towing (ABC News 20/20) [2:15 minute mark]*
- *Commission on Common Ownership Forum [7:15 minute mark]; including Delegate Jim Gilchrist [9:56] and Councilmember Phil Andrews [11:39]*
- *Grandparent Scam - PSA [17:13 minute mark]*
- *Annual Credit Report- PSA [18:31 minute mark]*
- *Korean Consumer Protection Delegation Visits Montgomery County [19:17 minute mark]*
- *Misleading Advertising Directory [26:15 minute mark]*
- *Lottery Scam- PSA [28:30 minute mark]*

Special thanks to: Producer: Cathy Grubman and Videographer: Mike Springirth

On-Line Chats with the Director of Consumer Protection:

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/News/Discussion/PIOTrans.asp?schedID=41>

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/News/Discussion/pioDisc.asp?discID=7>

One last thought...

How about having our cable TV production staff create 30 second Public Service Announcements (PSA's) letting viewers know what services MC provides regarding cable complaints.

We could show that PSC on our MC channel and maybe get Verizon and Comcast to show the PSC on other channels too?

Staff Suggestions for Discussion

1. One of the difficult impediments to consumer satisfaction is the overlapping jurisdiction of County (through the franchise agreement with each operator), State (through the PUC regulation of wire line services, and Federal (through the FCC that regulates aspects of cable service not under the jurisdiction of the County). This multiplicity of jurisdictions causes the achievement of a uniform and coherent response during emergencies such as the recent Derecho event to be

difficult. It would be useful to establish an intergovernmental strategy that unifies these three tiers of legislation for the consumer. In some industries (airlines, for example), a consumer bill of rights has been enacted that guarantees certain redress processes and even remuneration when standards are not met.

IN 1999, the FCC organized a "Cable Consumer Bill of Rights Campaign" with several elements that could be helpful to the Committee's deliberations. Here is the text:

CABLE CONSUMER BILL OF RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Effective tomorrow, April 1, 1999, the FCC's statutory authority to directly regulate rates for cable television service expires as a result of a "sunset provision" enacted by Congress in the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

In ending the FCC's rate regulation authority, Congress indicated that it expected that competition in the video programming marketplace would serve to keep cable service prices reasonable. At this point that has not yet occurred. The FCC will continue to open up the video marketplace by working to remove barriers to competition.

In the meantime, all cable users in the country should be aware of options available to them, so today I am launching a consumer education program to make consumers aware of what they can do in a deregulated marketplace:

From your cable company:

- (1) Consumers should expect a fair deal from their local cable company, with reasonable rates that fairly reflect the costs of doing business.
- (2) Consumers should expect an explanation from their cable companies whenever rates for the programming service tier are raised, particularly when cable companies attribute price rises to increases in the cost of obtaining programming.
- (3) Consumers are entitled to write or call their cable companies whenever they have complaints about the cable services being provided on the various channels, or about program cost increases, and they should expect a speedy response.

From your local government:

- (4) Consumers are entitled to file complaints with their local government (i.e. city, town or county) regarding basic tier cable rate increases and service quality.

From the FCC:

- (5) Consumers are entitled to provide their own inside wiring for cable hookups.
- (6) Consumers will soon be entitled to purchase and use cable set-top boxes at competitive market prices.

Additionally:

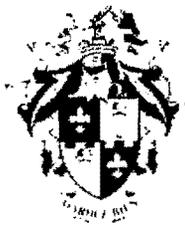
- (7) Consumers have a right to contact local, state and national consumer advocacy groups with grievances that are not being adequately resolved by their cable providers.
- (8) Consumers unhappy with their local cable company should explore competitive alternatives for video programming service available from DBS (direct broadcast satellite) and other providers.

In Europe, there is an Air Passengers' Rights legislation (see more at http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/the_eu_and_you/faq/air_travel/index_en.htm) that performs a similar quality function on the open market place. However, this principle has not yet been applied explicitly to the area of cable and phone service in an intergovernmental sense precisely because of the overlapping jurisdiction by technology platform. Committee members could discuss its applicability and potential application using the County's Emergency Management powers during such extraordinary events as the Derecho presented.

