

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

CABLE COMPLIANCE COMMISSION  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

----- X  
:  
COMCAST FRANCHISE RENEWAL :  
PUBLIC HEARING :  
:  
----- X

A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on  
Monday, August 3, 2015, commencing at 6:58 p.m., in the  
Lobby Level Auditorium at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville,  
Maryland 20850, before:

MICHAEL SUBIN



INDEX

<u>STATEMENT OF:</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Phil Roter	4
Josh Bokee	6
Merlyn Reineke	9
Richard Wells	11
Mary Lou Berg	12
Suzanne Ludlow	14
Rachel Moskal	16
Hamrawit Tesfa	19
Joanne Carl	20
Carolina Pena Galeano	23
Jeffrey Slavin	25
Bert Ollie	27
John Prue	28
Pam Doring	30
Brady Wilks	32
Bobbi Prue	34
Michael Tineo	34
Cassidy Prue	35
Sue Ellen Ferguson	36
Joan Fontana	38

P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 MR. SUBIN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.  
3 For the record it is now 7:00 p.m. on August 3rd, 2015, and  
4 we are in the County Executive's Office Building, 101 Monroe  
5 Street, Rockville, Maryland 20850, and in the lobby  
6 auditorium. This is a public hearing on the Comcast Cable  
7 Franchise Renewal for Montgomery County. My name is Michael  
8 Subin, and I am the County Executive's designated hearing  
9 officer for this hearing.

10 The record after this hearing will remain open  
11 until 5:00 p.m. on the 17th of August 2015. After that, and  
12 during the period after this hearing, comments can be sent  
13 to Mr. Phil Roter, R-O-T-E-R, the Cable and Broadband  
14 Administrator for Montgomery County, and he is located at  
15 100 Maryland Avenue, Suite 250, Rockville, Maryland 20850,  
16 and his email is phil.roter@montgomerycountymd.gov. I will  
17 repeat that information at the end of the hearing for you.

18 With the exception of Mr. Roter, who will be  
19 speaking first, each speaker will have three minutes. There  
20 is a timer that will be located to your right, against the  
21 wall, and we will let you know when you have 30 seconds  
22 remaining. When we call your name, please come to the  
23 podium in front of me and state your name and address, and  
24 your organization and title for the record.

25 Mr. Phil Roter, representing the Montgomery County

1 Office of Cable and Broadband Services. Good evening, Mr.  
2 Roter.

3 MR. ROTER: Thank you, and good evening. My name  
4 is Phil Roter, for the record, and I'm the County's Cable  
5 and Broadband Administrator. The County Executive is  
6 holding this hearing to receive public input and to decide  
7 whether the franchise held by Comcast should be renewed in  
8 light of the three documents that we have.

9 One, a review franchise agreement, a renewal  
10 franchise agreement, another is the settlement agreement,  
11 and another is an indiffusible right of use or IRU  
12 Agreement. The proposed agreements are the product of  
13 extended negotiations between our office and Comcast. The  
14 Renewal Franchise Agreement renews Comcast Cable franchise  
15 through 2021. The settlement resolves certain issues with  
16 respect to Comcast's past performance. The IRU effectively  
17 preserves the County's right to use a Comcast provided  
18 institutional network or iNet, connecting major county  
19 facilities for video and data communications.

20 The cable office recommends that the County  
21 Executive approve the Renewal Franchise Agreement and  
22 related agreements. We believe that the agreements, while a  
23 compromise, serve the interests of cable subscribers and the  
24 County. The proposed franchise agreement increases our  
25 number of PEG channels from 11 to 14, and includes the

1 launch of up to five high definition PEG channels. It  
2 requires Comcast to serve all parts of the County. Though  
3 some customers may be required to share system extension  
4 costs. The franchise agreement provides County and  
5 participating municipalities with a five percent franchise  
6 fee, and capital grants for PEG and iNet uses of the system.

7           The settlement allows use of grants for operating  
8 through the separate IRU Agreement, the County secures the  
9 availability of Comcast facilities, which are part of the  
10 iNet for at least 15 years, and obtains the right to acquire  
11 those facilities at the end of the IRU term. In addition,  
12 the agreements secure the current obligations of Comcast  
13 with respect to the provision of courtesy services to  
14 schools and public institutions.

15           The franchise agreement contains extensive  
16 consumer protection provisions. Through these and other  
17 provisions, we believe we've achieved the county's major  
18 renewal goals. If the Executive is satisfied with these  
19 agreements, the documents will be transmitted to the  
20 Montgomery County Council with the Executive's  
21 recommendation. We will also be meeting with the  
22 municipalities affected by the documents to ensure they're  
23 comfortable with them. We've already provided the  
24 agreements to them for their review.

25           Absent approval, we will be required to return to

1 the negotiating table with Comcast, or to go through a  
2 renewal process prescribed by federal law. Both processes  
3 could be very time consuming, and we cannot predict the  
4 outcome. Overall, the cable office believes that the  
5 agreements represent a reasonable compromise that serves the  
6 County's major goals going into the renewal.

7 MR. SUBIN: Thank you, Mr. Roter. Our next  
8 speaker is Mr. Josh Bokee, Director of Government Affairs  
9 for Comcast. Welcome Mr. Bokee.

10 MR. BOKEE: Good evening, Mr. Subin. Good  
11 evening, my name is Josh Bokee. I reside at 354 Park Avenue  
12 in Frederick, Maryland. I am the Director of Government and  
13 Regulatory Affairs for Comcast for the Beltway Region. With  
14 me this evening is also John Conwell (phonetic. sp.), Vice  
15 President of Government Affairs for Comcast. We welcome  
16 this opportunity to be here before you. I would like to  
17 thank the County Executive, Issiah Leggett, and his team,  
18 for the hard work that has led to the negotiated video  
19 franchise agreement that is now before you. Comcast  
20 supports this agreement and requests County ratification.

