

Lower Makefield Township
Electronic Media Advisory Council
January 25, 2018
Meeting Minutes

Present: Zachary Rubin, Chair; Lisa Gage; Jill Laurinaitis; John Lewis, BOS Liaison; Ann Schreiber; Joshua Waldorf

Mr. Rubin called the EMAC meeting to order.

Approval of November 30, 2017 Minutes - The November minutes were approved as written.

Discussion of the Falls Township Lawsuit Regarding Prohibition of Internet Companies from Selling Customers' Personal Information - Mr. Rubin asked Mr. Lewis to update the Council on Falls Township's suit against Comcast, Verizon and AT&T and to provide input on any actions LMT has taken.

Mr. Lewis reported that Falls Township had passed their ordinance in October, with the changes to take place when their franchise agreements are up for renewal, 2019 for Verizon and 2021 for Comcast. He introduced the idea of LMT filing a similar suit in the summer but, as there did not seem to be sufficient support, he decided to wait. He now feels the time is right and has talked to Comcast and Verizon and told them that LMT might move forward with a suit. To date, only Seattle, in 1996, and Falls Township have passed similar ordinances.

Mr. Rubin noted that Verizon indicated that this ordinance would be a big enough change that it would allow them to break their franchise agreement with LMT. Mr. Lewis feels that Verizon would not win that case. Mr. Rubin asked whether residents could lose service if there is no franchise agreement. Mr. Lewis said that he believes the companies have an obligation to provide the service. Ms. Schreiber asked if there are other cable companies that could provide the same service and Mr. Rubin suggested that there are not others.

Mr. Lewis would like to bring this up before the Board in early April. Mr. Rubin expressed his reservations, including his concern that residents could lose their service, moving forward with this alone could be costly for the Township, and that Mr. Lewis' version of the ordinance will not pass a legal challenge. Mr. Lewis said he can redraft something that will sustain a legal challenge before he brings it up for a vote in April. He also noted that he is working to get legislation passed in the Pa. House and that two Pa. State Representatives have laws pending. Mr. Rubin called again for a vote and reiterated that he thinks it should not be pursued. The vote passed to move forward with the ordinance..

Improvement of Township Communications – In response to a discussion at the EMAC November meeting about the need for better communication in the Township, Mr. Waldorf had drafted a job description for a Communications Director. Ms. Laurinaitis had provided some edits. It was agreed that the job had been thorough and appreciated.

Mr. Rubin asked Mr. Lewis if it was even feasible to hire a Communications Director full-time, given the budget of 2018. And, if not, whether there was someone currently on staff who could take it on, or they could hire someone on an hourly basis. Mr. Lewis said that a full-time Director might be possible but that the BOS is still working on finding a new Township Manager and Finance Director.

There was discussion of what is currently being done in the way of communication in the Township and Ms. Laurinaitis said that LMT needs to have a protocol. Ms. Gage suggested, and the Council members agreed, that a discussion of ways to improve communications in the Township should be part of an interview with Township Manager candidates.

It was agreed that, as a next step, Mr. Rubin and Mr. Waldorf will meet with Terry Fedorchak to get his input on the best way to improve communication in the Township.

With no new or old business, the January 25, 2018 meeting of the EMAC was adjourned at 8:45. The next meeting of the EMAC will be held on March 22, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zachary Rubin, Chairman