2. The Council and the County Executive are both supportive of an Open Government initiative; part of that initiative involves the establishment of data portals, where the performance of government organizations is open and available to members of the public. The same openness could be explored in the area of telecommunication services, where portals could be maintained by the County or by non-governmental organizations targeting quality and costing of telecommunications services.
3. The County is currently engaged in a franchising effort with one of the three telecommunications providers. The questions under discussion could give rise to more explicit metrics or Service Level Agreements with the provider, which could be incorporated not only in the specific agreement, but made part of the County policy towards citizen – centered standards of performance, especially when public health or public safety are at stake.

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

RECEIVED
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

NOV 2 2012 11:18

VALERIE ERVIN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

Memorandum

To: Eric Friedman, Director, Office of Consumer Protection
Mitsuko Herrera, Cable and Broadband Communications Administrator, Office of Cable and Broadband Services
Council Vice President Nancy Navarro, Councilmember – District 4

From: Valerie Ervin, Councilmember – District 5

Date: November 2, 2012

Re: **Enhanced Consumer Outreach on Cable and Broadband**

I am writing today to ask for additional community outreach on how Montgomery County and/or other regulatory entities can help residents regarding cable and broadband issues.

On October 8, the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee held a meeting to review the June 29 storm event, specifically regarding the County's cable companies. The GO Committee heard about ongoing issues with cable and broadband providers after major storms, such as timely service restoration, customer notification procedures, and the sharing of service outage information with emergency management officials. We also heard from a resident who gave a personal account of an extreme situation in which she did not have service restored for almost two months. I advocated for a "Consumer Bill of Rights," which would set minimum standards for these services.

I recently met with staff from the County Attorney's Office on ways to address the customer issues discussed. While minor changes to County law or request letters to elected leaders in Federal and State government may be considered in the future, we determined that the best, first step was to remind residents about what the County can already do to help residents.

I know that the Office of Consumer Protection and the Cable Office both provide outreach to Montgomery County residents. However, I feel there still may be gaps in the community when it comes to knowing how the County can help address cable and broadband issues with companies. I am requesting that Council Vice President Navarro convene a follow-up GO Committee worksession on December 3 to discuss the applicable cable laws and activities conducted by your offices and the Cable Compliance Committee. I want to explore innovative ways we can get this information out to consumers. In my opinion, we need to help constituents access the resources we already have through enhanced customer education campaigns in the press, through social media, and through materials service providers send to residents.

I look forward to working with you on this issue. Please feel free to contact my office with any questions regarding this request at 240-777-7960. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

c: Councilmembers
Chris Voss, Manager, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
Clifford L. Royalty, Associate County Attorney, County Attorney's Office
Costis Toregas, Council Staff
Richard Wells, Chair, Cable and Communications Advisory Committee



DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Harash (Sonny) Segal
Chief Information Officer

MEMORANDUM

January 14, 2013

TO: Dr. Costis Toregas, Council IT Analysis

FROM: Mitsuko R. Herrera, Cable & Broadband Communications Administrator,
Office of Cable and Broadband Services, Department of Technology Services

SUBJECT: January 17, 2013 Worksession – Consumer Outreach re: Assistance with Cable and Broadband Complaints

We are pleased that the Office of Cable & Broadband Services has been asked by the County Council's Government and Operations Committee to discuss ways to better inform Montgomery County residents of the services the County offers to assist residents with cable and Internet-related complaints. We will be prepared at the meeting to discuss:

1. Current services offered by the Office of Cable & Broadband Services
2. Expanded Outreach
 - a. Offers to make presentations at community associations
 - b. Offers to provide information for community newsletters and websites
 - c. Planned enhancements to the Cable & Broadband Office website
 - d. Video outreach campaign leveraging "Consumer Compass" and public service announcements on local cable television channels
3. Seeking substantive review and advice from the Cable Communications Advisory Commission on Expanded Outreach efforts.