21 Comcast has operated in Montgomery County since  
22 2002. The negotiated video franchise agreement provides the  
23 right to operate so that customers in Montgomery County have  
24 access to a great and ever evolving communications  
25 technology platform, while also providing additional public

1 benefits that flow to the County as a result.

2 Comcast offers video, voice, internet, home  
3 management, and business services, to virtually every  
4 resident and business that our plant infrastructure passes  
5 in Montgomery County. Comcast is applying the latest  
6 innovation and technology to entertain, inform, and connect  
7 people in new ways. Through Xfinity TV, customers receive  
8 the best viewing experience any time and anywhere, with the  
9 most extensive collection of entertainment available via  
10 Xfinity On Demand and the use of the X1 Platform, which  
11 reflects a powerful innovation to deliver a superior video  
12 entertain experience.

13 Comcast is fully committed to the goal to make  
14 customer service and the customer service our best product.  
15 Comcast is taking the same focus that we've had on product  
16 innovation and technology experiences, and applying that to  
17 customer service. This includes new cloud-based platforms  
18 to give our employees a better view of a customer's account  
19 history, and a re-imagined retail experience. And here in  
20 Montgomery County this now includes two customer retail  
21 locations with the recent store opening in Aspen Hill, plus  
22 third party locations for additional payment options and  
23 exchange of equipment. And customers can interact with our  
24 representatives by phone, live chat, and now even Facebook.  
25 And through the customer guarantee, Comcast offers two hour

1 appointment windows and service options such as self-install  
2 kits.

3 Comcast's culture is one that highly values  
4 accessibility, integrity, inclusion and diversity, both  
5 within the workplace and in how we relate to our customers.  
6 Comcast is once again named one of the Washington Post's  
7 2015 Top Work Places, listed among Diversity, Inc.'s 2015  
8 Top 50 Companies for Diversity, and was recognized as a top  
9 employer for Latino's on the 2014 Latino Style 50 Report.  
10 These values extend beyond the workplace to our customers,  
11 which recently Comcast has launched the industries first  
12 voice-guided TV interface that allows search and discovery  
13 for people with visual impairments and other disabilities.

14 MR. SUBIN: Could you begin to summarize, Mr.  
15 Bokee, please? Thank you.

16 MR. BOKEE: Absolutely. Comcast accessibility  
17 also means connecting low income households to internet for  
18 the first time through Internet Essentials. In conclusion,  
19 Montgomery County is a highly competitive market, and one  
20 that Comcast is proud to serve. We are making continuing  
21 investments in here, in technology, infrastructure, and our  
22 people, to provide the best products and services to our  
23 customers. We support this negotiated franchise agreement,  
24 and we look forward to the next steps of the approval  
25 process. Thank you.

1 MR. SUBIN: Thank you, Mr. Bokee, good to see you  
2 again. The next speaker is Mr. Merlyn Reineke, who is the  
3 Executive Director of Montgomery County Community Media.

4 MR. REINEKE: Thank you, Mr. Subin, good evening.  
5 I'm Merlyn Reineke, Executive Director of Montgomery  
6 Community Media, and Chair of the PEG Governance Board,  
7 which represents the public education and government media  
8 organizations here in Montgomery County. Those include  
9 Montgomery County government, Montgomery College, Montgomery  
10 County Public Schools, and Montgomery Community Media.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to highlight my  
12 written testimony in support of the application for renewal  
13 of the Comcast Cable franchise. One of the most important  
14 elements of a cable franchise is how effectively the  
15 provider is serving the community. Through carriage of  
16 public, education and government channels, Comcast is  
17 offering unique and valuable programming by and for the  
18 residents of Montgomery County.

19 Through this new franchise agreement, we're  
20 pleased to see that Comcast will continue to provide the  
21 necessary support for these PEG operations. And in a time  
22 when the Washington Post and other commercial media  
23 organizations continue to cut back on vital news and  
24 information about Montgomery County, this support for the  
25 PEGs will allow for country residents to benefit from the

1 unique programs and services that PEGs provide.

2           Technology is changing rapidly, and media related  
3 platforms more than any other. High definition television  
4 and broadband service are the standard by which most  
5 Montgomery County residents access video programming. The  
6 PEGs have been producing TV programs in HD for many years  
7 now, but there has been no way cable viewers in Montgomery  
8 County could see them because the cable providers refused to  
9 give HD carriage to the PEGs. This has been a significant  
10 detriment to county residents who deserve to be able to  
11 enjoy local programming at the same quality as other  
12 television channels. That's why we are very pleased to see  
13 that the new Comcast agreement provides for an initial four  
14 PEG channels in high definition, and a fifth PEG channel in  
15 three years time.

16           For those PEG channels not receiving HD carriage,  
17 the PEG Governance Board will explore including content from  
18 these municipal and educational channels providing a level  
19 of HD carriage for individual programs. And while we would  
20 prefer that all PEG channels obtain HD carriage  
21 distribution, this agreement is definitely a step in the  
22 right direction and a bell weather agreement for PEGs all  
23 across the country who have been struggling to obtain the  
24 vital HD carriage in their own communities.

25           By approving this franchise here in Montgomery

1 County, our hope is that Comcast will follow with other PEG  
2 carriage agreements. In conclusion, the PEG Governance  
3 Board would like to thank the negotiating team of their  
4 years of diligent and persistent efforts in successfully  
5 completing a contract with Comcast, one of the largest and  
6 richest media organizations in the world. Moreover, we are  
7 pleased with the support the new franchise provides to  
8 Montgomery County PEGs, as well as long-awaited HD carriage.  
9 We hope the County Executive will support this agreement and  
10 move quickly to approve the Comcast renewal. Thank you.

11 MR. SUBIN: Thank you, Mr. Reineke. If anybody  
12 has written testimony, they can leave that at the table,  
13 which is against the wall on your right. Our next speaker  
14 is Mr. Richard Wells, who is Secretary of the Cable  
15 Communications Advisory Committee. Good evening, Mr. Wells.

