

BCPUD Internet Access Committee
Meeting Minutes January
28, 2017

Committee members present: Lyndon Comstock (Chair), Jennifer Jones, Duncan Hopkins, Kris Backenstose

Absent: None

Call to Order:

Chair Lyndon Comstock called the inaugural meeting of this committee to order at 10:00 a.m. Duncan Hopkins volunteered to record and make notes of the meeting.

Public Comments on the current status of broadband internet service in Bolinas:

Ian Johnson (Bolinas Fire District):

- AT&T is the sole broadband internet service provider in Bolinas, offering DSL service through its copper wire telephone lines (copper plant). Claiming that their “aggregation module” is at maximum capacity, AT&T will not offer DSL to new accounts, will not allow current customers to transfer DSL access if moving from one location to another within Bolinas, and has begun canceling DSL accounts if a customer makes a late payment.
- AT&T's copper plant is old, inefficient, and heavily patched after decades of repairs to lines damaged by falling trees, etc.
- AT&T uses a fiber optic cable running from Stinson Beach to the Bolinas Fire Station to carry all of its telephone, internet, and cellular voice/data traffic, and leases bandwidth to Verizon for its cellular voice/data traffic. Even though DSL service is inadequate to meet the Fire District's needs due to limited bandwidth, they cannot afford to lease a fiber optic line from AT&T, which would charge the District a minimum of \$600/month for that service.
- There are three alternatives to DSL available in Bolinas:
 1. Satellite (very costly in excess of basic service packages, requires line of sight to the provider's satellite)
 2. Dial-up or ISDN from AT&T (ancient technologies; extremely limited bandwidth)
 3. the Muir Beach LAN [Local Area Network] (extremely fast broadband service; requires direct line of sight to Muir Beach)

Peter Pratt (Marin County Broadband and Telecommunications Consultant):

- AT&T continues a major lobbying effort in the California Assembly to secure the passage of legislation authorizing AT&T to abandon all of its copper lines in rural California. Bolinas would clearly be effected should AT&T receive this authority.
- The County is committed to improving broadband access in West Marin and he is anxious to work with Bolinas to that end. He is very encouraged that this committee has been created.
- It is possible that Bolinas may be able to make use of a grant from the CPUC (California Public Utilities Commission) to help build out a system, but the application process would need to begin as soon as possible because the money will run out soon and the program's funding (CASF) was not renewed by the Assembly.

Presentations from Internet Service Providers (ISP) currently operating in West Marin:

- Horizon Cable TV, servicing Point Reyes, Inverness, and Stinson Beach (Kevin Daniel, Susan Daniel). They are trying to obtain permits to bore under the Bolinas Lagoon channel and run a fiber optic link that would allow them to extend their Stinson Beach hybrid fiber/coax system into Bolinas. Because of the expense involved for that connection and for building out a system in Bolinas, they will want to bring in additional investment capital if the necessary permits are issued.
- Inyo Networks, ISP for the proposed Nicasio fiber optic network (Robert Volker). Nicasio currently has almost no internet service. Through Inyo, the Nicasio Homeowners Association has received a grant from the CPUC's CASF program to fund 60% of the cost to build a fiber to the premises [FTTP] network in Nicasio, contingent upon the Homeowners Association raising the matching \$1 million before 6/1/17.
- Leighton Hill, Proprietor of the Tomales Bay LAN. Mr. Hill operates a radio frequency (RF) broadband system in Muir Beach, as well as serving approximately a dozen customers in Bolinas who have direct line of sight to Muir Beach. He also serves Commonweal with an RF connection. He envisions a broadband network in Bolinas whereby a fiber optic network to be installed in Bolinas would be connected to his existing LAN via a narrow RF beam that would require the construction of a single tower in Bolinas situated such that the Bolinas transceiver had line of sight to either Muir Beach or to Mr. Hill's repeater on Middle Peak, Mt. Tamalpais.

After their respective presentations further discussion of technical details, potential State and Federal grant programs, and potential changes in State and Federal policy regarding rural broadband access ensued.

Community Expression:

A community member expressed deep concern about the potential threats to human and wildlife health posed by electromagnetic radiation and encouraged the committee to focus solely on fiber optic-only solutions.

Next meeting date: To be determined

Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.