Attached herein is the latest cable complaint data. During the worksession, we request that the audio visual equipment be made available for a demonstration of planned enhancements to our website.

Attending the meeting will be:

- Mitsuko Herrera, Cable & Broadband Administrator
- Marjorie Williams, Franchise Manager
- Keith Watkins, Chief Investigator

Memo to Dr. Toregas re: Consumer Outreach
January 14, 2013
Page 2 of 2

- Derrick Kenny, Web Manager
- Donna Keating, Media Service Manager
- Richard Wells, Chair, Cable Communications Advisory Commission

cc: Harash (Sonny) Segal, Director, DTS
Marjorie Williams, Franchise Manager, Office of Cable & Broadband Services, DTS
Keith Watkins, Chief Investigator, Office of Cable & Broadband Services, DTS
Derrick Kenny, Web Manager, Office of Cable & Broadband Services, DTS
Richard Wells, Chair, Cable Communications Advisory Commission
Eric Friedman, Director, Office of Consumer Protection
Chris Voss, Director, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

Montgomery County Maryland 2012 Cable Operator Customer Service Score Card

FCC Compliance Statistics

Based on data reported by cable operators, measuring all calls and scheduled appointments. Data is not independently verified.

		Telephone Answering								Service				Installation			
		Answered in 30 Seconds				Transferred to Agent in 30 Secs				Service within 24 Hours				Installed within 7 Days			
		<i>Minimum FCC Standard 90%</i>								<i>Minimum FCC Standard 95%</i>				<i>Minimum FCC Standard 95%</i>			
		1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12	1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12	1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12	1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12
COMCAST		99.0%	99.0%	99.0%		94.3%	95.3%	96.7%		96.8%	95.1%	98.1%		94.7%	97.5%	92.9%	
RCN		98.3%	98.7%	98.0%		56.3%	54.0%	25.0%		99.7%	98.3%	97.7%		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
VERIZON		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		93.2%	93.7%	92.0%		95.9%	96.2%	100.0%		99.2%	97.0%	99.2%	

Customer Service Outcomes

*Based on Cable and Broadband Office collected data, measuring customer satisfaction among complaints referred to the Cable and Broadband Office for assistance and reported by the cable operator to have been resolved.**

	Cummulative Survey Response Rate	Agree That Complaint Was Resolved				Agree That Complaint Was Resolved in a Reasonable Period of Time				Satisfied with Outcome of Complaint				Satisfied with Cable Office Assistance to Resolve Complaint			
		1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12	1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12	1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12	1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12
COMCAST	54%	88%	95%	93%		82%	79%	68%		91%	95%	86%		100%	97%	96%	
	192/356	49/56	36/38	91/98		46/56	30/38	67/98		51/56	36/38	84/98		56/56	37/38	94/98	
RCN	56%	100%	-	80%		100%		80%		100%		80%		100%		100%	
	9/16	4/7	0/0	4/5		4/7	0/0	4/5		4/7	0/0	4/5		4/7	0/0	4/5	
VERIZON	52%	84%	82%	73%		84%	59%	47%		89%	82%	60%		100%	86%	97%	
	71/136	16/19	18/22	22/30		16/19	13/22	14/30		17/19	18/22	18/30		19/19	19/22	29/30	
TOTAL	54%	87%	90%	88%		84%	72%	64%		91%	90%	80%		100%	93%	96%	
	272/508	69/79	54/60	117/133		66/79	43/60	85/133		72/79	54/60	106/133		79/79	56/60	128/133	

* After a consumer has been unable to resolve an issue directly with the cable operator, the Cable and Broadband Office will provide assistance. After the provider reports that the issue has been resolved, the Cable and Broadband Office will send a customer satisfaction survey. Customer satisfaction among consumers who have a complaint resolved directly by the cable operator without assistance by the Cable and Broadband Office is not included in this data set.

