



**TOWN OF PETERSHAM
OFFICE OF THE SELECTBOARD**

3 South Main Street • P.O. Box 486
Petersham, Massachusetts 01366

www.townofpetersham.org • 978-724-3353 • Fax 978-724-3501

May 26, 2016

RE: MBI PUBLIC COMMENTS

Honorable Commissioner Karen Charles Peterson
Massachusetts Dept. of Telecommunications and Cable
Suite 820
1000 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02118-6500

Dear Commissioner Charles Peterson,

The Town of Petersham Selectboard writes this letter as a follow-up to the Hearing held on May 23, 2016 at Lincoln Campus Center, UMass, Amherst.

We would like to thank you for holding the meeting and managing a civic and productive forum for all participants. Your allowance for time for all speakers who wished to be heard and at the lengths which they needed is greatly appreciated.

Several from the Town of Petersham were in attendance at the Hearing which we had all just learned of one week prior (and to which inexplicably we were not directly invited by MBI – an oversight that we do not understand as the MBI is fully aware that we are a town working directly with Matrix Design Group a primary topic of the Hearing). Attending were Petersham Broadband Committee members Chip Bull, Chair, and Andre Pierre, along with resident Mark Bishop, and two Selectboard members, Henry Woolsey Vice Chair, and myself, Chair. We also appreciate that Tyler Wolanin was there for Sen. Anne Gobi especially given that the legislators were fully involved in year-end budget debates on that evening, and so in our case, our Senator did not even have the choice to attend.

Given the required turnaround of comments by today's date we could not post for any official Selectboard or Broadband Committee follow-up meeting. Please note though that the Selectboard has been tracking and working closely on the broadband effort with the town's Broadband Committee and I write in the name of the entire Selectboard. Had we enough time for an official meeting this letter would likely have concluded with the signatures of all three Selectmen.

We wish to relay the following information to you for your consideration and I thank you in advance for your time and patience in reviewing and digesting so much information from so many sources such as Petersham:

- The Town of Petersham was approved by MBI to work with Matrix Design Group in Fall 2015 after MBI had qualified Matrix as an allowed vendor.
- Specific work towards planning and drafting agreements with Matrix has now been underway for over 6 months and many months (years actually) of prior work by the Petersham Broadband Committee had led up to Fall 2015.

- That work has included diligent efforts by our five member Broadband Committee, three member Selectboard, Administrative Coordinator, and importantly, use of our Town Counsel, Kopelman & Paige.
- Funding for Town Counsel fees has been via MBI State grant funding provided precisely for that purpose (and which we very much have appreciated having available for such use).
- Matrix has had their attorney spending valuable time with our Town Counsel as the two have worked through a draft Memorandum of Agreement.
- The Petersham Selectboard and Broadband Committee have a yearlong record of written communications (examples attached), telephone conversations, and meetings with MBI administrators. We have always expressed our appreciation for MBI's willingness to communicate and work with us in what we here in Petersham had every reason to believe was a unified way to get to successful solutions, working together. We greatly appreciate the complexity and difficulty of this overall project – so many individual towns, committees, and personalities to be working with. At no time did we ever feel anything but a sense of positive response to the process we had underway here in Petersham; including prior to this current phase of work and going back to 2009–2010, we greatly appreciated MBI's responsiveness to our specific requests during installation of the middle mile backbone network.
- The handful of towns such as Petersham, Hardwick, and Montague were led to believe that since we had not joined the Wired West collaborative, we had the green light to continue to proceed towards finding successful community solutions. That is the track each of us were on, with Hardwick and Montague a few steps ahead of Petersham on the timeline and obviously all three towns concluding that Matrix Design Group – an MBI qualified contractor – was likely the best group to serve our needs if all agreements could be worked out.
- With all of that said, even to this date and with State funds being used for our town attorney expenses, along with not being directly informed by MBI of the May 23rd Hearing, we have never heard directly from MBI that Petersham's work with Matrix should end or that they were now in the process of being disqualified. We were aware that in early 2016 Governor Baker has placed a pause on the overall project so his office could review status, but at no time did MBI suggest that we should stop the work we had well underway because they were now doing a comparison review of already qualified contractors.
- I note all of this as a way to underscore and help you understand the surprise and concern that Petersham now feels given the May 4th report issued by MBI regarding Matrix Design and Comcast.
- In all of the months leading up to this current hands-on work and during the efforts of the past six months, Chris Lynch, representative of Matrix Design Group, has been a dedicated presence – in person at meetings whenever needed and via telephone and e-mails. I believe that I and Broadband Committee Chair Chip Bull would be hard pressed to note a more dedicated and responsive service provider as Mr. Lynch has been for this project. And I stress that this has all been prior to any signed documents and obviously there has been no billing by Matrix for all of Mr. Lynch's time and expertise.
- Unlike Hardwick and Montague who are Underserved Towns, we are an Unserved Town. We do not have Comcast as an option. We do not have any cable serving our town. Comcast has never once reached out to any town officials on this matter. While meanwhile Mr. Lynch has been a regular presence providing ideas, answers, and solutions. The millions of dollars spent six years ago in 2010 on the Broadband 123 middle mile effort sits mostly idle in Petersham with some of our municipal offices being the only available users.

