CABLE COMPLIANCE COMMISSION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

COMCAST FRANCHISE RENEWAL
PUBLIC HEARING

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:

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. SUBIN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

For the record it is now 7:00 p.m. on August 3rd, 2015, and we are in the County Executive’s Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland 20850, and in the lobby auditorium. This is a public hearing on the Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal for Montgomery County. My name is Michael Subin, and I am the County Executive’s designated hearing officer for this hearing.

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

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

Mr. Phil Roter, representing the Montgomery County
Office of Cable and Broadband Services. Good evening, Mr. Roter.

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

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

The cable office recommends that the County Executive approve the Renewal Franchise Agreement and related agreements. We believe that the agreements, while a compromise, serve the interests of cable subscribers and the County. The proposed franchise agreement increases our number of PEG channels from 11 to 14, and includes the
launch of up to five high definition PEG channels. It requires Comcast to serve all parts of the County. Though some customers may be required to share system extension costs. The franchise agreement provides County and participating municipalities with a five percent franchise fee, and capital grants for PEG and iNet uses of the system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. BOKEE: Absolutely. Comcast accessibility also means connecting low income households to internet for the first time through Internet Essentials. In conclusion, Montgomery County is a highly competitive market, and one that Comcast is proud to serve. We are making continuing investments in here, in technology, infrastructure, and our people, to provide the best products and services to our customers. We support this negotiated franchise agreement, and we look forward to the next steps of the approval process. Thank you.
MR. SUBIN: Thank you, Mr. Bokee, good to see you again. The next speaker is Mr. Merlyn Reineke, who is the Executive Director of Montgomery County Community Media.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As you know, no single provider wants to have a
disadvantage compared to another provider. That's only fair and we at the CCAC wish that the agreement could have more teeth to provide enforcement and performance so that customers would have better experience with their provider. However, we concede that the environment that we're working under is limited by the franchise agreement and the FCC. Knowing that you can't always get what you want, the CCAC is submitting 14 issues for your consideration. There are nitpicking issues that have to do with your contract to make things a little bit more consistent. Thank you.

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

MR. WELLS: Yes, sir.

MR. SUBIN: And we'll have those for the record.

Our next speaker is Ms. Mary Lou Berg, who is Director of Communications for the City of Rockville. Welcome.

MS. BERG: Thank you so much. My name is Mary Lou Berg, the Director of Communications, City of Rockville. We're at 111 Maryland Avenue here in Rockville. We are very appreciative for the opportunity to offer input on the Comcast Franchise Agreement. Overall, we find the agreement to be positive. The City of Rockville is particularly supportive of the customer service portions of the proposed agreement, including additional location on the eastern side of Montgomery County for obtaining and returning agreement,
and continued free service to non-profit organizations and government agencies. The City also supports terms that allow one percent of the PEG grant to be used for operations, as opposed to capital, and the remaining two percent to be used for operations if matched by an equal amount of general funds.

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

The biggest obstacle for the City related to signing the Comcast agreement is the Memorandum of Understanding between the County and the City. Without completion of this important step, it's difficult for the City to know if its interests will be served by the overall franchise agreement. While we have seen some preliminary terms for the MOU, we've only begun the work necessary to come to agreement on this document. Rockville would like to
see the following items included in the final MOU. Rockville would like guaranteed access to the HD channels that are being offered in the franchise agreement. We've completed the work necessary to be HD ready several years ago, so we're looking forward to that opportunity.

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

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

MS. LUDLOW: Good evening. It's been a long time. Yes, I'm Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager of the City of Takoma Park. My last name is L-U-D-L-O-W. And, Takoma Park is at 7500 Maple Avenue in Takoma Park. The City of Takoma Park has a government television channel carried by Comcast, RCN and Verizon cable companies. We broadcast to homes throughout all of Montgomery County with the exception of
residents of Gaithersburg. We provide our own original
programming of city council meetings, special events, arts
and humanities programs, local election coverage, and
magazine shows, as well as special shows in several
languages. Our older and poorer residents tend to watch our
programs via television, while our arts patrons often watch
via the internet, forwarding links to special programs to
fans or musician websites. For this reason, HD coverage and
broadcasting is very important.