Complaint Description

Timeframe: 3rd Quarter 2012

6

<i>Comcast Complaints</i>	<i>Billing Marketing</i>	<i>Customer Service Telephone Answ Time</i>	<i>Telephone Service</i>	<i>Internet Service</i>	<i>Reception</i>	<i>Installation</i>	<i>Construction, Cable Line Related, Inspections</i>	<i>Service-ability</i>	<i>Other</i>
203	80	63	23	54	46	5	26	1	3
<i>Complaint Percentage</i>	39.4%	31.0%	11.3%	26.6%	22.7%	2.5%	12.8%	0.5%	1.5%
<i>Total Issue Percentage</i>	26.6%	20.9%	7.6%	17.9%	15.3%	1.7%	8.6%	0.3%	1.0%
<i>Total Issues Generated</i>		301	<i>Total Issues per Complaint</i>		1.5	<i>Inspection Complaints: 7</i>			

<i>RCN Complaints</i>	<i>Billing Marketing</i>	<i>Customer Service Telephone Answ Time</i>	<i>Telephone Service</i>	<i>Internet Service</i>	<i>Reception</i>	<i>Installation</i>	<i>Construction, Cable Line Related, Inspections</i>	<i>Service-ability</i>	<i>Other</i>
12	4	3	2	2	3	0	4	0	0
<i>Complaint Percentage</i>	33.3%	25.0%	16.7%	16.7%	25.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Issue Percentage</i>	22.2%	16.7%	11.1%	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Total Issues Generated</i>		18	<i>Total Issues per Complaint</i>		1.6	<i>Inspection Complaints: 2</i>			

<i>Verizon Complaints</i>	<i>Billing Marketing</i>	<i>Customer Service Telephone Answ Time</i>	<i>Telephone Service</i>	<i>Internet Service</i>	<i>Reception</i>	<i>Installation</i>	<i>Construction, Cable Line Related, Inspections</i>	<i>Service-ability</i>	<i>Other</i>
73	35	12	9	11	9	4	15	1	1
<i>Complaint Percentage</i>	47.9%	16.4%	12.3%	15.1%	12.3%	5.5%	20.5%	1.4%	1.4%
<i>Issue Percentage</i>	36.1%	12.4%	9.3%	11.3%	9.3%	4.1%	15.5%	1.0%	1.0%
<i>Total Issues Generated</i>		97	<i>Total Issues per Complaint</i>		1.4	<i>Inspection Complaints: 5</i>			

	<i>Billing Marketing</i>	<i>Customer Service Telephone Answ Time</i>	<i>Telephone Service</i>	<i>Internet Service</i>	<i>Reception</i>	<i>Installation</i>	<i>Construction, Cable Line Related, Inspections</i>	<i>Service-ability</i>	<i>Other</i>
Totals:	119	78	34	67	58	9	45	2	4

11/7/2012

Total Complaints filed: 288

Total Issues: 416

Issues per Complaint: 1.4

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Not a Franchised Complaint but Handled by the Cable Office: 5

Inspection Complaints 14

Montgomery County Maryland

2012 Cable & Broadband Complaint Resolution Report

	1st Qtr-12	2nd Qtr-12	3rd Qtr-12	4th Qtr-12
Comcast % Resolved	95.0%	92.4%	98.0%	
Received	121	119	196	
Resolved	115	110	192	
# of days to Resolve	3.9	3.0	3.8	
RCN % Resolved	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Received	7	1	10	
Resolved	7	1	10	
# of days to Resolve	6.7	2.0	6.4	
Verizon % Resolved	90.6%	90.0%	87.3%	
Received	64	60	63	
Resolved	58	54	55	
# of days to Resolve	5.5	6.4	6.5	
Total % Resolved	93.8%	91.7%	95.5%	
Received	192	180	269	
Resolved	180	165	257	
# of days to Resolve	5.4	3.8	5.6	

