

**CITY OF ALBANY  
CITY COUNCIL  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: July 6, 2009  
Reviewed by: BP

**Subject:** Albany Meeting Cable-Casting Policy

**From:** Jeremy Allen, KALB Supervisor

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**COMMUNITY MEDIA ACCESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopt a policy to:

- 1) Cable cast all Waterfront Committee meetings.
- 2) Cable cast all Planning & Zoning Commission meetings, or select meetings of general or special interest.
- 3) Adopt the Social & Economic Justice Commission recommendation of allowing other committee/commissions to request cablecasts of their meetings.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Current staff scheduling can accommodate cable casting the meetings of the Waterfront Committee, Planning & Zoning Commission, City Council, and School Board. Occasional cable casting of meetings of other City commissions or committees likely can be accommodated if a request is submitted with sufficient advance notice and available staff time can be scheduled.

**BACKGROUND**

The City Council last reviewed Albany's meeting cable-casting policies at its meeting on October 3, 2006. At this meeting, the council heard the recommendations of the Social and Economic Justice Commission (SEJC), which were:

- 1) Cable cast all Waterfront related Commission meetings.
- 2) Cable cast all Planning & Zoning Commission meetings.
- 3) Allow other Commissions to request that two meetings per year be cablecast, and more per the procedures recommended.
- 4) Have DVDs or VHS tapes available at the Albany Library for checkout and have them available for purchase at City Hall
- 5) Pursue funds needed to make additional venues possible, and to provide staff for operational needs, including coordinating the use of volunteers, particularly from Albany High School

The recommendation from City staff was to:

- 1) Approve cable casting of City waterfront planning process meetings.
- 2) Direct staff to assess the need for a telecommunications coordinator to assist the City in meeting needs for increased public information via Cable TV, Internet, and other related telecommunications means.
- 3) Upon the establishment of necessary staffing and budget resources, and in conjunction with the City's existing Cable broadcast policy, approve the Social & Economic Justice Commission recommendations on the cable casting of City meetings and explore the feasibility of the additional Commission and staff recommendations for enhancements in the City's web site, cable channel and related telecommunications services.

The Council adopted the staff recommendation and also the SEJC's recommendation #4 (i.e., making meeting DVD's available at the library), and referred the issue to the Cable Ad-hoc Committee (now the Community Media Access Committee) for its review and recommendation.

## **DISCUSSION**

During the approximately two and half years since the Council last reviewed meeting cable-casting policies, the City has broadcast every City Council meeting, and nearly every Waterfront Committee meeting since these meetings have generally included some items associated with the current waterfront planning process. The Waterfront Committee meetings have been broadcast in their entirety.

In June 2008, the City began streaming its meetings (live and archived) on the Internet. In July 2008, the City executed an agreement with the school district to broadcast school board meetings. To support all this, the Recreation and Community Service Department has dedicated a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time staff person to support KALB-33. That staff person's work schedule covers Monday and Tuesday evenings when meetings of the City Council, Waterfront Committee, Planning & Zoning Commission and School Board are normally conducted.

## **ANALYSIS**

By having meetings that are regularly broadcast on a set schedule of two nights a week, and with the staffing of a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time Recreation Coordinator dedicated to broadcasting meetings, the Council, School Board, Waterfront Committee, and Planning & Zoning Commission can be cable cast. If other commissions or committees wish to have occasional meetings broadcast, it may be possible to schedule those requests.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT**

Cable casting more meetings would provide residents with an alternative to in person attendance. This could potentially reduce the number of automobile trips to meetings, while still providing residents with access to information. This would also be beneficial to home bound residents who are not able to attend meetings in person, as well as to City staff who do not reside in Albany; keeping in mind that all cable cast public meetings are recorded and can be viewed on-demand

through the City website. Those who would like to view the meetings would be able to do so at their convenience.

Cable casting additional meetings contributes to transparency in government bolstering citizen's confidence that the City is doing as much as it can to provide relevant, timely information to the public. This will help foster community building, enabling KALB to be a functional channel for the City to effectively disseminate information.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The financial impact of the proposal should be minimal. Staff is already scheduled and available for the Monday and Tuesday evenings, when the Waterfront Committee and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings are held. There would be a small additional workload associated with scheduling rebroadcasts, preparing DVD's, etc., but these costs would be minor and absorbable into the current budget. Occasional other meetings requested by committees could be worked into staff's schedule with sufficient advance notice.