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

The City supports the proposed settlement
agreement that will allow PEG grants to be able to use for
operation costs provide a match is made. The City requests
that the payment of the legal fees used by the
municipalities be paid, as they have been paid for previous
negotiations on franchise agreements. We also wish to see Comcast being required to remove the wires from properties where somebody no longer has Comcast channel use. This has been a particularly touchy subject in the City of Takoma Park and I get calls about every two weeks, related to wires on properties.

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

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

MS. MOSKAL: Hello. My name is Rachel Moskal, my address is 12018 Remington Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland. It's a pretty easy name, M-O-S-K-A-L. Hello, my name is Rachel Moskal, I graduated from Montgomery College this Spring with a television associates, Television Production Associates in Applied Science. I worked for MCTV for the past two years as an intern, as I studied television production, and I couldn't be more grateful for this
invaluable experience. Working at MCTV gave me the
confidence and knowledge I need to continue highly
optimistic that I'll be successful in a future career in the
path that I choose. Being immersed in this hands-on field
in studio production at the professional level provided
technical hard skills and professional soft skills that I
will use for the rest of my life.

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

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

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

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

MR. SUBIN: Summarize, please.

MS. MOSKAL: Sorry?

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

MS. MOSKAL: Sorry?

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

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

Thank you.

MR. SUBIN: Thank you. And, it's always great to
hear of folks who've had intern possibilities that turned
out really well. And, forgive me if I mispronounce your
name is Hamrawit Tesfa from the Montgomery College Community Engagement Center in East County Regional Center.

MS. TESFA: Please excuse my voice, I have a sore throat. My name is Hamrawit Tesfa. I'm a Community Engagement Specialist at Montgomery College Community Engagement Center located at the Gaithersburg Library.

Montgomery College has two engagement centers. In addition to the Gaithersburg Library, the other is located in East County. These centers and staff are dedicated to proactively meeting residents where they are and helping them access MC's continuing education and workforce development offerings.

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

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

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

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

MS. CARL: Hello, Mr. Subin. Hi Leon. My name is
Joanne Carl, I'm a professor teaching broadcast media production, that's our new name, at Montgomery College. I'm also a lifelong county resident. I live in Cabin John, 6510 77th Street. I came to MC with 20 years of broadcast production experience and the goal of having a positive impact on the next generation of media production employees. As program coordinator for the TV and radio curriculum at MC, I research and teach video production, editing, writing, audio and other skills.

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

Several students have had the opportunity to work at MCTV, but many more students each year create and collaborate on class projects that are then broadcast on MCTV 10 and the colleges You Tube channel, for the community to watch and enjoy. MCTV is our partner in teaching. This supports our mission to teach professional standards for production, both technical and contextual. By that, I mean,
they don't just learn technical. They learn timeliness and
deadlines, effective storytelling, and respect for rights of
ownership and copyrights.

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

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

MC students have interned at other PEG channels,
and scores of students who have worked at MCTV or graduated
from our program, are working in good paying jobs in their
field right here in Montgomery County, and around the world.
I have a list, because it would take up too much of my three
minutes. And, those opportunities are expanding. As high
definition media production becomes such a critical part of today's world in communications, advertising and public service.

MR. SUBIN: Can you summarize, please.

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

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

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

I have shot, edited many videos to help the Spanish and the Amharic speaking communities learn about all
kinds of credit programs, workforce development courses, and even scholarships for MC. Several of the public education and government channels in the county have worked individually and together to identify and address topics of importance to minority groups, and to steadily increase the amount of video and online programming creating in the most popular languages spoken by county residents.

