

Attendees: Sally Greene (OC Commissioner)
Earl McKee (OC Commissioner)
Jim Northrup (OC CIO)
Vasu Kilaru (resident)
Paul Cardillo (resident)
Terri Buckner (resident)
Todd Broucksou (resident)
Pat Hull (resident)
Doug Noell (Chief IT Operations Officer Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools)
Victoria Deaton (Compliance Specialist Office of Institutional Equity and Inclusion Durham Tech)
Jeff Sural (Director, NC Broadband Infrastructure Office)
Dr. Monique Felder (Superintendent, OC Schools)
Dr. Kathleen Dawson (Deputy Superintendent, OC Schools)
Laura Jensen (Clerk to the BOCC)
Travis Myren (Deputy County Manager)
Mark Johnson (maybe)
Jacci Ruhe (resident)

Broadband Task Force March 17, 2021 @ 5:30 PM Meeting Agenda / Minutes

AGENDA

- 5:30 PM Welcomes and introductions - Greene/McKee
- 5:35 PM Group Discussion Action Item Maps – Northrup (discussion notes below)
- Tower Map
 - Coverage Map
 - RDOF Map
- 5:50 PM Discuss Approaches and next steps Greene/McKee
- Group discussion on the following 3 approaches
 - o Legislative – Greene/Sural
 - o Grant Funded – Northrup
 - o Technical what’s out there - Northrup
- 6:30 PM Discuss 3 Meeting Speakers
- Interest and availability updates for the following companies
 - o Piedmont Electric Membership Cooperative
 - o RiverStreet
 - o Open Broadband
 - Outside of future plans, what kind of presentation are we looking for?
- 6:45 PM Old Business/New Business
- Action Register
 - Minutes/Notes approval – March 3rd minutes/notes approved
- 6:50 PM Adjourn

Meeting is in zoom till 7PM

Action Items:

- ACTION: Next meeting April 7th at 5:30 - All
- ACTION: Provide list of all county owned land – Northrup
- ACTION: MCNC fiber maps? – Broucksou
- ACTION: Graig Meyer (and Republican colleague) on agenda for next meeting – McKee to arrange
- ACTION: Commissioner Greene requests that OC put together a synopsis of grants that we are eligible for (federal funding, block grants, etc); Northrup/Myren (Northrup=>will provide weekly progress reports)
- ACTION: Disruptive technologies to consider – All (Northrup will put together a starter list)

Discussion notes:

- Sally/Earl welcome
- Maps discussion (Northrup)
 - o Discussion about service areas (RDOF map); not attesting to 100% accuracy; hatched area is Spectrum's coverage in county; yellow dots are in underserved and unserved area; ~5000 dots in this area; wanted to figure out where problem areas are – no competition, just a single landline provider (DSL); where OC gets the most calls about poor/absent internet service; crosshatched area represents more than one ISP (CenturyLink, Google, etc); OC map generally accurate for Spectrum coverage area
 - Starlink discussion -> land-based equipment (Earth stations) 2 in NC (Chapel Hill)
 - o Tower map – telecommunication sites (preferred/not preferred); Planning Dept put together map of preferred tower locations (as of 2012 – green dots); any telecom that wants to put up a tower in OC, we ask them to go to these sites first (built into permitting process); Walnut Grove Church Road has a preferred location (Verizon – not moving forward yet); guyed towers (higher than 200', has guy wires), electric transmission towers (steel transmission towers, high intensity); lattice tower - triangular or square; monopole; preferred towers are not all county owned properties; map last updated 2012 (preferred tower locations map); Schley Road tower, Open Broadband putting LTE antennas and expect 2-3 miles penetration; OC has rights on some of the towers - so can sublet tower space to ISPs; may try to require space for ES on all towers erected (may be possible to legislate space on towers); OC does have some small communications towers (on the map – lattice at ES; Cedar Grove Fire Dept. – put OpenBB equip on); if commissioner's allocate funding, OC could build towers; regulatory process is very involved for under 200' and extremely involved for over 200' (Myren)
 - o Map for schools (10/29/2020) – where is effective area of their hotspots; gray spectrum, white is not good internet; did radii around towers to figure out which vendor could provide best service (known cell towers); intent to project success of hotspot program; all properties that were owned when they were permitted; Jim contacted property owners to see if they're amenable to putting antennas on towers – nearly all said "no"; Town of Hillsborough is charging for use of water tower; cost model of fixed wireless solution require ability to get on towers for little to no cost – must have 40 customers within radius of tower for service to still be profitable if paying to be on tower
 - o Fiber map – did strategic fiber plan 4 years ago; found that the only fiber is connecting parts of Century Link network so they can interconnect with each other; even Piedmont fiber is not well built out in OC; Todd has access to Piedmont Electric fiber maps that may be shareable; 5 year strategic plan for running fiber North/South/East/West (economic development zones), phased approach w/ToH for underground fiber MOU but didn't get off the ground; county owned fiber

project from ToH to North Campus – funding was previously granted to strategic fiber project (Phase 1); burying 140 strands between facilities at Tryon Street (Health Dept) to new North Campus; all of downtown H'boro buildings have fiber

- Legislative – Graig Meyer, would like to come to next meeting to discuss funding (McKee); (Greene) NCACC – [stated goal is to improve internet](#); will share status reports
- Grant Funded – counties can encourage ISPs to apply; some towns/counties have formed non-profits; counties not allowed to be ISP so if ISP is required for grant then no-go; send grant info to Jim to research if county can apply; (Greene) county is expected to get \$28million to use for broadband; (Myren) waiting for guidance from Treasury for how funding can be used (public/private partnership?); can use funding for last mile of fiber project (Jeff); “use by” date is 2024; in Biden funding, some money is on the user side (laptops, iPads, etc) (Todd); \$100billion bill for broadband infrastructure if passed; county money ½ must be released within 50 days of the bill’s passage with reporting requirements
- Any disruptive technology out there? Possibly Starlink but too soon to say; fixed wireless – currently working with; what about others? Any suggestions? White space??? Does the county own any “spectrum”? Jim – no but will check with ES
- Will have Graig come to next meeting then Riverstreet/Piedmont in subsequent meeting
- Formal action to approve minutes – move to approve; seconded, approved
- Terri – can OC be ISP to school systems? Takes advantage of eRate then has clout with providers? Problem is that govt cannot generate competition. Instead of hotspots, assume doing “real” service in the future – maybe use this to build fiber infrastructure from county to schools. If there’s enough then can share with ISPs. No schools in whole northwest quadrant of county or White Cross. Jim – ISPs have said they wouldn’t use or take over fiber even if we put it in the ground.