

**TOWNSHIP OF LUMBERTON
COUNTY OF BURLINGTON
ORDINANCE #2014-11-007**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LUMBERTON, COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, GRANTING RENEWAL OF MUNICIPAL CONSENT TO COMCAST OF GARDEN STATE, L.P., THE APPLICANT FOR SUCH MUNICIPAL CONSENT, TO CONSTRUCT, CONNECT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A CABLE TELEVISION AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN LUMBERTON, NEW JERSEY

WHEREAS, the Township of Lumberton has received the application for renewal of municipal consent by Comcast and specifically by Comcast of Garden State, L.P., and

WHEREAS, the Township of Lumberton has caused there to be a public hearing before the Township Committee of the Township of Lumberton, notice for which will be published according to law November 19, 2014 and the public hearing shall be scheduled before the Township Committee on December 2, 2014 at 730 p.m.;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Lumberton, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey, as follows:

§1. PURPOSE

Lumberton Township hereby grants to Comcast of Garden State, L.P., the applicant for the renewal of municipal consent, subject to the terms and conditions of this chapter and upon the condition that Comcast shall accept the provisions of this chapter and confirm, in writing, that it shall comply with all of the commitments, renewal of its nonexclusive municipal consent to place in, upon, across, above, over and under highways, streets, alleys, sidewalks, easements, public ways and public places in Lumberton Township, poles, wires, cables, underground conduits, manholes and other television conductors, fixtures, apparatus and equipment as may be necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance in Lumberton of a cable television and communications system. For all purposes of this ordinance, the applicant, Comcast of Garden State, L.P., shall be referred to as either the “applicant”, Comcast of Garden State, L.P. or Comcast.

§2. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Ordinance, the following terms, phrases, words and their derivations shall have the meaning given herein. Such meaning or definition of terms is supplemental to those definitions of the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) rules and regulations, 47 C.F.R. Subsection 76.1 et seq., and the Cable Communications Policy Act, 47 U.S.C. Section 521 et seq., as amended, and the Cable Television Act, N.J.S.A. 48:5A-1 et seq., and shall in no way be construed to broaden, alter or conflict with the federal and state definitions:

ACT or CABLE TELEVISION ACT – Chapter 186 of the General Laws of New Jersey, and subsequent amendments thereto, N.J.S.A. 48:5A-1 et seq.

APPLICATION – The Company’s application for renewal of municipal consent.

BASIC CABLE SERVICE – Any service tier, which includes the retransmission of local television broadcast signals as defined by the FCC.

BOARD OR BPU – The Board of Public Utilities, State of New Jersey.

COMPANY – The grantee of rights under this chapter and is known as the “applicant”, Comcast of Garden State, L.P. or Comcast.

FCC – The Federal Communications Commission.

OFFICE or OCTV – The Office of Cable Television of the Board.

PRIMARY SERVICE AREA OR PSA – Consists of the area of Lumberton Township currently served with existing plant as set forth in the map annexed to the company’s application for municipal consent.

TOWN OR MUNICIPALITY – The Township of Lumberton, County of Burlington,
State of New Jersey.

§3. STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

Public hearings conducted by the municipality, concerning the renewal of municipal consent herein granted to the company, were held after proper public notice pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Act and the regulations of the Board adopted pursuant thereto. Said hearings, having been fully open to the public, and the municipality, having received at said public hearings all comments regarding the qualifications of the company to receive this renewal of municipal consent, the municipality hereby finds that the company possesses the necessary legal, technical, character, financial and other qualifications and that the company's operating and construction arrangements are adequate and feasible, and shall provide a reasonable assurance of meeting the Township's future cable-related needs.

§4. DURATION OF FRANCHISE

- A. The nonexclusive municipal consent granted herein shall expire 15 years from the date of expiration of the previous certificate of approval issued by the Board with a with a 10-year automatic renewal as provided by N.J.S.A. 48:5A-19 and 25, and N.J.A.C. 14:18-13.6.
- B. In the event the municipality shall find that the company has not substantially complied with the material terms and conditions of this chapter, the municipality shall have the right to petition the OCTV, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-47, for appropriate action, including modification and/or termination of the certificate of approval; provided, however, that the municipality shall first have given the company written notice of all alleged instances of noncompliance and an opportunity to cure same within 90 days of that notification.

§5. FRANCHISE FEE

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Act, the company shall, during each year of operation under the consent granted herein, pay to the municipality 2% of the gross revenues from all recurring charges in the nature of subscription fees paid by subscribers for cable television reception service in the municipality or any higher amount required by the Act or otherwise allowable by law, whichever is greater.