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

Residents of the County and the world are consuming more video than ever. Your local PEG channels are listening to what they want to our residents. And we're working with government agencies, non-profits, and county partners to provide information where it is needed in that language format and medium that is needed. HD cable TV channels, HD vide online, and video posted on social media are all critical was in which our global society
communicates. Montgomery County must keep up with the technology, the training, and outreach if we are to remain a world class county which communicates effectively with all its residents. Thank you.

MR. SUBIN: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Next speaker is Mr. Jeffrey Slavin, Board Chair of Montgomery Community Media.

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

This year, Montgomery Community Media --

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

MR. SLAVIN: Okay, that's fine. This year Montgomery Community Media is celebrating 30 years as our county's community media center. During these last three decades MCM's mission has evolved, grown, adapted and innovated with changing multi-media and broadcast technologies. Our commitment to Montgomery County and to you is to encourage and sponsor multi-media content that
informs, connects and educates the diverse one million 
residents that make up our Montgomery mosaic. We are 
committed in our efforts to become the nation's number one 
community media center.

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

This new franchise agreement allows us to continue 
to foster award winning results for Montgomery County. This 
year, Anthony Anderson, our access member from Germantown, 
made media history by winning a national daytime Emmy award 
for his original community sale proper entitled Anacostia. 
It is recorded throughout Montgomery County, features local 
talent, and is broadcast on access 19. Today MCM is the 
broadcast home of the Washington Spirit, our women's 
professional soccer team, with two star players that earned 
the USA the 2015 Womens World Cup victory. Our many 
community volunteers provide 120 program series each quarter 
in nearly a dozen languages. We are pleased to see that the
new franchise agreement with Comcast continues to provide support for MCM at a time when media has become such an important part of our lives.

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

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

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

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

MR. OLLIE: I'm sorry, sir?

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

MR. OLLIE: Okay. My name is Bert Ollie, and I live at 3052 Bel Pre Road in Silver Spring. And the organization I represent is the Center for the Enhancement of Economic and Community Development. Now, I hope I'm at
the appropriate hearing with regard to Comcast. Is that correct?

MR. SUBIN: You are at the correct place.

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

Now, not only do we need to have more power for the regulator, I would suggest to you, we need a commission, okay, to monitor the regulator. One of the axioms in political science is, who will guard the guardians. Also, we need referenda to approve the regulatory structure.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity, and I shall disengage. Thank you.

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

MR. PRUE: My name is John Prue, 14920 Shaffer Road, Boyds, Maryland. And I'd like to bring to the attention of the County Executive three items. First of
all, this franchise, if it's approved, will leave hundreds
of citizens in Montgomery County without service. I am one
of them. I have been a resident for 15 years, and in my day
job, I happen to be the Chief Information Officer of one of
the National Institutes of Health. Now, in this capacity,
as you can imagine, I need to have internet access.
However, for 15 years, I have been desperately trying to get
it, and have not been able to do so.

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

Now, you may think that this seems extraordinary.
But, in some respects I can understand. Comcast is a
business, they're here to make money, and they're not going
to make money on me when they drag that cable out. It's not
a business solution. But, on the other side of it, they
could make a lot of money, and they will, with this agreement from the county. They made 3.1 billion dollars last year on internet providing services that they were doing. They're doing okay. Now, I also want to point out that we can think out of the box to try to provide services for County residents that are outside of their density requirements.

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

MR. SUBIN: Okay, thank you, sir, and I know Mr. Roter was taking copious notes while you were speaking. Our next speaker is Pam Doring, speaking as an individual.

Evening, ma'am.

MS. DORING: Good evening, my name is Pam Doring, I live at 23910 Barley Field Lane. The post office says it's Dickerson, it's actually Comus, right on the County line. I look at Frederick County at Sugarloaf Mountain. I have a similar situation. I haven't requested a quote from
Comcast because, as I've seen in a comment submitted about
the potential for the freeloader, you pay the bill to bring
it all out, and then somebody else connects later without
having to share in the cost.