Last updated: November 6, 2012



Montgomery County Maryland 2012 Cable & Broadband Refund Report

Consumer Credits Obtained by the Cable & Broadband Office

	1st Qtr 2012			2nd Qtr 2012			3rd Qtr 2012		
	Comcast	RCN	Verizon	Comcast	RCN	Verizon	Comcast	RCN	Verizon
Total Filed Complaints	145	7	69	143	3	66	196	10	63
Total Complaints Receiving Credits	69	6	25	50	0	26	109	5	25
Percentage of Complaints Receiving Credits	47.6%	85.7%	36.2%	35.0%	0.0%	39.4%	55.6%	50.0%	39.7%
Total Amount Credited	\$8,746.49	\$597.32	\$4,932.58	\$6,165.62	\$0.00	\$5,772.07	\$9,559.68	\$410.75	\$4,031.18
Average Amount Credited per Complaint	\$126.76	\$99.55	\$197.30	\$123.31	\$0.00	\$222.00	\$87.70	\$82.15	\$161.25
Grand Total of Credits Obtained on Behalf of Subscribers	\$14,276.39			\$11,937.69			\$14,001.61		

Last Updated: November 6, 2012

Montgomery County Maryland Cable Inspection Report

	COMCAST INSPECTIONS AND VIOLATIONS									
	1st Qtr-12		2nd Qtr-12		3rd Qtr-12		4th Qtr-12		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sites Inspected	211		554		244				1,009	
Construction Violations	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%			1	0%
In-field Violations	613	91%	215	68%	248	81%			1,076	83%
Homeowner Complaints	62	9%	99	31%	57	19%			218	17%
Total Violations	675		315		305				1,295	
Total Repaired	533	79%	183	58%	145	48%			861	66%
Repairs Outstanding	142	21%	132	42%	160	52%			434	34%
Re-Inspections	218		201		189				608	
% Found Corrected		82.6%		90.5%		93.1%			81	96%

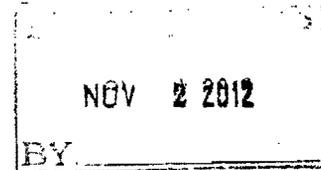
	RCN INSPECTIONS AND VIOLATIONS									
	1st Qtr-12		2nd Qtr-12		3rd Qtr-12		4th Qtr-12		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sites Inspected	0		0		0				0	
Construction Violations	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%			0	0%
In-field Violations	31	45%	6	46%	14	70%			51	50%
Homeowner Complaints	38	55%	7	54%	6	30%			51	50%
Total Violations	69		13		20				102	
Total Repaired	69	100%	13	100%	13	65%			95	93%
Repairs Outstanding	0	0%	0	0%	7	35%			7	7%
Re-Inspections	13		4		19				36	
% Found Corrected		85%		100%		100.0%			81	96%

	VERIZON INSPECTIONS AND VIOLATIONS									
	1st Qtr-12		2nd Qtr-12		3rd Qtr-12		4th Qtr-12		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sites Inspected	106		304		189				599	
Construction Violations	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%			1	0%
In-field Violations	156	80%	76	60%	109	75%			341	73%
Homeowner Complaints	38	20%	50	39%	37	25%			125	27%
Total Violations	194		127		146				467	
Total Repaired	102	53%	64	50%	51	35%			217	46%
Repairs Outstanding	92	47%	63	50%	95	65%			250	54%
Re-Inspections	116		88		56				260	
% Found Corrected		96%		95.5%		83.9%			81	96%

	ICBN INSPECTIONS AND VIOLATIONS									
	1st Qtr-12		2nd Qtr-12		3rd Qtr-12		4th Qtr-12		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sites Inspected	437		425		273				1,135	
Construction Violations	1	0.23%	3	0.71%	1	0.37%			5	0%
In-field Violations	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%			0	0%
Homeowner Complaints	3	75%	2	40%	0	0%			5	50%
Total Violations	4		5		1				10	
Total Repaired	4	100%	5	100%	1	100%			10	100%
Repairs Outstanding	0	0%		0%		0%			0	0%
Re-Inspections	4								4	
% Found Corrected		100%		0%		0%			81	96%



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND



VALERIE ERVIN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

Memorandum

To: Eric Friedman, Director, Office of Consumer Protection
Mitsuko Herrera, Cable and Broadband Communications Administrator, Office
of Cable and Broadband Services
Council Vice President Nancy Navarro, Councilmember – District 4

From: Valerie Ervin, Councilmember – District 5

Date: November 2, 2012

Re: **Enhanced Consumer Outreach on Cable and Broadband**

I am writing today to ask for additional community outreach on how Montgomery County and/or other regulatory entities can help residents regarding cable and broadband issues.