16 MR. WELLS: Good evening, sir. Richard Wells, 716  
17 McNeil Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland. I'm representing the  
18 Cable and Communications Advisory Committee as Secretary.  
19 We've had the opportunity to work with the cable office for  
20 the past number of years, and most recently reviewed the  
21 current pending franchise agreement with Comcast. The CCAC  
22 is satisfied with the overall negotiations and concessions  
23 agreement upon by the preliminary draft pending, and some  
24 attached comments are being submitted.

25 As you know, no single provider wants to have a

1 disadvantage compared to another provider. That's only fair  
2 and we at the CCAC wish that the agreement could have more  
3 teeth to provide enforcement and performance so that  
4 customers would have better experience with their provider.  
5 However, we concede that the environment that we're working  
6 under is limited by the franchise agreement and the FCC.  
7 Knowing that you can't always get what you want, the CCAC is  
8 submitting 14 issues for your consideration. There are  
9 nitpicking issues that have to do with your contract to make  
10 things a little bit more consistent. Thank you.

11 MR. SUBIN: Thank you, Mr. Wells. And, Mr. Roter  
12 is aware of those, is he not?

13 MR. WELLS: Yes, sir.

14 MR. SUBIN: And we'll have those for the record.  
15 Our next speaker is Ms. Mary Lou Berg, who is Director of  
16 Communications for the City of Rockville. Welcome.

17 MS. BERG: Thank you so much. My name is Mary Lou  
18 Berg, the Director of Communications, City of Rockville.  
19 We're at 111 Maryland Avenue here in Rockville. We are very  
20 appreciative for the opportunity to offer input on the  
21 Comcast Franchise Agreement. Overall, we find the agreement  
22 to be positive. The City of Rockville is particularly  
23 supportive of the customer service portions of the proposed  
24 agreement, including additional location on the eastern side  
25 of Montgomery County for obtaining and returning agreement,

1 and continued free service to non-profit organizations and  
2 government agencies. The City also supports terms that  
3 allow one percent of the PEG grant to be used for  
4 operations, as opposed to capital, and the remaining two  
5 percent to be used for operations if matched by an equal  
6 amount of general funds.

7           Rockville would like to see a provision in the  
8 franchise agreement that requires Comcast to remove wire and  
9 cable from properties that are no longer using Comcast  
10 within a specific period. We also request that Comcast be  
11 required to provide an easily accessible contact telephone  
12 number that non-customers can use to report issues with  
13 Comcast wires or damage to property by Comcast employees.  
14 The City also requests that Comcast be required to pay  
15 permit fees in a timely manner. Comcast is currently in  
16 arrears for permits granted to complete work in the City's  
17 rights-of-way.

18           The biggest obstacle for the City related to  
19 signing the Comcast agreement is the Memorandum of  
20 Understanding between the County and the City. Without  
21 completion of this important step, it's difficult for the  
22 City to know if its interests will be served by the overall  
23 franchise agreement. While we have seen some preliminary  
24 terms for the MOU, we've only begun the work necessary to  
25 come to agreement on this document. Rockville would like to

1 see the following items included in the final MOU.  
2 Rockville would like guaranteed access to the HD channels  
3 that are being offered in the franchise agreement. We've  
4 completed the work necessary to be HD ready several years  
5 ago, so we're looking forward to that opportunity.

6           Moving forward, Rockville would also like to have  
7 a voting seat on the PEG Governance Board to ensure that our  
8 interests are considered when recommendations are made for  
9 the use of HD channels, channel operations and the like.  
10 Finally, the City is requesting the payment of legal fees  
11 incurred for costs related to franchise agreement  
12 negotiations. Thank you so much, and we do look forward to  
13 working with everyone to finalize the MOU and the final  
14 agreement.

15           MR. SUBIN: Thank you. And we appreciate your  
16 inputs and we'll look forward to reviewing them. The next  
17 speaker is Ms. Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager for the City of  
18 Takoma Park. Good evening after a long time.

19           MS. LUDLOW: Good evening. It's been a long time.  
20 Yes, I'm Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager of the City of Takoma  
21 Park. My last name is L-U-D-L-O-W. And, Takoma Park is at  
22 7500 Maple Avenue in Takoma Park. The City of Takoma Park  
23 has a government television channel carried by Comcast, RCN  
24 and Verizon cable companies. We broadcast to homes  
25 throughout all of Montgomery County with the exception of

1 residents of Gaithersburg. We provide our own original  
2 programming of city council meetings, special events, arts  
3 and humanities programs, local election coverage, and  
4 magazine shows, as well as special shows in several  
5 languages. Our older and poorer residents tend to watch our  
6 programs via television, while our arts patrons often watch  
7 via the internet, forwarding links to special programs to  
8 fans or musician websites. For this reason, HD coverage and  
9 broadcasting is very important.

10           Despite the popularity and usefulness of our  
11 programming, our City TV staff operates on a shoestring  
12 budget because we have a limited amount of operating funds.  
13 For this reason, Takoma Park City Council has a number of  
14 points to make as part of this public hearing, and will be  
15 submitted as part of the record. Many of the points are the  
16 same that Ms. Berg made for the City of Rockville. The City  
17 does support the pro-consumer elements of the proposed  
18 Comcast agreement. We are glad that there's going to be a  
19 location, or I guess, now is a location on the eastern side  
20 of the County.

21           The City supports the proposed settlement  
22 agreement that will allow PEG grants to be able to use for  
23 operation costs provide a match is made. The City requests  
24 that the payment of the legal fees used by the  
25 municipalities be paid, as they have been paid for previous

1 negotiations on franchise agreements. We also wish to see  
2 Comcast being required to remove the wires from properties  
3 where somebody no longer has Comcast channel use. This has  
4 been a particularly touchy subject in the City of Takoma  
5 Park and I get calls about every two weeks, related to wires  
6 on properties.