§6. FRANCHISE TERRITORY

The consent granted under this chapter to the renewal of the franchise shall apply to the entirety of Lumberton Township, Burlington County, New Jersey and any property subsequently annexed hereto.

§7. EXTENSION OF SERVICE

The company shall be required to proffer service to any residence or business along any public right-of-way in the primary service area, as set forth in the company's application. The company's Line Extension Policy, as set forth in the company's application, shall govern any extension of plant beyond the primary service area.

§8. CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Restoration. In the event that the company or its agents shall disturb any pavement, street, surfaces, sidewalks, driveways, or other surface in the natural topography, the company shall, at its sole expense, restore and replace such places or things so disturbed in as good a condition as existed prior to the commencement of said work.
- B. Relocation. If, at any time during the period of this consent, the municipality shall alter or change the grade of any street, alley or other way or place, the company, upon reasonable notice by the municipality, shall remove, re-lay or relocate its equipment, at the expense of the company. The company shall, at the request of the municipality, temporarily raise, lower or remove its lines in order to facilitate the moving of buildings or machinery or other like circumstances, at the expense of the company.

- C. Removal or trimming of trees. During the exercise of its rights and privileges under this franchise, the company shall have the authority to trim trees upon and overhanging streets, alleys, sidewalks or other public places of the municipality so as to prevent the branches of such trees from coming in contact with the wires and cable of the company. Such trimming shall be only to the extent necessary to maintain proper clearance of the company's wire and cables.

§9. CUSTOMER SERVICE

In providing services to its customers, the company shall comply with N.J.A.C. 14:18-1 et seq. and all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations. The company shall strive to meet or exceed all voluntary company and industry standards in the delivery of customer service and shall be prepared to report on it to the municipality upon written request of the municipality Administrator or Clerk.

- A. The company shall continue to comply fully with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations regarding credit for outages, the reporting of same to regulatory agencies and notification of same to customers.
- B. The company shall continue to fully comply with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations regarding the availability of devices for the hearing impaired and the notification of same to customers.
- C. The company shall use every reasonable effort to meet or exceed voluntary standards for telephone accessibility developed by the National Cable Television Association (NCTA).
- D. Nothing herein shall impair the right of any subscriber or the municipality to express any comment with respect to telephone accessibility to the Complaint Officer or impair the right of the Complaint Officer to take any action that is permitted under law.

§10. MUNICIPAL COMPLAINT OFFICER

The Office of Cable Television is hereby designated as the Complaint Officer for the Municipality pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-26(b). All complaints shall be received and processed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 14:17-6.5. The Municipality shall have the right to request copies of records and reports pertaining to complaints by Municipality customers from the OCTV.

§11. LOCAL OFFICE

During the term of this franchise, and any renewal thereof, the company shall maintain a business office or agent in accordance with N.J.A.C. 14:18-5.1 for the purpose of receiving, investigating and resolving all local complaints regarding the quality of service, equipment malfunctions and similar matters. Such a business office shall be open during standard business hours.

§12. PERFORMANCE BONDS

During the life of the franchise, the company shall give to the municipality a bond in the amount of \$25,000. Such bond shall be to insure the faithful performance of all undertakings of the company as represented in its application for municipal consent incorporated herein, and in the commitments.

§13. SUBSCRIBER RATES

The rates of the Company shall be subject to regulation as permitted by State or Federal law.

§14. EDUCATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL ACCESS

- A. The Company will continue to provide one channel for educational and governmental ("EG") access for the shared use by the municipalities of Lumberton Township, Westampton Township, Mount Holly Township, Eastampton Township and Hainesport Township (Collectively, "Municipalities).
- B. The Company will provide and maintain the cable, modulators and equipment necessary for the Township education-government access channel to

send a signal to the Company, and to receive the return feed signal. The Company will not be responsible for the acquisition or maintenance of any studio facility or equipment used for the access channel including, but not limited to cameras, editing decks, monitors, character generators, etc.

- C. The Company does not relinquish its ownership of or ultimate right of control over a channel by designating it for EG use. An EG access user – whether an educational or government user – acquires no property or other interest by virtue of the use of a channel so designated, and may not rely on the continued use of a particular channel number, no matter how long the same channel may have been designated for such use.
- D. The Company shall not exercise editorial control over any educational or governmental use of channel capacity, except Company may refuse to transmit any educational or governmental access program or portion of an educational or governmental access program that contains obscenity, indecency, or nudity.
- E. The governing body of the Municipalities shall be responsible for developing, implementing, and enforcing rules for EG Access programming.
- F. Educational Access. “Educational Access” shall mean noncommercial use for educational purposes that is managed, scheduled, and programmed by local educational institutions such as public or private schools, but not “home schools,” community colleges, and/or universities.
- G. Government Access. “Government Access” shall mean noncommercial use by the governing bodies, for the purpose of showing the public local government at work.
- H. Company Use of Fallow Time. Because blank or underutilized EG channels are not in the public interest, in the event the Municipality or other EG access users elect not to fully program their EG access channel, Company may program unused time on those channels (at its discretion and for any purpose), subject to reclamation by the Municipality upon no less than 60 days written notice.
- I. Indemnification. The Municipality shall indemnify the Company for any liability, loss, or damage it may suffer due to violation of the intellectual property rights of third parties on the EG channel and from claims arising out of the Municipalities’ rules for or administration of access.

