



WILDWOOD

# Rural Internet Access Committee

Minutes from the Meeting of  
Thursday, October 6, 2016

I. Welcome by Chair Kallaus and Introductions/Roll Call of Committee Members

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kallaus, at 7:00 p.m., in the Wildwood City Hall Community Room. Introductions of the Committee Members were completed and the following individuals were in attendance:

Committee Members:

Rick Kallaus  
Debbie Trunko  
David Sewell  
Cheryl Jordan

Council Member Liaisons:

Greg Alexander

City Staff:

Director of Planning and Parks Joe Vujnich and Assistant Director of Planning and Parks Kathy Arnett

Wireless Providers:

Chris Bay – Bays ET; Nathan Stooke - Wisper ISP; and Caleb Marsh - Wisper ISP

II. Overview of Tonight's Agenda Items

Chair Kallaus reviewed the Committee's agenda for tonight's meeting.

III. Updates and Discussion of Coverage and Service Rollouts to Rural Areas by **Bays ET** and **Wisper ISP**

a. St. Louis County Emergency Communication Commission Facilities

Director of Planning and Parks Vujnich provided an update on the St. Louis County towers, noting that an agreement between the County and the City was approved by City Council a few weeks ago. At their upcoming meeting, the City Council is scheduled to review two (2) subagreements for the service providers. Engineering plans are being drafted and will be provided to St. Louis County for its review within the next couple of weeks.

b. Update on Bays ET's Network – South Half of the City

Chris Bay, with Bays ET Wireless, provided a handout (see attached) and noted his company will use the location on the St. Louis County tower to provide additional capacity. The four (4) proposed repeater poles will help the network reach some previously unserved pockets. Additionally, Bays-ET has started to pick up leads east of State Route 109. His company has been upgrading all of its equipment and will be changing its speeds and prices for customers in early 2017. The current customer count is at 325.

l. Proposal from Bays ET for Four (4) Repeater Sites

The location of four (4) repeater poles, which will increase service to several underserved/unserved areas, as well as provide improved service to existing customers, was discussed. These poles will be located in areas around: Fox Creek Road, Melrose Road, Woodland Meadows Drive, and Vixen Drive. The Committee is being asked to provide a recommendation to the City Council, on these poles for the upcoming meeting on October 10, 2016.

Discussion was then held regarding the following: the cost of the four (4) repeater poles (\$15,800) and how much money is in the budget this year (still \$44,000), which will be sufficient to cover the proposed work left for 2016; the budgeted amount for next year (\$50,000 proposed); and the preferred installer of poles (Tim Reinhold, dba Tim Reinhold Enterprises or TRE), who was selected after a competitive bidding process.

Motion was made by Committee Member Trunko, seconded by Chair Kallaus, to recommend approval to the City Council on the contract with TRE for the installation of the four (4) repeater poles. A voice vote was taken, with no opposition, and the motion was declared approved.

c. Update on Wisper ISP's Network – North Half of the City

Nathan Stooke, with Wisper ISP, provided a handout (see attached) and then noted the colocation on the Babler Park tower will allow his company to bring in a large connection and will increase capacity, in addition to providing the ability to disperse bandwidth more efficiently. With the connection this new addition will provide, Wisper ISP should be able to increase its customer base by sixty (60) homes. He noted that, once the tower is online, they'll need approximately four (4) weeks to complete the installation work on it. He also noted their current number of Wildwood customers is 105.

Mr. Stooke also noted they no longer are requesting the City assist with the funding of the tower equipment, but instead there are some infrastructure items they would appreciate assistance from the City. These items include fencing and some associated improvements. Mr. Vujnich noted this request is

more in-line with how it has assisted throughout this process. The City cannot allocate funds for the providers' equipment, but can pay for infrastructure, which the City then owns. Mr. Walsh will send over the infrastructure requirements for the space and the estimated costs.