7           The City also would like to be ensured that the  
8 revenue distribution funds between the municipalities and  
9 the county be settled through the memorandum of  
10 understanding with Montgomery County. We also want an HD  
11 channel, and we do urge that municipalities have a voting  
12 seat on the PEG Governance Board. Thank you for your  
13 consideration.

14           MR. SUBIN: Thank you, Madam City Manager. Next  
15 speaker is Ms. Rachel Moskal, an alumni of the  
16 Communications Broadcast and Technologies Program at  
17 Montgomery College. Good evening.

18           MS. MOSKAL: Hello. My name is Rachel Moskal, my  
19 address is 12018 Remington Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland.  
20 It's a pretty easy name, M-O-S-K-A-L. Hello, my name is  
21 Rachel Moskal, I graduated from Montgomery College this  
22 Spring with a television associates, Television Production  
23 Associates in Applied Science. I worked for MCTV for the  
24 past two years as an intern, as I studied television  
25 production, and I couldn't be more grateful for this

1 invaluable experience. Working at MCTV gave me the  
2 confidence and knowledge I need to continue highly  
3 optimistic that I'll be successful in a future career in the  
4 path that I choose. Being immersed in this hands-on field  
5 in studio production at the professional level provided  
6 technical hard skills and professional soft skills that I  
7 will use for the rest of my life.

8           As an intern, I was given projects that were  
9 sometimes out of my comfort zone, but with the many  
10 technical resources, my supervisor, Brian O'Neil (phonetic  
11 sp.), and the many MCTV producers that always helped me  
12 learn very quickly and teach me everything I needed to know  
13 and know up to this point. They helped me produce creative  
14 videos and wouldn't have been able to develop otherwise.  
15 All of this, in addition, was to my learning in school and  
16 it really helped me excel throughout my schooling.

17           I believe I could not have received a better  
18 education as a hands-on education anywhere else. I am proud  
19 and often speak of my great experience as a student intern  
20 at MCTV. Other students will truly benefit from this  
21 awesome program going forward for years to come, because of  
22 the professional atmosphere, ability to operate  
23 professional/technical gear, and to develop a portfolio or a  
24 demo reel of high quality videos.

25           It was the mentoring and the exposure to the

1 environment that prepared me for interning at Discovery  
2 Channel this Summer. I will be attending American  
3 University in the Fall to work towards a BA in Film and  
4 Media Studies, minoring in Graphic Design. I say  
5 wholeheartedly that without the experience gained from MCT,  
6 none of this would have been possible for me.

7           Several of my fellow students, student interns at  
8 MCTV are getting jobs in their field. For example, there is  
9 one filming right next to you, on your right. They are  
10 prepared to pursue their careers and their academic goals,  
11 mainly, and largely, because of the MC experience.

12           MR. SUBIN: Summarize, please.

13           MS. MOSKAL: Sorry?

14           MR. SUBIN: Could you begin to summarize, please?

15           MS. MOSKAL: Sorry?

16           MR. SUBIN: Can you begin to summarize, please?

17           MS. MOSKAL: Yes, of course. None of this would  
18 have been possible for any of us without funding coming to  
19 the County, PEG channels from Comcast. Please approve the  
20 Comcast franchise agreement and keep PEG channel support  
21 intact, thriving for future students and County residents.  
22 Thank you.

23           MR. SUBIN: Thank you. And, it's always great to  
24 hear of folks who've had intern possibilities that turned  
25 out really well. And, forgive me if I mispronounce your

1 name is Hamrawit Tesfa from the Montgomery College Community  
2 Engagement Center in East County Regional Center.

3 MS. TESFA: Please excuse my voice, I have a sore  
4 throat. My name is Hamrawit Tesfa. I'm a Community  
5 Engagement Specialist at Montgomery College Community  
6 Engagement Center located at the Gaithersburg Library.  
7 Montgomery College has two engagement centers. In addition  
8 to the Gaithersburg Library, the other is located in East  
9 County. These centers and staff are dedicated to  
10 proactively meeting residents where they are and helping  
11 them access MC's continuing education and workforce  
12 development offerings.

13 In just 18 months, the community engagement  
14 centers have assisted over 3,000 residents. Many of them do  
15 not speak English, or English is not their first language.  
16 Some are first generation Americans, and some are  
17 immigrants. They're all pursuing their dreams. All of them  
18 need language or job training, and workforce skills. MCTV  
19 County Cable Montgomery and Montgomery Community Media each  
20 brought awareness of the community engagement centers to  
21 many local residents through their coverage on cable, radio  
22 online, and even social media. Public education in  
23 government channel outreach efforts have been in English,  
24 French, Spanish, and Amharic.

25 Speaking of Amharic, the Ethiopian community is

1 part of this growing community in need of work skills and  
2 college education, yet they are unable to go to school due  
3 to lack of resource and information. Recently, we had an  
4 event for the Ethiopian community to give much needed  
5 support. MCTV was the main outreach method that we've used.  
6 Our outreach video by MCTV was watched online over 8,000  
7 times. The reason was over 300 Ethiopian residents attended  
8 an MC open house to learn about programs especially for  
9 them.

10 Another event that was held last week was also  
11 watched by thousands and thousands of viewers, and all this  
12 was online and MCTV is the one that has contributed to these  
13 thousands and thousands of views, and many people were being  
14 able to outreach because of this. The pics are powerful and  
15 effective in getting key message to our local residents,  
16 especially where other major media outlets have failed. I  
17 strongly encourage the County Executive to ensure that  
18 Comcast continues to abide by a franchise agreement that  
19 provides the operating and capital budgets necessary to  
20 sustain PEG organizations and secure their HD channels, and  
21 their immediate and long-term future. Thank you very much.

22 MS. SUBIN: Thank you, ma'am. Our next speaker is  
23 Professor Joanne Carl from Montgomery College TV Curriculum  
24 Faculty Program Coordinator. Good evening, professor.

