

# Baltimore Grassroots Media

April 16, 2004

Marilyn Harris-Davis  
Executive Director  
Mayor's Office of Cable & Communications  
8 Market Place, Suite 200  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Ms. Harris-Davis,

Thank you for holding the Public Access hearing on March 30<sup>th</sup> and listening to our concerns. We were very encouraged by the large public turnout and several statements you made there.

When asked whether the community could participate in running Channel 5 in the interim period before a new group is chosen to manage Public Access you said, "In terms of someone coming into the station right now that could probably be arranged." We would like to meet with you to discuss that arrangement.

You also indicated that you would find out within two weeks whether a public representative could participate in the cable franchise negotiations. By this Tuesday, April 13, two weeks had passed, and we are hopefully awaiting the results of your inquiry.

Our group, Baltimore Grassroots Media, was formed by public access volunteers, producers and concerned citizens to organize the public effort for Public Access. Although we have many diverse interests, we are united in advocating for an adequately-funded, democratically-controlled, well-run and widely-utilized public access station for Baltimore.

Beyond public representation in the negotiation process, these are our main concerns pertaining to the new contract, as we can best present them at this time with the limited information available to us:

- 1) **More time**, so the public can understand the negotiating process, determine what bargaining leverage they have and have an opportunity to form well-constructed positions to bring to the negotiating table.
- 2) **A continual revenue stream for public access**, ideally 40% of the 5% franchise fee, for the P (Public Access) part of PEG. On the WBAL Channel 11 news coverage of the hearing, a reporter said that a "key City negotiator" was seeking \$3 million from Comcast. It is not clear what parts of PEG this includes. Nevertheless this is precisely what doomed the previous Public Access management group -- a relatively small lump sum and no recurring payments.
- 3) **Funding for facilities and equipment** from Comcast, separate from the recurring percentage.
- 4) **Multiple analog channels and a percentage of digital bandwidth** dedicated to Public Access. Bunnie Riedel, director of the Alliance for Community Media, recommends we seek 10% of the bandwidth.
- 5) **Promotional spots** for Public Access programs on the regular cable channels and the ability to **communicate with subscribers through the regular cable bill mailings**.

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep channel 5 alive, and we look forward to working with your office to achieve the best possible outcome for Public Access.

Sincerely,

Supporters of Baltimore Grassroots Media\* (contact: Amanda Bowers, 410-371-8218, abowers1@jhmi.edu)

Dr. Kwame O. Abayomi, Baltimore City Council  
Julie Anderson, aminibigcircus  
Jana Baird, student, University of Baltimore School of  
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Ameena Batada, youth media instructor  
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Patricia Berry, web programmer, Evolving 1 Media  
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David G.S. Greene  
Kira Hammond, The Digital Media Center, Johns  
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Caleb Hawley  
Gerri Ingerson, president, Talent Connection  
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Mitchell Klein, head organizer, ACORN  
Pat Lakatta  
Benjamin Lefstein  
Martin S. Lefstein  
Elissa Leif, journalism teacher/OSI fellow,  
St. Veronica's After-School Academy  
Scott Loughrey  
Alicia Lucksted  
Emily Lynch, youth media instructor  
Harriet Lynn, producer/artistic director, Heritage Theatre  
Artists Consortium  
Robert H. Moore, MFA theater  
Arschel Morell, Jr., Harlem Park Neighborhood Council,  
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Michael Morrill  
Kay Lawal Muhammad, WombWork Productions, Inc.  
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Kathryn L. Parke  
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Sultan A. Shakir  
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Jeanette Snowden, parent  
Truxon M. Sykes  
Kristen Toedtman  
Vince Tola  
Mille Tyssowski, League of Women Voters

Beth Wacks  
David Ward, Dusk T'Dawn Party and Tavel Club, Inc.  
Joseph M. Weiss  
Brandon Welch, MFA theater  
Greg Whitehair, independent producer  
Frances Widdick  
Rebecca Yenawine, director, Kids on the Hill  
Rose Anne Zaeske, BFA  
Jodie Zisow, Forum for Creative Organizing

Cc: Jonathan Shorr, Ph.D.

\*affiliations listed for identification purposes only