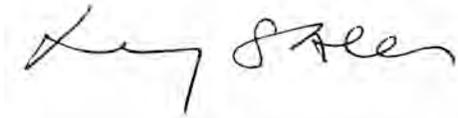
• I also wish to relay the tremendous efforts that Petersham has witnessed by the officials of Montague and Hardwick. Their dedication to this issue is impressive and we have seen it firsthand here in Petersham with their attendance at our local meetings – making that intense extra effort in travel, time, explanations, sharing of information, etc. I cannot speak highly enough of their dedication to finding the best solutions for their communities and the knowledge they bring in doing so – both on technical fronts and on what is the right fit for their communities for successful solutions. I believe Chair Chip Bull and the Petersham Broadband Committee would easily join me in that assessment of those town's efforts.

In closing, the Town of Petersham very much wishes to continue our work with Matrix Design Group to focus on finding solutions for our community's needs. We respectfully ask for your support in that effort and that of Hardwick and Montague. The residents of Petersham have recently petitioned for support from the Governor and our legislators. Because the work has now been halted, we do not yet know if a broadband solution with Matrix will be found, but with what has been covered so far, we believe they are our best option for finding the best solution for Petersham at this time.

Thank you very much for your time and work for the Commonwealth and for the communities of Massachusetts.

Yours sincerely,

PETERSHAM SELECTBOARD



Nancy S. Allen
Chair, Petersham Selectboard

attachments

cc: Ms. Sara Clark, Secretary, Mass. Dept. of Telecommunications and Cable
Mr. Henry L Woolsey, *Vice Chairman*; Mr. Fredrik A. Marsh, *Clerk*, Petersham Selectboard
Hon. Senator Anne Gobi
Hon. Representative Susannah Whipps Lee
Hon. Senator Stanley Rosenberg
Hon. Representative Stephen Kulik
Hon. Representative Donald Berthiaume
Mr. Chip Bull, *Chair, Petersham Broadband Committee*
Mr. Ross France, *Chair, Petersham Advisory Finance Committee*
Mr. Steven Boudreau, *Petersham Administrative Coordinator*



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April 26, 2016

Hon. Governor Charlie Baker

Office of the Governor, Room 280

Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02133

Hon. Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito

Office of the Lt. Governor, Room 280

Hon. Senator Anne Gobi

Massachusetts State House, Room 513

Hon. Representative Susannah Whipps Lee

Massachusetts State House, Room 540

Ms. Elizabeth Copeland, *Interim Director*

Mr. Ed Donnelly, *Strategic Policy Director*

Massachusetts Broadband Institute

75 North Drive, Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

Dear Gov. Baker, Lt. Gov. Polito, Sen. Gobi, Rep. Whipps Lee, Ms. Copeland, and Mr. Donnelly,

The Petersham Selectboard writes this letter to you collectively asking for information regarding the status of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's effort on the last mile high speed broadband project in central and western Massachusetts. We do so at the request of the Petersham Broadband Committee and local citizens.

Several months ago we communicated via teleconference with Ed Donnelly and then Director Eric Nakajima regarding next steps for our broadband implementation process. It was a positive and productive discussion and based on it we continued moving forward with our process which has primarily been focused on development and review of an Agreement between the Town of Petersham and Matrix Design Group, Inc. Our town counsel, Kopelman & Paige, has been actively engaged with legal counsel for Matrix to review the Agreement drafts and which had first been reviewed by Matrix, the Petersham Broadband Committee, and the Petersham Selectboard prior to inclusion of the attorneys.

As we continue to undertake this review process we also closely follow news about the moratorium placed on the project and funding, questions that have been raised by MBI to other towns about Matrix Design Group, various meetings and forums held in the western part of the state, and the general sense of frustration that seems to dog this process. As you can likely imagine given the work so far, we are concerned that the State at this juncture is reviewing the abilities of Matrix Design Services.

We are deeply respectful of the need to understand the process through the eyes of MBI and the Governor's office — we recognize it is a complex situation. We appreciate the time and care your offices are giving to this subject and we know you have received a lot of input. And we are certain that you can appreciate the growing frustration from towns such as Petersham.