25 MS. CARL: Hello, Mr. Subin. Hi Leon. My name is

1 Joanne Carl, I'm a professor teaching broadcast media  
2 production, that's our new name, at Montgomery College. I'm  
3 also a lifelong county resident. I live in Cabin John, 6510  
4 77th Street. I came to MC with 20 years of broadcast  
5 production experience and the goal of having a positive  
6 impact on the next generation of media production employees.  
7 As program coordinator for the TV and radio curriculum at  
8 MC, I research and teach video production, editing, writing,  
9 audio and other skills.

10 In this role, I am happy to have had the  
11 opportunity to work with our college television station's  
12 professional staff for over 10 years. The Comcast cable  
13 franchise revenues designate for MCTV and other county PEG  
14 channels, enabled these professionals to partner with and  
15 support the academic experience of students taking classes  
16 in video as well as sound production, video engineering,  
17 journalism, computer science, and graphic design, to name a  
18 few.

19 Several students have had the opportunity to work  
20 at MCTV, but many more students each year create and  
21 collaborate on class projects that are then broadcast on  
22 MCTV 10 and the colleges You Tube channel, for the community  
23 to watch and enjoy. MCTV is our partner in teaching. This  
24 supports our mission to teach professional standards for  
25 production, both technical and contextual. By that, I mean,

1 they don't just learn technical. They learn timeliness and  
2 deadlines, effective storytelling, and respect for rights of  
3 ownership and copyrights.

4           We serve students from a variety of backgrounds  
5 with all types of strengths and weaknesses. For example, a  
6 student came to me with a documented severe dyslexia. I  
7 knew that completing the highest level writing class would  
8 be extremely difficult and it did not support the student's  
9 career goals. We were able to substitute engineering  
10 experience and independent study with MCTV 10, and that  
11 graduate now has a successful career as a videographer and  
12 master control operator at the White House.

13           Through our partnership with Channel 10, students  
14 are mentored by this nationally recognized, award winning  
15 staff, on a daily basis. This reinforces and advances what  
16 they have learned in class, and strengthens the important  
17 skills and abilities they will need to get a job in the  
18 increasingly media-driven world, or to transfer to a four  
19 year program. (like Rachel).

20           MC students have interned at other PEG channels,  
21 and scores of students who have worked at MCTV or graduated  
22 from our program, are working in good paying jobs in their  
23 field right here in Montgomery County, and around the world.  
24 I have a list, because it would take up too much of my three  
25 minutes. And, those opportunities are expanding. As high

1 definition media production becomes such a critical part of  
2 today's world in communications, advertising and public  
3 service.

4 MR. SUBIN: Can you summarize, please.

5 MS. CARL: I urge you to continue this critical  
6 support of MCTV and the PEG organizations, and thank you for  
7 listening.

8 MR. SUBIN: Thank you very much. Our next speaker  
9 is Ms. Carolina Pena Galeano from Montgomery College's MCTV  
10 Multi-cultural Content.

11 MS. GALEANO: My name is Carolina Galeano, and I'm  
12 from Montgomery College. Thank you for the opportunity to  
13 speak tonight. I'm an MC alumni, and a Montgomery County  
14 resident. Last year I was hired as a multi-cultural content  
15 producer for MCTV, and the position was specifically created  
16 to help address the communications needs of the increasingly  
17 diverse multi-cultural and multi-lingual population in our  
18 County. The position and the work that I do help fill the  
19 communications void to these underserved groups, and it  
20 would be entirely impossible without the support of the  
21 County Executive, the County Council, and the funding  
22 designated for MCTV as part of the Comcast franchise  
23 agreement.

24 I have shot, edited many videos to help the  
25 Spanish and the Amharic speaking communities learn about all

1 kinds of credit programs, workforce development courses, and  
2 even scholarships for MC. Several of the public education  
3 and government channels in the county have worked  
4 individually and together to identify and address topics of  
5 importance to minority groups, and to steadily increase the  
6 amount of video and online programming creating in the most  
7 popular languages spoken by county residents.

8 PEG channels help provide access to many special  
9 populations, not only through foreign languages, but to  
10 seniors, veterans and youth, also providing closed-captions,  
11 and by offering many programs online for on demand viewing.  
12 None of this would be possible without the operational and  
13 capital support specified in the franchise agreements. My  
14 MCTV colleagues and I are now mentoring the next generation  
15 of bilingual, bi-cultural diverse video producers. We owe  
16 to them to continue and expand the level of support received  
17 in the previous Comcast cable franchise agreement.

18 Residents of the County and the world are  
19 consuming more video than ever. Your local PEG channels are  
20 listening to what they want to our residents. And we're  
21 working with government agencies, non-profits, and county  
22 partners to provide information where it is needed in that  
23 language format and medium that is needed. HD cable TV  
24 channels, HD vide online, and video posted on social media  
25 are all critical was in which our global society

1 communicates. Montgomery County must keep up with the  
2 technology, the training, and outreach if we are to remain a  
3 world class county which communicates effectively with all  
4 its residents. Thank you.

5 MR. SUBIN: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.  
6 Next speaker is Mr. Jeffrey Slavin, Board Chair of  
7 Montgomery Community Media.

8 MR. SLAVIN: Good evening, and thank you for this  
9 opportunity to express my strong and enthusiastic support  
10 for the application for the renewal of the Comcast cable  
11 franchise agreement. I am Jeffrey Slavin, Mayor of the Town  
12 of Somerset, 5706 Warwick Place, Member of the Board of  
13 Directors of the Montgomery College Foundation, and the  
14 Committee for Montgomery, and most importantly, Chairman of  
15 Montgomery Community Media's Board of Directors.

