



UPPER SHORE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Cecil County
Kent County
Queen Anne's County

Upper Shore Regional Council IT Meeting Minutes, May 15, 2013

Location: 122 N. Cross St., Chestertown, MD

Time: 10:00 – 12:00 pm

Participants: Scott Boone, Amy Plummer, Scott Mesneak, Megan DelGaudio, Karl Hagelin, Doris Mason

Guests: **Pat Michell, President and CEO & Tyler Patton, Vice President of Public Affairs from Maryland Broadband Cooperative**

Time

10:00 – 10:05 Opening/Meeting Purpose

Ms. Mason welcomed the group and introduced the guest speakers Pat Mitchell, President and CEO, Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc., and Tyler Patton, Vice President of Public Affairs of Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc. She reiterated the importance of filling in the gaps for high-speed internet services in every area of Kent, Cecil and Queen Anne's counties. This is critical for local businesses, families, and new businesses anticipating moving into the region. Ms. Mason emphasized that high speed internet connectivity was deemed the #1 goal for the region throughout the Council's strategic planning process and that the Economic Development Councils/Advisory Boards in all three of our Counties have also deemed it a priority.

10:05 – 10:40 Update/ Progress On Co-op/ Questions

Tyler Patton informed the group that the Cooperative's focus is presently on Southern and Western Maryland, completing the backbone in those regions. He also mentioned two new huts in our region, which are located in Elkton and Chestertown (at Washington College). Each county has certain anchor institutions (CAI's) which have fiber connections. In Kent County, there are 10, Queen Anne's has 17, and Cecil has 37.

There are currently 76 members in the cooperative. Scott Boone asked if the Cooperative staff could speculate as to why new startups have not emerged to complete the "last mile" as anticipated. Mr. Patton shared that the Cooperative model for broadband is new and has not been tested.

The Cooperative team shared that, of course, there are private ISP providers who are leasing fiber from the them to serve our local populations. The Cooperative is a 501C(3) and is not currently permitted to make profitable business use of the fiber. The Cooperative is currently paying for the fiber being laid via grant funds.

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The group asked the question of the Cooperative team, "Can we assist the ISP's with figuring out how to recoup their investment if they lay the last mile, so that they can make profits?" That would create the incentive that they need to do it.

The Cooperative team suggested that for now, perhaps a "best practice" methodology for the counties is to come to them (the Cooperative) on a case-by-case basis, as they identify areas, which need high-speed internet access to see if they can negotiate with the ISP's and relevant public and private partners in the area to be able to collaboratively provide service to the area.

Greg Urban heads the state of Maryland's IT office (DoIT, acronym) and is the primary contact there.

Megan DelGaudio asked about whether there is accurate mapping of the respective ISP's services and where the fiber is actually located. Mr. Mitchell suggested visiting <http://broadband.maryland.gov/map.html>, which was created for that purpose using a mapping grant. This grant came after the BTOP grant. He stated the fiber only runs up Route 213 (with which the Cooperative assisted), and that they did not place any on Hwy 301 in our region.

Choptank Electric Cooperative owns a large portion of fiber and made available their maps for public view. Often the providers will contact the Cooperative for locations of fiber and frequently the Cooperative will contact the provider to discuss disclosure for business purposes (although it is the ISP's proprietary information and they have the choices pertaining to disclosure).

Mr. Mitchell discussed the primary goal of the MD Broadband Cooperative: The goal of MD Broadband is for the state to have access to broadband, and to reduce costs to ISP's so each can expand their footprint across Maryland.

11:40 – 12:00 Action Steps/Summary/Next Meeting

Karl Hagelin suggested the group meet with other ISP's, to learn more about their services, and what they feel they need to incentivize providing the last mile service.

Scott Boone agreed to contact Kent County Planning and Zoning regarding the "overlay" policies.

Ms. Mason suggested arranging a meeting with an executive from PEPCO/Delmarva. Also it was suggested that we request that Rick Gordon (USDA) meet with the some of the providers.



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The group agreed that there is a need to investigate to see where is the closest connection from Route 213 to Highway 301. Ms. Mason agreed to talk with her contact at the EDA Ms. Alma Plummer in reference to funding.

The meeting date was arranged for Wednesday, June 26, 2013 for 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Council offices.