§15. COMMITMENTS BY COMPANY

- A. The company shall provide standard installation and basic cable television service on one outlet at no cost to each school in the municipality, public and private, elementary, intermediate and secondary, provided that the school is within 200 feet of active cable distribution plant. Each additional outlet installed, if any, shall be paid for on a materials/equipment plus labor basis by the school requesting service. Monthly service charges shall be waived on all outlets.
- B. The company shall provide standard installation and basic cable television service at no cost on one outlet to each of the following municipal facilities: all police, fire, emergency management facilities, Township Administration Building, the Department of Public Works facility, and each public library provided that the facilities are located within 200 feet of active cable distribution plant. Each additional outlet installed, if any, shall be paid for on a materials plus labor basis by the municipality. Monthly service charges shall be waived on all additional outlets.
- C. The company shall provide standard installation of one free non-networked Internet connection via high-speed cable modem on one outlet in each public library facility and in each public or private elementary, middle or secondary school. Connections at all facilities outlined in this section shall be accessible to student or patron use and cannot be restricted to administrative use. All facilities must be within 200 feet of active cable distribution plant.
- D. Within 90 days of the issuance of a Renewal Certificate of Approval by the BPU, the Company shall provide to the Municipality a one-time Technology Grant in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to meet the technology and/or cable related needs of the community.

E. The Communications Act of 1934, as amended [47 U.S.C. §543 (b)], allows the Company to itemize and/or identify: (1.) the amount on the subscriber bill assessed as a franchise fee and the identity of the governmental authority to which the fee is paid; (2.) the amount on the bill assessed to satisfy any requirements imposed on the Company by the cable franchise to support public, educational, and/or governmental access channels or the use of such channels; and (3.) any grants or other fees on the bill or any tax, assessment, or charge of any kind imposed by any governmental authority on the transaction between the operator and the subscriber. The Company reserves these external cost, pass-through rights to the extent permitted by law.

F. At the written request of the Township, the Company and the Township's designee shall meet at least annually to review all matters relating to cable television in the Township, with the minutes of such meetings to be delivered to the company and to be filed with the Township.

§16. EMERGENCY USES

A. The company will comply with the Emergency Alert System (EAS) rules in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes and regulations. (State Police manages override of our system for EAS messaging, not municipal government).

B. The company shall in no way be held liable for any injury suffered by the municipality or any other person, during an emergency, if for any reason the municipality is unable to make full use of the cable television system as contemplated herein.

§17. LIABILITY INSURANCE

The company shall at all times maintain a comprehensive general liability insurance policy with a single limit amount of \$1,000,000 covering liability for any death, personal injury, property damages or other liability arising out of its construction and operation of the cable television system, and an excess liability (or "umbrella") policy in the amount of \$5,000,000.

§18. INCORPORATION OF APPLICATION

All of the statements and commitments contained in the application or annexed thereto and incorporated therein, and any amendment thereto, except as modified herein, are binding upon the company as terms and conditions of this consent. The application and other relevant writings submitted by the company shall be annexed hereto and made a part hereof by reference, provided that same do not conflict with applicable state or federal law.

§19. COMPETITIVE EQUITY

Should the municipality grant a franchise to construct, operate and maintain a cable television system to any other person, corporation or entity on terms materially less burdensome or more favorable than the terms contained herein, the company may substitute such language that is more favorable or less burdensome for the comparable provision of this chapter subject to the provisions of N.J.A.C. 14:17-6.7.

§20. THIRD PARTY BENEFICIARIES

Nothing in this franchise or in any prior agreement is or was intended to confer third-party beneficiary status on any member of the public to enforce the terms of such agreements or franchise.

§ 21. SEPARABILITY

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court or federal or state agency of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision, and its validity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the Ordinance.

§ 22. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon issuance of a Renewal Certificate of Approval from the BPU.

Introduced: November 13, 2014

Adopted: December 2, 2014

Attest:


Stephanie N. Yurko, RMC/CMR
Municipal Clerk


Lewis K. Jackson, Mayor