16 This year, Montgomery Community Media --

17 MR. SUBIN: You only get three minutes total, Mr.  
18 Slavin, not three minutes for each.

19 MR. SLAVIN: Okay, that's fine. This year  
20 Montgomery Community Media is celebrating 30 years as our  
21 county's community media center. During these last three  
22 decades MCM's mission has evolved, grown, adapted and  
23 innovated with changing multi-media and broadcast  
24 technologies. Our commitment to Montgomery County and to  
25 you is to encourage and sponsor multi-media content that

1 informs, connects and educates the diverse one million  
2 residents that make up our Montgomery mosaic. We are  
3 committed in our efforts to become the nation's number one  
4 community media center.

5           We continue to sustain and grow our relevance to  
6 Montgomery County's residents through providing hyper local  
7 community contributed content on both the broadcast cable  
8 and broadband platforms. Mymcmedia.org, our broadband  
9 platform, annually serves over 860,000 web visitors, 80  
10 percent of those visitors are unique. In this multi-media  
11 age in which print organizations such as gazette newspapers  
12 are being forced to cut back, we are emerging as the hyper  
13 local community voice of choice.

14           This new franchise agreement allows us to continue  
15 to foster award winning results for Montgomery County. This  
16 year, Anthony Anderson, our access member from Germantown,  
17 made media history by winning a national daytime Emmy award  
18 for his original community sale proper entitled Anacostia.  
19 It is recorded throughout Montgomery County, features local  
20 talent, and is broadcast on access 19. Today MCM is the  
21 broadcast home of the Washington Spirit, our women's  
22 professional soccer team, with two star players that earned  
23 the USA the 2015 Womens World Cup victory. Our many  
24 community volunteers provide 120 program series each quarter  
25 in nearly a dozen languages. We are pleased to see that the

1 new franchise agreement with Comcast continues to provide  
2 support for MCM at a time when media has become such an  
3 important part of our lives.

4 We are also pleased that our community media  
5 center and other public education and government channels  
6 will receive some level of HD carriage. Moreover, we  
7 support the PEG Governance Board's recommendation submitted  
8 to the County Executive, that the initial for HD channel PEG  
9 allocations be assigned to MCM --

10 MR. SUBIN: Could you begin to summarize, please.

11 MR. SLAVIN: Yes, sir. Thank you to all for  
12 facilitating the voice of Montgomery County residents, the  
13 renewal of this franchise agreement. Thank you.

14 MR. SUBIN: Thank you, Jeff, and thank you for all  
15 the various activities you're involved in. Our next  
16 speaker, Mr. Bert Ollie, speaking as an individual. I know  
17 you weren't here earlier, so make sure you identify yourself  
18 and your address for the record.

19 MR. OLLIE: I'm sorry, sir?

20 MR. SUBIN: If you'd identify yourself and your  
21 address for the record.

22 MR. OLLIE: Okay. My name is Bert Ollie, and I  
23 live at 3052 Bel Pre Road in Silver Spring. And the  
24 organization I represent is the Center for the Enhancement  
25 of Economic and Community Development. Now, I hope I'm at

1 the appropriate hearing with regard to Comcast. Is that  
2 correct?

3 MR. SUBIN: You are at the correct place.

4 MR. OLLIE: Okay. Now, first of all, Comcast, the  
5 service is abysmal, and is discriminatory. With regard to  
6 Comcast, we're not enforcing the Clayton and the anti-  
7 Sherman Act. The regulator, okay, Mr. Watkins, says he does  
8 not have enough power to ameliorate the situation. It is  
9 abominable that African Americans with regard to service  
10 delivery have to be -- this is another instance where we're  
11 being raped, ravaged and ruined.

12 Now, not only do we need to have more power for  
13 the regulator, I would suggest to you, we need a commission,  
14 okay, to monitor the regulator. One of the axioms in  
15 political science is, who will guard the guardians. Also,  
16 we need referenda to approve the regulatory structure.  
17 Thank you for giving me this opportunity, and I shall  
18 disengage. Thank you.

19 MR. SUBIN: Okay, thank you, sir. Our next  
20 speaker is Ms. Linda Lewis, owner of Lewis Orchards. Ms.  
21 Lewis? Okay, our next speaker then is John Prue, speaking  
22 as an individual.

23 MR. PRUE: My name is John Prue, 14920 Shaffer  
24 Road, Boyds, Maryland. And I'd like to bring to the  
25 attention of the County Executive three items. First of

1 all, this franchise, if it's approved, will leave hundreds  
2 of citizens in Montgomery County without service. I am one  
3 of them. I have been a resident for 15 years, and in my day  
4 job, I happen to be the Chief Information Officer of one of  
5 the National Institutes of Health. Now, in this capacity,  
6 as you can imagine, I need to have internet access.  
7 However, for 15 years, I have been desperately trying to get  
8 it, and have not been able to do so.

9           Most recently, within the last two months, I  
10 reached out to Comcast to try to get internet access again.  
11 They quoted me the modest sum of \$13,000 to receive this  
12 service. I said, well certainly Verizon could do better,  
13 and they did. Verizon quoted me \$50,000 to receive internet  
14 service. Now, this seems a little extraordinary. I wasn't  
15 building an addition to my home, I just wanted to have  
16 internet access for my professional life and my family. But  
17 the nature of this agreement precludes it, and allows  
18 Comcast to charge prices like that to individuals who are on  
19 the edge of the service area, and without the necessary  
20 density of houses.

21           Now, you may think that this seems extraordinary.  
22 But, in some respects I can understand. Comcast is a  
23 business, they're here to make money, and they're not going  
24 to make money on me when they drag that cable out. It's not  
25 a business solution. But, on the other side of it, they

1 could make a lot of money, and they will, with this  
2 agreement from the county. They made 3.1 billion dollars  
3 last year on internet providing services that they were  
4 doing. They're doing okay. Now, I also want to point out  
5 that we can think out of the box to try to provide services  
6 for County residents that are outside of their density  
7 requirements.

8 For example, if this franchise required Comcast to  
9 offer something like WiMAX, which is a wireless internet  
10 service, that can be provided at distance. It would allow  
11 them to not have to roll out the infrastructure, which is  
12 very expensive, but still give access to those County  
13 residents who are left out right now. I urge the Executive  
14 to not approve this and to try to take into consideration  
15 the many hundreds of people who will be left in the dust,  
16 and in the 19th or 18th century. Thank you very much.