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

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

Another one of my concerns is the teleworking. As
more people have opportunities to reduce congestion,
teleworking is common. This is going to eventually drive
resale values and property values which will then come down
to accessible taxes. Access to County meetings. I didn't
know whether or not clapping was appropriate at a County
meeting or not because when I lived in Frederick County I
had access to watch the county meetings. When I moved down
here 11 years ago, it was a very strange world to be in what
was supposed to be Montgomery County and not have internet.

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

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

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

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

MR. WILKS: Good evening. Thank you so much for
letting me speak. My name is Brady Wilks, I live at 14810
Shaffer Road in Boyds, Maryland. I am a Professor of
Photography and I teach online and on campus at Frederick
Community College, and the Academy of Art University in San
Francisco. I am one of the several people here that are
part of that last mile. The group of individuals that do
not have proper high speed internet access. Other people in
that community, there's not many of us, but there are
federal employees that have required teleworking. We have
educators and grade level, secondary and college educators that deal with core curriculum that has to have access to technology and integrate technology into their classrooms, which is basically an impossibility.

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

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

MR. SUBIN: Thank you. And again, Mr. Roter will
have cards available for folks afterwards if you need to contact him and discuss these issues more in depth. Bobbi Prue, speaking as an individual.

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

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

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

MR. TINEO: Good evening, my name is Michael Tineo. Address is 14920 Shafter Road. My mom and dad are
John and Bobbi Prue, who just talked not too long ago. I'm currently enrolled in Montgomery College. Whenever I get homework from any of my classes, I can never do them at home because I never have the access to go online from any of the computers in our house. So, I always have to take everything either to the college, or, just like my neighbor said, Brady Wilks, that I have to go to Wegmans or Starbucks just to download things on my Ipad mini or my Iphone. And, it would just be nice if we got high speed internet pretty soon. And, that's all for today.

MR. SUBIN: Thank you for your input.

MR. TINEO: Thank you.

MR. SUBIN: Cassidy Prue. Good evening.

MISS PRUE: Good evening. I'm Cassidy Prue, and I'm a high school student in MCPS. I recently left 10th grade, so I'm going to be going into 11th grade, and as you've heard from the other speakers, that core curriculum is requiring our school work to be more necessary to use the internet at home and do our assignments. And leaving 10th grade, I notice that almost all of my school work involves computers and technology, and most importantly, the internet. And, I am one of the students who is in AP classes, which people can infer would use a lot more internet access, an is more necessary for people who are doing this high, hard work to get the proper internet.
Well, since I can't do that, I often have to find myself being at school and doing my homework that takes like four hours long, which isn't very logical because at my school, Northwest High School, our media center often, it's often closed and I can't go in there. So then sometimes I found myself at a loss, and I have to tell my teachers, oh I couldn't do this assignment because I don't have any internet access that's stable at home.

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

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

MS. FERGUSON: Good evening, Sue Ellen Ferguson, here on behalf of Chevy Chase Village and the Town of Kensington. My office address is 18125 West Street in
Annapolis. Chevy Chase Village and Kensington are both
franchise authorities. Currently, they are amongst the
group that is being negotiating -- part of the negotiating
team that the County is representing for the Comcast
franchise. They are very interested in this process, and
they generally find there are many positive things in the
proposed franchise agreement.

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

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

MR. SUBIN: Thank you, ma'am. There is nobody
else on the list who had signed up previously. If there's
somebody in the audience who hasn't spoken, who would like
to, this is your last opportunity. Yes, ma'am?

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

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

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

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

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

MR. SUBIN: Thank you. Okay, seeing no other
hands, it is now 7:54 p.m., and I am declaring this hearing
regarding the Comcast franchise agreement closed. The
record will remain open until 5:00 p.m. on August 17, 2015.
Anybody who has any further comments, or would like to
submit further testimony, can send it to Mr. Phil Roter, R-
O-T-E-R, the cable and broadband administrator for Montgomery County, at the Office of Cable and Broadband Services, 100 Maryland Avenue, Suite 250, Rockville, Maryland 20850, and his email address is phil.roter@montgomerycountymd.gov. Thank you all for your inputs.

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