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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC MEETING
BEFORE COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PUBLIC WORKS

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, December 10, 1998
10:50 a.m.

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Bill No. 980847 - An ordinance renewing the cable
TV franchise held by Greater Philadelphia Cable
Vision, Inc., also known as "Greater Media," under
certain terms and conditions.

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PRESENT: COUNCILWOMAN AUGUSTA CLARK, Chairwoman
COUNCILWOMAN JOAN KRAJEWSKI
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER

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5	Former City Councilman Edward Schwartz. . . .	4
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1 12/10/98 PUBLIC PROPERTY & PUBLIC WORKS - Bill 980847

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Good morning. The
4 Committee on Public Property and Public Works is
5 now in session. Present in the room for purposes
6 of a quorum are Councilwoman Donna Miller, myself
7 -- Councilwoman Clark, Councilwoman Joan
8 Krajewski, and Councilman Michael Nutter.

9 Are there any persons present in the
10 room who wish to be heard with respect to the
11 continuation of the hearing on Bill No. 980847?
12 This is an ordinance renewing the Area One cable
13 TV franchise held by Greater Philadelphia Cable
14 Vision, Inc., also known as "Greater Media," under
15 certain terms and conditions.

16 Will persons presently in the room
17 please come to the witness table?

18 For purposes of this continued hearing,
19 I'm going to ask people from Public Property and
20 the City Solicitor's Office to come inside the
21 rail.

22 Ladies and gentlemen who were not here
23 last week, this hearing was convened and testimony
24 was taken. On a suggestion of the parties, the
25 bill was held for a week to permit some greater

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2 negotiations between Greater Media and members of
3 the bargaining units. It is my understanding that
4 those meetings were held and that they were at
5 least not unsatisfactory. I want to be as
6 nonjudgmental of those as possible.

7 And now before us is an opportunity for
8 one additional person to speak, and that person is
9 former Councilmember Edward Schwartz. Please come
10 forward.

11 (Former Councilman Edward Schwartz
12 comes forward.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Good morning, Mr.
14 Schwartz.

15 MR. SCHWARTZ: Good morning,
16 Councilwoman Clark. I have a basic summary for
17 you, if the sergeant-at-arms could give them to
18 you.

19 And I'm going to be
20 uncharacteristically brief here.

21 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: No, you won't be
22 characteristically brief.

23 MR. SCHWARTZ: No, I said
24 "uncharacteristically" brief.

25 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Oh, okay. Thank

1 12/10/98 PUBLIC PROPERTY & PUBLIC WORKS - Bill 980847
2 you.

3 MR. SCHWARTZ: So I'm acknowledging my
4 reputation before it's brought to my attention.

5 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you. I
6 agree.

7 MR. SCHWARTZ: I want to thank you for
8 this opportunity. I'm here, having voted some
9 years ago on all of the franchises, including this
10 one that you're looking at.

11 In the course of last summer, as a
12 tenant in room -- in 1218 Chestnut Street, I
13 discovered that it was virtually impossible for
14 our building and others like it to get cable
15 access for people and companies inside; that the
16 cable company was basically -- in this case,
17 Greater Media -- imposing the charge for wiring
18 the building on the landlord. And if there was no
19 building nearby, that charge became prohibitive.

20 And there was nothing really that I
21 could do about it. So when I saw this hearing
22 reported in the papers, I figured we'd come down.

23 I've discovered since then, in looking
24 into this, the one great lapse in the original
25 ordinance and in this one is that the cable

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2 company has no responsible institutionally for
3 infrastructure for the commercial sector -- it's
4 all for residential building -- so that they can
5 set the terms of the commercial buildings.

6 Now, this has not been a problem over
7 the years because most commercial buildings really
8 have had no demand for cable. And as you,
9 Councilwoman Clark, pointed out when we discussed
10 this, it's never really come up.