17 MR. SUBIN: Okay, thank you, sir, and I know Mr.  
18 Roter was taking copious notes while you were speaking. Our  
19 next speaker is Pam Doring, speaking as an individual.  
20 Evening, ma'am.

21 MS. DORING: Good evening, my name is Pam Doring,  
22 I live at 23910 Barley Field Lane. The post office says  
23 it's Dickerson, it's actually Comus, right on the County  
24 line. I look at Frederick County at Sugarloaf Mountain. I  
25 have a similar situation. I haven't requested a quote from

1 Comcast because, as I've seen in a comment submitted about  
2 the potential for the freeloader, you pay the bill to bring  
3 it all out, and then somebody else connects later without  
4 having to share in the cost.

5 I read the entire franchise agreement when I was  
6 very grumpy and pregnant, nine years ago, because we only  
7 had dial-up, and I was getting frustrated listening and  
8 seeing on TV all the Comcast commercials. Oh, just no  
9 connect. But, I have children now who are in the public  
10 schools, and as young as third grade they have assignments  
11 on Google Drive. In math, for Algebra II in the high  
12 school, they had additional class notes and videos to  
13 supplement the curriculum, posted on Edline. The interim  
14 reports are given to parents on Edline.

15 When I called the County curriculum office this  
16 past Summer to find out what the textbook would be for  
17 Algebra II, I was told there wouldn't be one. They moved to  
18 core curriculum. This means more emphasis on resources will  
19 be needed for any additional help bridging the gap on being  
20 able to go out onto the internet.

21 Another one of my concerns is the teleworking. As  
22 more people have opportunities to reduce congestion,  
23 teleworking is common. This is going to eventually drive  
24 resale values and property values which will then come down  
25 to accessible taxes. Access to County meetings. I didn't

1 know whether or not clapping was appropriate at a County  
2 meeting or not because when I lived in Frederick County I  
3 had access to watch the county meetings. When I moved down  
4 here 11 years ago, it was a very strange world to be in what  
5 was supposed to be Montgomery County and not have internet.

6 We spent more than an hour this past week  
7 downloading the math summer packets for one of our children.

8 MR. SUBIN: Could you begin to summarize, please.

9 MS. DORING: In summary, access to all of our  
10 students and all of our residents is not fully supported,  
11 and although I don't say deny this, I think that there could  
12 be better wording, or better agreements that could support  
13 all County residents. And thank you very much.

14 MR. SUBIN: Thank you, ma'am. Brady Wilks,  
15 speaking as an individual. Good evening, sir.

16 MR. WILKS: Good evening. Thank you so much for  
17 letting me speak. My name is Brady Wilks, I live at 14810  
18 Shaffer Road in Boyds, Maryland. I am a Professor of  
19 Photography and I teach online and on campus at Frederick  
20 Community College, and the Academy of Art University in San  
21 Francisco. I am one of the several people here that are  
22 part of that last mile. The group of individuals that do  
23 not have proper high speed internet access. Other people in  
24 that community, there's not many of us, but there are  
25 federal employees that have required teleworking. We have

1 educators and grade level, secondary and college educators  
2 that deal with core curriculum that has to have access to  
3 technology and integrate technology into their classrooms,  
4 which is basically an impossibility.

5           And I'm going to put all of these notes into my  
6 written statement, so I'm not going to take up a lot of time  
7 on that. Instead, I'm going to take up time trying to get  
8 you guys to be advocates for us. You know, we're  
9 overlooked. There's not many of us. We are not part of the  
10 business. We will not make money for them. You know, a lot  
11 of accolades were said earlier, and how about we work  
12 together to add one more accolade, and that is to provide  
13 service to everyone in Montgomery County.

14           Having to go to Wegmans or Starbucks and spend  
15 money, away from my family, when I could be working at home  
16 to download and update very simple things is excruciating.  
17 It's horrible. And, I would really encourage you guys to  
18 speak with me to try and find some resolution. The  
19 Montgomery County officials and the Comcast officials, I've  
20 brought business cards, if you would like to speak with me  
21 to work together to find some resolution to help us out, and  
22 to provide some level of high speed internet to our  
23 community of several individuals that provide public  
24 service, and educate for the County. Thank you very much.

25           MR. SUBIN: Thank you. And again, Mr. Roter will

1 have cards available for folks afterwards if you need to  
2 contact him and discuss these issues more in depth. Bobbi  
3 Prue, speaking as an individual.

4 MS. PRUE: Hello. I'm Bobbi Prue, 14920 Shaffer  
5 Road in Boyds. And, I was told that I was part of the last  
6 mile or out of sight, out of mind, part of the County. I  
7 work for Montgomery County Public Schools, and just like the  
8 other speaker said, with our new core curriculum, we have  
9 more demands to be online. The school that I work for is  
10 just a mile up the street, and we're considered a Beta  
11 school, so we're given tablets, computer laptops. We're  
12 told to take them home, download the apps, check out these  
13 videos and webinars, and then get back with them. I'm never  
14 able to do any of those things because I get little circle,  
15 the little lag.

16 I've been living in my residence almost 16 years,  
17 and my husband was able to hook us up with a little Wifi  
18 box, which is just not good enough for us to access the  
19 internet, and it would just be nice if we could have decent  
20 internet. I have two kids. One's in college, one's in high  
21 school, and that's all I wanted to say.

22 MR. SUBIN: Thank you. Mr. Michael Tineo,  
23 speaking as an individual.

24 MR. TINEO: Good evening, my name is Michael  
25 Tineo. Address is 14920 Shaffer Road. My mom and dad are

1 John and Bobbi Prue, who just talked not too long ago. I'm  
2 currently enrolled in Montgomery College. Whenever I get  
3 homework from any of my classes, I can never do them at home  
4 because I never have the access to go online from any of the  
5 computers in our house. So, I always have to take  
6 everything either to the college, or, just like my neighbor  
7 said, Brady Wilks, that I have to go to Wegmans or Starbucks  
8 just to download things on my Ipad mini or my Iphone. And,  
9 it would just be nice if we got high speed internet pretty  
10 soon. And, that's all for today.

