

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council

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Date of NC Board Action: 11/03/2008

Type of NC Board Action: General Comments

Impact Information

Date: 11/22/2008

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 06-2818

Agenda Date: 11/25/2008

Item Number: 16

Brief Summary: The Greater Valley Glen Council supports public access television and asks the City Council to make sure there are studios, equipment and staff available for the people of Los Angeles. Time Warner should keep the studios open until a new plan is in place to protect the integrity of public access.

Additional Information:

GREATER V GREATER VALLEY GLEN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Government Relations

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2008

(To be submitted to President at least 120 hours in advance of monthly board meeting)

PROPOSED MOTION FOR BOARD ACTION: The GVGC supports public access television and asks the City Council to make sure there are studios, equipment and staff available for the people of Los Angeles. Time Warner should keep the studios open until a new plan is in place to protect the integrity of public access.

PROPOSED COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT (if applicable) – 100 words or less:

(Attach to any applicable Council File) Council file number 07-3611. The GVGC supports public access television and asks the City Council to make sure there are studios, equipment and staff available for the people of Los Angeles. Time Warner should keep the studios open until a new plan is in place to protect the integrity of public access.

INFORMATION ABOUT PUBLIC ACCESS

Pro- public access argument by David Hernandez.

Future of Public Access

There is a problem facing a segment of the independent producing community in Los Angeles.

Beginning January 1st 2009 the City of Los Angeles has notified independent producers that 1220cable access channels and production facilities will close. These studios and channels have been financed and maintained for the last 20 years by Time Warner cable in lieu of a 2% franchise fee in Los Angeles.

These studios and channels also serve as public access community media centers; checking out portable mini-DV production kits and providing non-linear edit bays for hundreds of producers free of charge. The physical loss of equipment, personnel, and channel air time, will be due to the fact that the City of Los Angeles has failed their obligation to provide the public access facilities when Time Warner opts out under the new State Franchise Law.

The obligation of the City to continue operations of public access studios and channels, were originally created by the Federal Communications Act that was later amended to give local authority for their operation.

Under the new State Franchise system now in place, the City's failure to exercise the operation of the channels and replace the studios, in a timely manner may jeopardize public's use of the cable access channels, and by default, allow Time Warner to take them over for commercial use.

This would be the loss of a valuable PUBLIC ASSET. These public channels have provided an open forum where producers are free to display their creations and more importantly, inform the public as a balance to the government cable channels that are operated by the City.

Beginning January 1 a new State law, called DIVCA or the Digital Infrastructure & Video Competition Act, transfers the responsibility of maintaining access studio operations to the individual cities throughout California. We see an unfortunate trend unfolding across the country where many cash strapped cities are choosing to abandon their access systems rather than refit them for the digital age.

At best only a few cities have had the courage and insight to tackle these problems head-on while maintaining their commitment to the **Public and Independent** producers. **It seems fitting that Los Angeles California, the entertainment capital of the world, should be leading the fight for the rights of individual producers to have an outlet to share their creations. Unfortunately this is not the case.**

I have not seen one story in Los Angeles concerning the loss of access television in either print or on our local TV news. Our city leaders seem at a loss as to how to use this protected resource while big cable is glad to see it finally out of their hands. **If someone doesn't speak up for this resource that is not directly associated with its operation, how can we expect it to survive?**

In a report regarding the future of access, the ITA or Information Technology Agency warns that if the city does not find a way to use its access channels they may be lost forever.

Though viewing options are ever expanding, we may be set to lose one of the most important and often ignored choices. The choice that means; local creative individuals are what make up the bedrock of any community and protecting their right to create is something that will benefit us all.

As the access system waits in limbo, it is important that advocates step forward to remind our political and corporate leaders of their responsibility to maintain open and free outlets of communication. By monitoring the quickly moving battle for a vital and productive access system, we can ensure that at the core of our great country lies the freedom of the individual to create and share ideas.

Those against public access - It will cost the city money and we already have the Internet. It is unclear how a new system would be implemented.

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The City Council seems supportive of keeping public access if there is a cost-effective, easy way to do so. CityWatch thinks some of the time on Channel 36 should be devoted to public access TV.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT STATEMENT (if applicable – 100 words or less)*

***all non-operation expenditures must attach Agency or Department Letter Requesting item(s) or donation(s) to Committee prior to Committee vote;**

PROPOSED BUDGET EXPENDITURE (if any): None

IMPACT ON FISCAL YEAR BUDGET ALLOCATION BY CATEGORY & QUARTER:

(1st quarter 7/1-9/30 – 2nd quarter 10/1-12/31 – 3rd quarter 1/1 - 3/31 – 4th quarter 4/1-6/30)

All Non Operational Expense Motions must attach Agency or Department Letter Requesting item(s) or donation(s);