

MISSION STATEMENT, GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Whitemarsh Township Government Access Channel (the "GAC") shall be to provide information to Township residents about their local government, and government-related community programs. The programming on the GAC shall focus on activities, services, events, and issues of interest to our residents. To the extent feasible, the GAC shall provide programming 24-hours per day/7-days per week, and may include timely regional information purchased from various sources, as well as local programming that shall originate from, and be the responsibility of, Whitemarsh Township (the "Township").

In providing information about governmental operations to the public, the Township shall allocate resources in the most efficient manner. Therefore, it shall be the general policy of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors (the "Board") to cablecast only those meetings, which have a broad applicability or interest to the Township as a whole.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Township in providing programming on the GAC shall be as follows:

1. To provide timely public information about government meetings, services, programs and events.
2. To provide information that will enable Township residents to have more effective access to local government.
3. To educate residents about government procedures and processes.
4. To provide residents with information on various Township functions and departments.
5. To expand community awareness of the decision-making processes of local government.
6. To provide accurate, up-to-date information to residents during emergencies.
7. To otherwise assist Township departments in the delivery of services, programs and information.
8. To provide information about community activities, as space and time permit.
9. To provide programming of interest to residents concerning Township history, health & wellness, sporting events and other areas of special interest to our community.

OVERSIGHT

Media Communications Advisory Board

The Board has established the Media Communications Advisory Board (the "MCAB") to provide general guidance and policy recommendations regarding the operation and supervision of the GAC.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Board has determined that the following general guidelines shall be applicable to the GAC:

1. To the extent feasible, the GAC shall operate 24-hours per day/7-days per week. Either a purchased "streamer" service or a character generator shall be used to display a bulletin board of information at all times when local programs are not being cablecast on the Township's GAC.
2. The GAC shall be used primarily to provide information by and about the Township. Programs produced by others about the Township's governmental activities and/or its supported activities or subjects, of general interest to Township residents, may also be cablecast on the GAC.
3. In considering programming options, the Board shall have the responsibility of determining which meetings shall be cablecast. Any Committee Chair or staff member may recommend to the Township Manager (the "Manager") that a particular meeting be cablecast if such meeting is believed to address issues of broad public interest. Upon such recommendation, the Manager shall review the matter. If appropriate, the MCAB shall make a recommendation to the Board regarding whether any such meeting should be cablecast.
4. Tape-delayed programming and replay of taped meetings and events may be cablecast as deemed appropriate by the Board.

CONTENT AND PRODUCTION

1. Public meetings: Coverage of public meetings, if cablecast, shall be gavel-to-gavel.
2. Board meetings or other public meetings receiving coverage on the GAC will be cablecast without editing or subjective comment, except when (1) the intent is to use excerpts as part of a larger program, or (2) when technical difficulties interfere.
3. When meetings of the Board are cablecast, they shall be presented live if technically feasible, and shall be taped for playback when deemed appropriate. The Township Secretary shall continue to develop and maintain the official public record of such meetings.
4. Locally produced programs produced by, or for, the Township or

Township departments, may be cablecast for Township residents, subject to the guidelines set forth herein.

5. Programs produced elsewhere (*i.e.*, those that do not involve the use of Township resources) that are available for acquisition and playback and which are relevant to the Township's operations and/or activities may, subject to the approval of the Board, be cablecast for Township residents.
6. Tapes produced elsewhere and provided by current federal, state, and/or county elected officials regarding the status of issues and other governmental business may, subject to the approval of the Board, be cablecast for Township residents, provided that fairness and equal time rules are followed where applicable.
7. Tapes of political debates for elective offices, produced elsewhere, may, subject to the approval of the Board, be cablecast for Township residents, provided that fairness and equal time rules are followed where applicable.

PROHIBITIONS

1. Commercial Messages.

Any programming promoting a product or service, with the primary objective of producing a monetary profit for a specific organization or individual, may not be cablecast on the GAC. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it shall be permissible to cablecast the incidental mention of a business or product, as part of a program where the primary purpose is to disseminate information of public benefit. Businesses, individuals, and organizations may be acknowledged for assistance in the production of a program or the provision of support for events or activities.

2. Political Campaigning.

The GAC shall not be used for political campaigning by individuals or organizations seeking public office or supporting the enactment of legislation. Nor shall the GAC be used for the solicitation of political contributions. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the tape-delayed cable casting of political debates for the offices of Township Supervisor, or other elected offices that serve Township residents, shall be permitted, provided that fairness and equal time rules are followed.

Except as noted in the preceding paragraph, a declared candidate for any political office shall not appear on the Township's GAC during the forty-five (45) days preceding the date of a primary or primary runoff election and during the sixty (60) days preceding the date of a general or special election in which such person is a candidate. This restriction shall not apply to an appearance by a legally qualified candidate during:

- a. Cable-cast meetings of the body of which he or she is a sitting

- member;
- b. GAC coverage of a news event; or
- c. "Public privilege of the floor" or "public comment" at a public meeting of the Board, or a Township Committee, Board or Commission appointed by the Board.

3. Encouragement of Legislative Action.

Township encouragement of proposed legislative action, or referendum matters, shall not be allowed, although information concerning such proposed legislation, or referendum, may be portrayed and discussed, provided it is presented in a fair and balanced manner.

4. Lotteries.

Information regarding private lotteries or promotions offering prizes based wholly or in part on chance shall not be allowed.

5. Religious Material.

Programs that are religious in nature or that would advocate a particular religious belief will not be cablecast on the GAC. Notwithstanding the foregoing, religious organizations or ideas that may be mentioned incidentally as part of another program, or the appearance of a member of the clergy or an individual representing a particular religion, may be permitted as part of a program providing general information.

6. Obscenity.

Every effort shall be made to ensure that all programs cablecast on the GAC meet community standards relative to obscenity.

7. Other

The GAC shall not cablecast material the presentation of which would violate any federal, state or local law, including without limitation laws protecting copyright.

DISCLAIMER

It is understood that the Board, Township staff and agents, and the members of the MCAB shall not and do not warrant the accuracy or timeliness of any information cablecast on the GAC and the Township reserves the right to cablecast appropriate disclaimers as necessary.