A motion was made by Committee Member Sewell, seconded by Committee Member Jordan, to endorse the City paying for the fencing and other infrastructure, contingent on the cost being reasonable. A voice vote was taken, with no opposition, and the motion was declared approved.

d. Other Options for Expanded and Improved Service

Discussion by the Committee included the following:

- The desire of the members to complete a study to determine how many residents still need service. There may be difficulties in obtaining information on service areas from AT&T and Charter, but both Bays-ET and Wisper ISP offered their assistance in reaching out to these companies for information. The Committee Members noted a direct mail postcard to the original 1,200 homes that were unserved may be the best way to obtain this information. The following items were discussed as potential questions on the postcard:
  - Do you have high-speed, no data limits, internet access?
  - If not, how do you get internet? Cellular, satellite, etc.
  - If you have broadband, what are your speeds?
  - How much would you pay for this service?
- Department staff noted they would attempt to find the previous postcard used in the last similar survey, so the Committee could use it as a starting point.

IV. Other Items for Consideration

Discussion was held regarding the definitions of 'unserved' and 'underserved,' which are:

Unserved: where the only options for internet are limited to dial-up or a cellular provider, with escalating payment plans and data limits.

Underserved: includes those locations where options are the same as unserved, but also include satellite or AT&T DSL, both of which are known for poor reliability, high cost, and data latency.

The Committee determined these definitions are still relevant.

V. Public Comments

A gentleman questioned the reason why AT&T did not proceed with the tower in the northwest corner of Ward 1? It was noted that, after AT&T purchased DirecTV, it abandoned many in-progress cellular projects. It was also noted the City could not take advantage of the partial infrastructure they had built, because it is located on private

property.

Susan Fine, 3915 Tamara Trail, noted her service is spotty, and since she runs a business from her home it is frustrating. She questioned why there is not after-hours customer service; if there are any federal grants for funding rural internet service; and if a repeater could be placed on her home to improve service. Mr. Bay noted that his customer service line is staffed from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. and has been for over a year. Committee Member Sewell provided the history of the City's application for a federal grant for internet service, which was denied due to other locations having greater financial need and our area not qualifying as rural, according to the federal definition. The Committee also explained that a repeater is not installed at the location needing service, but instead at an interim site, so it can be projected into an unserved area.

Joseph Kablan, 19220 Melrose Road, questioned what internet will be like in this area in ten (10) years. The service providers both noted that it is difficult to predict that far into the future of technology, but they would expect service to be at least 100MB to the home, or higher. They also noted that line-of-sight technology are faster services and are advancing at a faster rate than non-line-of-sight technologies.

Bill Young, 19274 White Oak Valley Road, questioned what type of coverage will be provided in his area, when the colocation on the Babler Park tower is complete. Mr. Stooke noted that homes in his area should have coverage from this tower, especially the sites along the ridge, like Mr. Young's. A repeater pole may be necessary to reach the lowest topographical areas in the vicinity, but the entire area from Ossenfort to Centaur Roads should get service. Mr. Young also asked if any investigation of TV white space technology has been considered. Both Mr. Stooke and Mr. Bay noted this technology is too expensive and will not likely be deployed in the U.S. due to the extensive amount of rules that prohibit its use.

Rob Rambaud, 18400 Bebe's Valley Lane, noted he was in attendance to provide positive feedback. He noted Bays ET has gone above and beyond to provide an excellent quality service to his home.

Chris Sauer, 9 Deer Field Ridge Road, also questioned if the Babler Park tower colocation would service his neighborhood. Mr. Stooke noted that, yes, they will now be able to get service, but a repeater tower may be needed on the ridgetop to attain coverage of the entire subdivision.

Discussion was then held among the Committee Members regarding the following: the possibility of the service providers including a 'super premium' package for those users that need a VPN connection for work; the desire for Wisper ISP and Bays ET to provide locations where repeater poles would be needed to serve underserved/unserved areas, once the colocations on the St. Louis County towers have been completed; and the best schedule for the Committee Members to meet (consensus was reached on the first Thursday of the month).

VI. Summation of Meeting and Concluding Remarks by Chair Kallaus

Chair Kallaus noted the next possible meeting date and time would be Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.

VII. Adjournment by Chair Kallaus

A motion was made by Committee Member Trunko, seconded by Committee Member Jordan, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken on the motion to adjourn, with a unanimous result. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Kallaus at 8:50 p.m.