We are writing to ask a few items of you:

- An Invitation to Meet: We cordially invite MBI and either Governor Baker, Lt. Gov. Polito, or someone from the Governor's Office to attend a meeting in Petersham or Hardwick to review the project with both town's Selectboards and Broadband Committees. We realize this invitation may not be accepted or feasible (though last year Mr. Nakajima and staff did visit Petersham with Sen. Gobi and which we were all greatly appreciative). An alternative would be for members of the two town Boards to visit your office(s).

• Status of Review of Matrix Design Services: We understand that MBI has told the Town of Montague that you will be replying to them by April 29 regarding your review of Matrix Design Services. We are equally interested in hearing the results of that review and would prefer to learn of it directly from MBI rather than via newspaper accounts. We would greatly appreciate if you can accommodate this request to relay your findings to Petersham.

As noted above, Matrix has been working with Petersham on a proposed implementation plan for quite some time — we wish to relay to you that we have only positive comments to make about their clear commitment to the project, their willingness to work through questions and ideas, and their overall responsiveness and attention to the project and to Petersham town officials and residents. Obviously we cannot speak for Hardwick or Montague, but our understanding is that those towns feel the same way.

• When will the moratorium be lifted: We, naturally along with all other towns, would like to know when the moratorium will be lifted? Announced at the end of January it is now been in place for three months. We realize that the Governor's Office asked MBI to "develop policies to ensure that it is reviewing and analyzing all options." In Petersham and as with our neighbors to the south in Hardwick, we believe we have a viable solution underway with Matrix Design. We need to know if and when we can proceed.

• Funding: We would like confirmation that Petersham's portion of the broadband project funding already approved by the State is secure and will be released when needed. As we have done all along since appointing a Broadband Committee and their work began with MBI, we would always take all steps in concert with MBI, following all correct procedures, and always maintaining close communications. That is how we always work and how we are prepared to proceed on this project.

As MBI knows, Petersham is defined as one of the "unserved" towns. The Selectboard and Broadband Committee are hearing from concerned residents on a regular basis about the lack of service and the project's overall standstill status. We also know that Petersham residents have recently voiced their concerns and frustrations to Sen. Gobi's assistant who holds monthly office hours in all the Senator's towns. And at this time a Citizens' Petition is circulating in Petersham asking for the Governor and MBI to move forward. We relay this information so as to give you a sense of the mounting frustration and general lack of understanding by citizens as to why this process has seemingly stalled for so long.

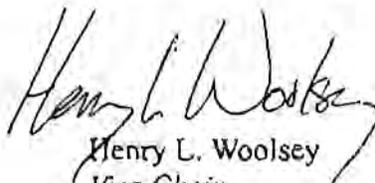
Your response to our queries is appreciated and we look forward to hearing from you to see if a meeting can be arranged. Again, if holding a meeting in Petersham-Hardwick is not realistic then we can arrange for a group of local officials to come to your offices and where we hope our representatives Sen. Gobi and Rep. Whipps Lee would also be able to attend.

Thank you for your work for the Commonwealth — yours sincerely,

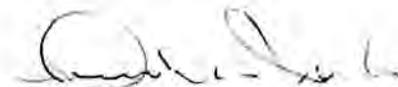
Petersham Selectboard



Nancy S. Allen
Chair



Henry L. Woolsey
Vice Chair



Fredrik A. Marsh
Clerk

cc: Ms. Pamela Goldberg, *Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative*
Mr. Chip Bull, *Chair, Petersham Broadband Committee*
Mr. Ross France, *Chair, Petersham Advisory Finance Committee*
Mr. Steven Boudreau, *Petersham Administrative Coordinator*
Selectboard, Town of Hardwick, Massachusetts
Broadband Committee, Town of Hardwick, Massachusetts
Broadband Committee, Town of Montague, Massachusetts



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Mr. Eric Nakajima
Director
Massachusetts Broad Band Institute
75 North Drive
Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

November 24, 2015

Dear Mr. Nakajima,

The Petersham Selectboard thanks you and your staff for taking important time to meet with the Selectboard, with Senator Anne Gobi, and with the Petersham Broadband Committee on October 13, 2015. We are grateful for your work and time. Your informative presentation gave us a clearer understanding of how Petersham partnering with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute can achieve our common goal of providing true broadband connectivity to the residents and businesses of Petersham.

The Petersham Broadband Committee continues their work and at this time is proceeding with the process precisely as was reviewed with everyone in October and continuing to update the Selectboard and residents as they move forward.

The Selectboard is also familiar with MBI's 'Last Mile Broadband Policy' including key aspects:

- Allocation of \$40 Million in State Funds: Unserved towns are eligible for a share of \$40 million in state funds, which is divided into two pools, up to \$18 million for professional services and \$22 million for construction; and
- The MBI Board of Directors and the Mass Tech Executive Committee approved town allocations for the \$40 million for unserved towns at the January 29, 2015 meeting of the respective boards.

