

**CITY OF ALBANY  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: February 4, 2008  
Reviewed by: *BP*

**SUBJECT: Community Media Access Committee**

**REPORT BY: Jeremy Allen, Cable Coordinator/Youth Services Supervisor**

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Direct staff to return with a resolution creating a new Community Media Access Committee from the current citizens' *ad hoc* committee to the City Council Cable TV Subcommittee.

**BACKGROUND**

On February 22, 2000, the Albany City Council approved the five-year Cable Television Programming Plan for community-based cable television programming. The plan's purpose was twofold: (1) to address the Council's previously expressed interest in community cable television; and (2) to involve more of the community in cable programming by developing and sponsoring video presentations featuring issues, people, and points of interest in and around Albany, thereby increasing communication and awareness of community issues, events, and activities.

On December 16, 2002, the City Council approved the formation of a citizens' *ad hoc* committee to the Council Cable TV Subcommittee. The stated purpose of the *ad hoc* committee was to make recommendations to insure that Albany's PEG (Public, Educational, and Government) access facilities are managed in the best public interest.

Since 2002, the *ad hoc* committee has been meeting on a regular basis to discuss and implement improvements to KALB's facilities and its programming. This effort has resulted in a number of benchmarks, notably, live broadcasts of City meetings.

At its meeting on April 21, 2003, the City Council expressed its interest in the possibility of broadcasting public meetings and directed staff and the *ad hoc* committee to prepare a report on the feasibility of such broadcasts, including fiscal details. That report was brought back to Council on May 17, 2004, and Council voted to authorize funding for the installation of a three camera broadcast system in the City Council chambers. In October 2005, the City of Albany began live broadcasts of City Council meetings.

The *ad hoc* committee has also played a significant role in the following accomplishments:

- Taping and broadcasting community meetings
- Moving Channel 33 broadcast and production facilities from City Hall to the Albany Community Center
- Acquiring a new video switching system for KALB that includes digital content playback
- Creating the call letters KALB for Channel 33
- Acquiring two Final Cut Pro video editing workstations
- Assisting in identification of job specifications for KALB operations staff
- Advising staff on the existing Comcast franchise agreement
- Advising staff on state and national legislation
- Facilitating an agreement with the City of Berkeley to allow Albany residents use of Berkeley's video production studios

Currently, the *ad hoc* committee's goals are focused on developing KALB content that is interesting, informative, and relevant to Albany residents. Toward this end, the *ad hoc* committee is looking for ways to obtain more programming from Albany citizens and from area organizations such as the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the Albany School District. The committee is also encouraging the City to cablecast public meetings in addition to City Council meetings. Other goals include raising community awareness of KALB, getting volunteers to participate in creating content, and making greater use of City-owned production equipment.

To date, the citizens' *ad hoc* committee of the City Council Sub-committee has proven to be of tremendous value to the City of Albany.

## **DISCUSSION**

The current citizens' *ad hoc* committee members are unanimously in favor of creating a permanent committee to address the ongoing needs of KALB and the Albany residents who benefit from KALB programming. The *ad hoc* committee discussed the purpose and structure of a proposed new committee at its past several meetings.

One critical point raised during these meetings was whether or not the new committee should assume the wider role of overseeing various aspects of the City's information technology and multimedia activities in addition to its responsibility of overseeing cable TV-related activities. The committee agreed that, for the present, a narrow focus would make the committee more productive, and that an important part of that focus should be on PEG access for KALB.

The new state video franchise laws provide ongoing capital support for PEG access. For Albany, this should amount to \$25,000–\$30,000 per year. The new committee can provide ongoing advice on how to utilize this funding to its fullest advantage.

The citizens' *ad hoc* committee makes the following recommendations:

- The new committee will be named Albany Community Media Access Committee
- Its role will focus on PEG access TV in Albany
- It should be comprised of five community members appointed directly by City Council, with staff support from the Recreation and Community Services Department
- The term of the committee members would be two years. In order to maintain continuity, the current *ad hoc* committee members should remain as members on the newly formed Community Media Access Committee until the City Council elections in 2008.

The *ad hoc* committee has created a scope of work for the new Community Media Access Committee that includes the following tasks:

- Prepare a new five-year operation plan for KALB
- Advise City on changes to the Cable TV access policy
- Evaluate current goals, create new goals, and suggest timelines for all goals
- Oversee cable funds that are spent on cable-related activities
- Encourage alternative funding sources for equipment and staff
- Provide video production training opportunities for Albany residents
- Create Albany-based programming for the channel
- Post KALB programming schedules on Comcast guide channels and in print media
- Coordinate and recruit volunteers to participate in cable-related activities
- Oversee allocation of funds from the new state franchise 1% PEG support fee
- Promote and publicize KALB

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

No financial impact results from creating the Community Media Access Committee. There is staff time associated with working with the committee.

