Call to Order: Chairman John Morosani called the special meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. with John Bongiorno, Erich Marriott, Stephen Simonin, Jeffrey Zullo, Burke Gibney (Alt.), Stephan Krucker (Alt.) present. Absent: Michael LaHart, Bruce Schnitzer

Approval of Minutes: Motion: E. Marriott moved to approve the minutes of the special organizational meeting on January 25, 2021, and J. Zullo seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Chairman J. Morosani appointed B. Gibney and S. Krucker as regular members for this meeting in the absence of M. LaHart and B. Schnitzer. J. Morosani reported that M. LaHart has decided to resign from the Commission so there is an open seat for a new member.

Public Comment: None

Old Business: None

New Business:
1) Discussion with Optimum re: their plans to roll out 1 Gig broadband service in Litchfield in 2022

J. Morosani noted there were a number of participants in the Zoom meeting from neighboring communities including Cornwall, Sharon, and Warren who were interested to hear Altice/Optimum’s plans for their towns as well. J. Morosani then introduced Esme Lombard, Senior Director of Government Affairs at Altice who introduced the team she assembled for the discussion:

Mike Alexander, Senior VP of Outside Plant Design and Construction
Ed Russo, VP of Field Operations
Craig Busch, Senior Director of Network Engineering
Jamie Muscara, VP of Access Networks

J. Morosani framed the discussion saying the purpose is to determine what kind of a network Altice/Optimum plans to roll out in our area. He asked if it is an extension of the existing hybrid fiber-coax network or will it become a fiber to the home network.

Mike Alexander explained FTTH (Fiber to the Home) can be construed in different formats. He provided some definitions to contextualize the discussion. FTTH, FTTB (Fiber to the Building), FTTC (Fiber to the Curb), FTCX are all a matter of deploying fiber as close to the home as possible. There are different variants that are defined as FTTH within the telecom industry.
RFoG (RF over Glass) is similar to a hybrid fiber-coax (HFC) network, it just brings the fiber closer to the home and puts a mini node on the side of the home. There are EPON, GPON, and XG-PON technologies, different versions of passive optical networks (PONs).

EPON = Ethernet Passive Optical Network  
GPON = Gigabit Passive Optical Network  
XGPON is a 10-Gigabit version of GPON

Altice currently deploys a GPON network as a FTTH network and will be building this GPON network in our service area. Mr. Alexander described the difference between RFoG or EPON vs. GPON as the difference between FTTH with the fiber drop at the side of the house vs. FTTH with what he calls “fiber to the living room” because a GPON network brings the fiber into the home to the back of the gateway.

As to the question of whether it is an extension of the existing HFC network or a new network, Mr. Alexander answered it is “a planned new overbuild of our existing network.” Describing the overbuild process, he explained where they have already deployed GPON they have built new backhaul fiber coming from the headend (the central office, the point of origination) to an OLT cabinet (Optical Line Termination or Terminal). From that OLT cabinet they break the region into smaller cells or pockets of about 120 homes. Then they build a feeder cable into each cell and then distribute the fiber to all the homes within the cell.

They define it as 3 different stages:
  1. The backhaul from the headend to the local area  
  2. A feeder from that local area into the cell  
  3. Within that cell, a distribution fiber network that goes up and down the block to hit every home

Then out of that distribution network they have a point of demarcation where they bring the drop from that network to the side of the home and then into the home to the back of the gateway (fiber to the living room).

It is a 1 Gigabit symmetrical service.

Question: What is the timeframe for engineering, design and permitting?  
Answer: Mr. Alexander answered they will start engineering late this year and going into next year. Pre-engineering cell pocketing is roughly 60% complete already. Then they would start designing the network itself, e.g. sizing the fiber cables needed and engineering the route the fiber will take. This is when they start applying for any permits required. Then as permits are received they start the build. The scheduled time frame for this build is mid to late 2022 and construction would carry out into 2023.

Question: When this is built out, will it be available to ALL of your current subscriber bases in the 7 town region?
Question regarding bandwidth per subscriber?
Answer: The GPON standard is shared bandwidth. 2.5 gigabits downstream shared among up to 64 homes. 1.25 gigabits upstream. This supports the 64 homes with gigabit service because not everyone is running 1 gigabit traffic simultaneously. It’s bursty traffic and they can deliver the 1 gigabit when needed. The network is also being designed to be subdividable to 32 homes should they run into any problems with capacity.

Question: What price are you planning to offer the 1 gigabit service at?
Answer: Esme Lombard answered they do not have pricing now and it’s impossible to predict pricing a couple years in the future, but there will probably be promotional offers as there usually are when they roll out a new product or service.

Question: For customers who might want more than 1 gigabit, will your network be upgradable to a faster speed, 5 or 10 gig?
Answer: Craig Busch answered they have the ability to overlay XG-PON which can deliver upstream and downstream (symmetrical) speeds of up to 10 gigabits per second. They are ready to offer that and have a demo customer right now but currently there’s no market for it. When that market materializes they’ll be ready to fulfill it.

Question to Mr. Alexander: What is the best way for us to track your progress to see that you’re on track for rolling out this service in late 2022 into 2023?
Answer: The best way is through Esme. We can provide updates to our scheduling through her. When we start the permit process to get locations for our cabinets we’ll be dealing with local town officials for approvals so you’ll know what’s happening during that ongoing process. That engineering and permitting phase should become visible in late 2021 and into 2022. There will be multiple permit applications submitted for multiple cabinet locations. There will be DOT permitting as well.

2) Discussion of 1st Level Engineering Study for Litchfield

Chairman J. Morosani suggested tabling this discussion to the next Commission meeting to give members an opportunity to digest what we heard from the Altice team.
Motion: E. Marriott moved to table this discussion to the next meeting. S. Simonin seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

3) Discussion of Norfolk Broadband Business Plan

There was a brief discussion of the Norfolk business plan. The high cost was noted and the question to be determined as to how the Norfolk residents respond to the estimated cost. It’s unknown at this time if Comcast, the cable provider in Norfolk, currently has plans similar to Altice’s plan to upgrade their network.
**Next Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be March 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Motion: B. Gibney moved to adjourn. E. Marriott seconded. All voted aye and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Burke Gibney  
Recording Secretary