We have now reached a point where we need to understand more from MBI so that as a municipality we can move forward in a logical, correct manner — specifically, as one of the 45 towns in Central and Western Massachusetts classified as 'Unserved' regarding broadband, Petersham officially requests that MBI share with us what formula is being used for determining how the State's 'Last Mile' bond funding of \$40 million will be apportioned among the 45 "Unserved" towns. As you know, this information is critical so as to continue on the path forward for residents and businesses and as it is foundational information for continuing our work we hope it is easily relayed for our ongoing process.

Your prompt response is greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Allen
Chair, Petersham Selectboard

cc: Hon. Senator Anne Gobi
Hon. Representative Susannah Whipps Lee
Elizabeth Copeland, Associate General Counsel, MTC
Steve Boudreau, Petersham Administrative Coordinator
Petersham Broadband Committee

Governor Baker
Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor
Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Date: April 18, 2016

Dear Governor Baker:

In 2016, rural populations without access to high speed internet form a class of people with compromised job options, non-competitive educational resources, and reduced access to state and federal government services.

Internet access is not merely about *quality of life*, it is about *equality of citizenship*. Although this is rhetorically recognized by government leaders and servants, direct action is stymied by red tape, delays, and false starts.

Our town, Petersham, would like you to visit us and explain how and when this will be changed so our citizens can fairly compete in the job market and equally benefit from online educational resources and government services.

Thank you,

Concerned Petersham Community Members, (63) signatures attached.

cc:

Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito
Attorney General Maura Healey
Senator Anne M. Gobi
Representative Susannah M. Whipps Lee
The Boston Globe
Worcester Telegram and Gazette
Athol Daily News
Petersham Selectboard
Petersham Broadband Committee

Please contact Mark Bishop at (978) 724-0327 for clarifications, questions, and to arrange your visit.

Signature Page

Concerned Residents of Petersham
to Governor Baker, April 18, 2016

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Charles S. Smith | 48 West St Petersham MA |
| Sherry Lee Berube | 48 West St- Petersham, MA |
| XXXXXXXXXX | |
| Dorothy Pagliaro | 37 West St Petersham Mass |
| John Ewing | 18 Hammond Lane, Petersham, MA |
| Ronald D. Johnson | 43 AMUND RD. Petersham MA |
| Rose Talar | 15 Sunset Lane Petersham MA |
| Tom Bergman | 44 West St Petersham MA |
| XXXXXXXXXX | 95 Maple Lane Petersham MA |
| James S. Bradford | 23 Bone Rd, Petersham, ma. |
| XXXXXXXXXX | 191 Nicholson Rd. |
| XXXXXXXXXX | 3 Hardwick Rd |
| ANNE PERKINS | 15 SO. MAIN ST |
| Janet West | 59 Bone Rd. Petersham |
| Nancy [unclear] | 327 EAST ST PETERSHAM |
| WILLIAM [unclear] | 80 East St. Petersham |
| FRANCIS [unclear] | 95 N. MAIN Petersham |
| Edith [unclear] | 22 Old New Salem Rd, Petersham |
| Jim M. [unclear] | 19 North St, Petersham MA |
| Ken [unclear] | 8 North main st, Petersham MA |
| Michael [unclear] | 50 Birch Drive, Petersham MA |
| Pat [unclear] | 217 West Rd, Petersham MA |
| Timothy [unclear] | 26 South St, Petersham MA |
| Kip Chinn | 37 N main St. Petersham MA |
| Patricia Fraser | 37 N Main St Petersham |
| John [unclear] | 204 West Rd Petersham |
| Joshua Cayen | 173 Hardwick Rd, Petersham |
| Julie [unclear] | 51 W. Main St. Petersham |
| Monica Agnello | 6 NORTH MAIN ST. PETERSHAM |
| XXXXXXXXXX | 150 Nicholson Rd, Peter |

NAME

Norma Floyd
H. Christian Floyd

Loren Maguire

Patricia Bock

Denise Andrews

Susan Blake

Ken Layan

Wendy S. M...

John Natoli

~~Patricia Bock~~
Patty Pillsbury

ADDRESS

16 Oxford St. Lexington, MA
4 4 1

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10 Popple Camp Rd. Petersham MA 01366

21 BEACH LAKE DRIVE W...
01364

25 Gayfield St. Greenfield MA 01301

27 Barre Rd. Petersham, MA 01366

82 GREENWICH RD HARDWICK MA 01037

170 HARDWICK RD, PETERSHAM
01366

8 EAST ST Petersham, MA 01366