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c: Councilmembers
Chris Voss, Manager, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
Clifford L. Royalty, Associate County Attorney, County Attorney's Office
Costis Toregas, Council Staff
Richard Wells, Chair, Cable and Communications Advisory Committee

Memorandum

TO: Dr. Costis Toregas, Council IT Analysis

FROM: Richard Wells, Chair, Cable and Communications Advisory Committee

DATE: January 14, 2013

SUBJECT: January 17, 2013 Work session - Consumer Outreach

As follow up to the Oct GO meeting, we on the Cable and Communications Advisory Committee (CCAC) agree with GO Committee members when they observe we in Montgomery County are dependent on broadband services for more than just entertainment. The restoration of services impacts 911 emergency, business, important personal interactive relationships and we have more and more services dependent on broadband, cable, voice over broadband & TV.

At this time, the FCC has yet to update technical standards to reflect modern digital cable platforms. The Cable Office has little muscle to control cable operators customer service and technical operation as many aspects are beyond the scope of the franchise agreement. It would seem the following conditions exist:

A) We are waiting for the Cable Office & County Attorney to advise us on what the options are to improve our authority over issues such as cable modem, and other data or voice over broadband. We can see if the FCC will be able to provide improved technical standards for cable service to remove some of the ambiguities that exist today but action, if any has been slow so far.

B) If control over cable providers can't be found via the FCC or Franchise then perhaps Customer Protection regulations can be used. We on the CCAC would indeed support the implementation of a "Consumer Bill of Rights", and we would look forward to proving input on such a document. We know such activity has not started and hope we can explore the options on the 17th.

C) Since October, have the cable providers responded with any of the requested information that Chris Voss and Mitsuko Herrera have noted that they have requested? In so many meetings with the providers when they attend, we ask for information and the answer is "I'll get back to you on that....". This is a common condition and is not resolved for years. Just recently, during the fall meeting when providers did attend, some providers were not able to answer basic questions about the number of service calls within the County. The CCAC would like input from the providers on the questions posed during the last meeting answered.

D) We support a wonderful portion of the talk from the 8th of October GO meeting:

Franchise or not, somehow we need to change how we do business with the cable providers and how they do business with the customer. Just like Pepco, we must develop a way to share information and cooperation to improve the level of service. It should be a matter of self interest if we can get it right

and preserve a customer, reduce costs by lowering the number of calls and provide for the community good by just doing the right thing.

E) The CCAC has set consumer outreach and education of via a series of short topic webinar as one of our prime objective for 2013. We have talked with the Cable Office about this and look forward to the opportunity.

Also, during a 2012 October GO meeting, the CCAC was granted opportunity to speak and offered some suggestions, in the effort to continue to improve the situation, we reiterate the following:

- 1)Billing the number one issue with customer complaints per the Cable Office Complaint report, and perhaps cable providers marketing promos should be more like credit cards to be clear cut and state what you will get. This will reduce the confusion of what happens when promos run out and may reduce the cause for so many calls. This is a major issue that will require extensive attention to resolve.
- 2)PEG channel name and program listing should be posted on the interactive program guides of all cable providers. This information is vital for the public to be aware of what information is being provided and to omit it is to treat our County channels in an discriminatory manner. This issue has so far been beyond current control of the County and seems to be something one cable provider is unwilling to help us with.
- 3)Cable Funds should be used for public communications issues not Ride-On bus or other General Funds. This issue is under the current control of the County.
- 4)The underground cable that are exposed is a minor issue in the grand scope of issues. This issue seems to be well under control.
- 5)Training of Customer Service Representative to provide better customer service should be most important and may be responsible for a large number of issues. Like issue #1, this will attention to resolve but is more a provider issue.