11 MR. SUBIN: Thank you for your input.

12 MR. TINEO: Thank you.

13 MR. SUBIN: Cassidy Prue. Good evening.

14 MISS PRUE: Good evening. I'm Cassidy Prue, and  
15 I'm a high school student in MCPS. I recently left 10th  
16 grade, so I'm going to be going into 11th grade, and as  
17 you've heard from the other speakers, that core curriculum  
18 is requiring our school work to be more necessary to use the  
19 internet at home and do our assignments. And leaving 10th  
20 grade, I notice that almost all of my school work involves  
21 computers and technology, and most importantly, the  
22 internet. And, I am one of the students who is in AP  
23 classes, which people can infer would use a lot more  
24 internet access, and is more necessary for people who are  
25 doing this high, hard work to get the proper internet.

1 Well, since I can't do that, I often have to find myself  
2 being at school and doing my homework that takes like four  
3 hours long, which isn't very logical because at my school,  
4 Northwest High School, our media center often, it's often  
5 closed and I can't go in there. So then sometimes I found  
6 myself at a loss, and I have to tell my teachers, oh I  
7 couldn't do this assignment because I don't have any  
8 internet access that's stable at home.

9           So, I find that as my student career progresses, I  
10 am at more and more of a loss at my school work, and it's  
11 not good for my student career, and it's not good for my  
12 grades, and it's just not good for my family, obviously, and  
13 I am one of the many peers of mine who know that this is not  
14 good for our school experience. And, I'd ask that  
15 representatives and people understand and listen that it's  
16 hard for the students, high school students too. If they  
17 give us more and more of this requirement to use the  
18 internet, that if I can't do it, then what's the point of  
19 giving it to us. Thank you.

20           MR. SUBIN: Thank you. And the final person who  
21 has signed up is Sue Ellen Ferguson, attorney for Kensington  
22 and Chevy Chase Villages.

23           MS. FERGUSON: Good evening, Sue Ellen Ferguson,  
24 here on behalf of Chevy Chase Village and the Town of  
25 Kensington. My office address is 18125 West Street in

1 Annapolis. Chevy Chase Village and Kensington are both  
2 franchise authorities. Currently, they are amongst the  
3 group that is being negotiating -- part of the negotiating  
4 team that the County is representing for the Comcast  
5 franchise. They are very interested in this process, and  
6 they generally find there are many positive things in the  
7 proposed franchise agreement.

8           Currently, these two towns are entitled to use the  
9 MMC Channel, which is a PEG channel that is maintained  
10 Montgomery Municipal channel for the smaller municipalities  
11 to use for their PEG needs. And they are unable, tonight,  
12 to indicate their support for the franchise agreement  
13 because the other piece of the package, the MOU with the  
14 County, has yet to be resolved.

15           I think you've heard about this already from  
16 Takoma Park and Rockville. Both Chevy Chase Village and  
17 Kensington support the comments from Takoma Park and  
18 Rockville, this evening, so I won't go over those again.  
19 They are the same comments, the same concerns, and until the  
20 time comes when the MOU with the County is resolved, they  
21 will not be able to take a position in support as they do  
22 not know finally how the terms of this agreement will apply  
23 to them. Thank you very much.

24           MR. SUBIN: Thank you, ma'am. There is nobody  
25 else on the list who had signed up previously. If there's

1 somebody in the audience who hasn't spoken, who would like  
2 to, this is your last opportunity. Yes, ma'am?

3 MR. OLLIE: Can you add an addendum to -- a brief  
4 addendum to --

5 MR. SUBIN: No, sir. Ma'am?

6 MS. FONTANA: Joan Fontana, President of Kirana,  
7 Inc. (phonetic sp.). I moved recently to the Ag Reserve in  
8 Poolesville. I've had a chimney cleaning business for 45  
9 years, excellent internet in Bethesda. Since I've moved, I  
10 can't communicate with my customers. We've seen a decrease  
11 because we try to get Verizon Jetpack going, that's sketchy.  
12 So this is just my quest, personal quest, not to mention, I  
13 have three teenagers that have to go in town to do their  
14 homework. I provide jobs, feed families. It would be huge  
15 if I could have internet again. Thank you.

16 MR. SUBIN: Could you provide your address for the  
17 record, please?

18 MS. FONTANA: Yes. It's 14421 Sugarland Lane,  
19 Poolesville, Maryland 20837. Thank you.

20 MR. SUBIN: Thank you. Okay, seeing no other  
21 hands, it is now 7:54 p.m., and I am declaring this hearing  
22 regarding the Comcast franchise agreement closed. The  
23 record will remain open until 5:00 p.m. on August 17, 2015.  
24 Anybody who has any further comments, or would like to  
25 submit further testimony, can send it to Mr. Phil Roter, R-

1 O-T-E-R, the cable and broadband administrator for  
2 Montgomery County, at the Office of Cable and Broadband  
3 Services, 100 Maryland Avenue, Suite 250, Rockville,  
4 Maryland 20850, and his email address is  
5 phil.roter@montgomerycountymd.gov. Thank you all for your  
6 inputs.

7 (Whereupon, at 7:59 p.m., the meeting was  
8 adjourned.)

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Digitally signed by Keena Lukacinsky

ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE

DEPOSITION SERVICES, INC., hereby certifies that the foregoing pages represent an accurate transcript of the electronic sound recording of the proceedings before the Montgomery County Cable Compliance Commission, in the matter of:

COMCAST FRANCHISE RENEWAL PUBLIC HEARING



---

Keena Lukacinsky

August 10, 2015