11 I'm happy to say, thanks to your
12 intervention, that we have, over the last day or
13 so, worked out with Greater Media some
14 conversation here about how to deal with the
15 problem of 1218 Chestnut Street.

16 The deeper problem I'm just calling to
17 your attention as a way of moving forward. If
18 this has not been an issue the last 15 years, it
19 will be a big issue in the next 15 years because,
20 as the technologies for cable, telephone, and
21 computers become one, and cable modems and cable
22 access become an important part of doing video
23 conferencing and doing business, this becomes part
24 of the economic development life and economic life
25 of the City.

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2 And the City's economic development
3 agencies have well-developed strategies for land
4 use and residential stuff and tax financing, but
5 we need a strategy to manage the development of
6 technology in Center City and in all of our
7 business districts and to work collaboratively
8 with the companies to do this. That's not the
9 time to set it up here. It's merely my voice in
10 this hearing, as this franchise moves forward, to
11 say that this is the next step that we all need to
12 work together on to achieve.

13 And I'm pleased to say that the
14 leadership of Greater Media has in its plans fiber
15 optic wiring and a willingness to work with us in
16 all of that.

17 So this never came up years ago. I had
18 no idea that the commercial districts weren't
19 included until just yesterday. I want to call
20 this to your attention. I think it is a very,
21 very important priority for the City in the future
22 given the changes -- radical changes that are
23 being made technologically and economically.

24 And I look forward to working with you
25 on trying to solve the more basic problem as we

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2 deal with this more specific one.

3 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you.

4 It is my understanding that with the
5 advent of fiber optics that this problem gets
6 addressed, but I feel very certain that if does
7 not, that the commercial district and the Chamber
8 of Commerce and other people who have a direct
9 interest will bring it to the attention and be
10 addressed.

11 But I appreciate your putting it on
12 this record, albeit somewhat late.

13 MR. SCHWARTZ: I didn't know that I had
14 that opportunity, really.

15 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: But it is a
16 problem that we might encounter in the future.

17 MR. SCHWARTZ: Parking is something
18 that this Council and the City has dealt with in
19 terms of the management of cars in Center City as
20 a matter of course, and I sat here while we had to
21 wrestle with that.

22 And I just think there needed to be a
23 place for, let's say, me and other business owners
24 to go when we were having this problem with
25 Greater Media, to get some kind of public --

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2 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Always bring your
3 problems to us, Mr. Schwartz, and we'll do our
4 best to fix 'em.

5 MR. SCHWARTZ: Fair enough. Thank you
6 very much.

7 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: I thank you very
8 much.

9 MR. SCHWARTZ: I appreciate the
10 opportunity to be here.

11 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you.

12 Okay, that ends the testimony on the
13 Greater Media renewal. We've had very extensive
14 testimony. I see we're being joined at the
15 table. New wisdom?

16 UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL: No, ma'am.

17 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: No new wisdom, all
18 right.

19 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: In that case, I'll
20 entertain a motion that this meeting be -- any
21 questions?

22 COUNCILWOMAN KRAJEWSKI: No, I don't
23 have any questions.

24 (No questions.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN KRAJEWSKI: Madame

3 Chairwoman, I move that Bill No. 980847 be
4 reported out of this committee with a favorable
5 recommendation, as amended, and with a suspension
6 of rules as to permit first reading at our next
7 session of Council.

8 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: All in favor?

9 Opposes?

10 Therefore, Bill No. 980847 will be
11 reported out of this committee with a favorable
12 recommendation, as amended, and that the rules of
13 Council will be suspended so as to permit first
14 reading at the next stated meeting of Council.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN KRAJEWSKI: Thank you,

17 Madame Chair.

18 COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: This committee is
19 now adjourned.

20 (Adjourned at 10:58 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of Thursday, December 10, 1998, were
reported and accurately by me, and that this is a
correct transcript of same.

RE: COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PUBLIC WORKS
BILL NO. 980847

_____,
JOSEPHINE CARDILLO,
Registered Professional Reporter