

## **DARIEN TV79 ADVISORY BOARD**

REGULAR MEETING – February 29, 2008

### **MINUTES**

Members Present: Wilder Baker, Jim Cameron, Gene Coyle, David Dever, Marilyn Hart

Member Absent: Lynn Hamlen

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm in room 206 of Darien Town Hall by acting Chairman Jim Cameron. The meeting was aired live on TV79 and replayed at later dates.

The members introduced themselves and spoke of their interest in serving on the Board.

Mr. Cameron asked for nominations for Chairman after declining the position himself. In her absence, Ms. Hamlen was elected unanimously. Mr. Cameron offered to be Acting Secretary for this meeting with the job to be rotated among members in the future.

Continuing as Acting Chairman, Mr. Cameron reviewed the Darien Town Government Access Television operating guidelines as approved and amended by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Baker asked about the station airing programming produced outside the town. Mr. Cameron and Mr. Dever spoke of their philosophy that the station should not air programs except those produced locally or regionally, but always of interest and relevance to Darien.

Mr. Dever reviewed the history of TV79.

There was much discussion of the single biggest issue facing the station: finding staffers to run the cameras. Mr. Baker suggested approaching Wright Tech in Stamford and Mr. Cameron agreed to follow-up. Mr. Coyle suggested approaching Darien HS drama teacher Nancy Herman to see if her students would be interested. Mr. Cameron explained that he and Mr. Dever had appeared before every fraternal and interest group in town soliciting volunteers, so far to little success.

Mr. Dever spoke of the technical investment in the station so far, totaling approx. \$25,000. Funding came from fees collected by Cablevision from subscribers and allocated to the ten towns on the Area Nine Cable Council (on which Mr. Cameron and Mr. Dever serve as appointed representatives of the Town of Darien).

Mr. Cameron spoke about plans to also carry TV79 on the new AT&T uVerse video service and via Internet access on a web server. Mr. Dever said that TV79 would never be available to subscribers to satellite TV systems.

Mr. Cameron explained that TV79 was seeking \$15,000 in funding support from the Town for equipment and to pay staffers as camera operators to supplement the volunteers. These funds would supplement an additional \$4 - \$5000 to be received this year from Cablevision noting that these funds may only be used to pay for equipment but not for its installation or staff to run the cameras.

Mr. Dever explained that TV79 has also received equipment grants from the Darien Technology and Community Foundation (a new computer and flat-screen TV to be installed in the lobby of Town hall) and equipment manufacturers such as Chyron which donated a character generator.

Mr. Cameron suggested that TV79 create a non-profit, 501c3 fund-raising arm to solicit donations and foundation grants. A motion to do so was approved unanimously and Mr. Cameron said he would seek volunteer legal services to file the necessary paperwork with the IRS.

There was further discussion of programming ideas including a CSpan-style interview series "Inside Town Hall" where the chairs of various Town boards and commissions could explain their organizations' work.

Mr. Cameron asked the Board to endorse the TV79 budget request and sought Board members' help to push this request thru the budget approval process. The motion passed unanimously.

During the Public Comment period Mr. Cameron read into the record an e-mail from Ms. Gwen Mogenson (member of the Bd of Finance) praising the station for its coverage.

Ms. Flora Smith also spoke, complimenting the station's coverage and suggested further promotional ideas including an enhanced Program Guide, inclusion of TV79 coverage in the schools' e-mail blasts and passing out flyers about the station on election day.

There was discussion about how often the Advisory Board should meet and there seemed consensus that meeting every-other month would be sufficient. Mr. Cameron said he welcomed calling special meetings as needed.

Mr. Cameron said he would confer with Chairman-elect Ms. Hamlen and plan for the next meeting sometime in May 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM CAMERON  
Acting Secretary