

BOROUGH OF NEW PROVIDENCE
ORDINANCE 2024-02

**AN ORDINANCE GRANTING RENEWAL OF MUNICIPAL CONSENT TO
COMCAST OF NEW JERSEY, LLC TO CONSTRUCT, CONNECT,
OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A CABLE TELEVISION AND COMMUNICATIONS
SYSTEM IN THE BOROUGH OF NEW PROVIDENCE, UNION COUNTY,
NEW JERSEY**

Be it ordained and enacted by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of New Providence, Union County, New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF THE ORDINANCE.

This Ordinance shall supersede and replace Chapter A343, Cable Television Franchise, of the Code of the Borough of New Providence.

The Borough hereby grants to Comcast renewal of its non-exclusive Municipal Consent to place in, upon, across, above, over and under highways, streets alleys, sidewalks, easements, public ways and public places in the Borough, poles, wires, cables, underground conduits, manholes and other television conductors, fixtures, apparatus, and equipment as may be necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance in the Borough of a cable television and communications system.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this Ordinance, the following terms, phrases, words and their derivations shall have the meaning given herein. Such meaning or definition of terms in supplemental to those definitions of the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") rules and regulations, 47 C.F.R. Subsection 76.1 et seq., and the Cable Communications Policy Act, 47 U.S.C. Section 521 et seq., as amended, and the Cable Television Act, N.J.S.A. § 48:5A-1 et seq., and shall in no way be construed to broaden, alter or conflict with the federal and state definitions:

- a. "Borough" is the Borough of New Providence, County of Union, State of New Jersey.
- b. "Company" or "Comcast" is the grantee of rights under this Ordinance and is known as Comcast of New Jersey, LLC.
- c. "Act" or "Cable Television Act" is Chapter 186 of the General Laws of New Jersey, and subsequent amendments thereto, N.J.S.A. § 48:5A-1, et seq.
- d. "FCC" is the Federal Communications Commission.

- e. "Board" or "BPU" is the Board of Public Utilities, State of New Jersey.
- f. "Office" or "OCTV" is the Office of Cable Television of the Board.
- g. "Basic Cable Service" means any service tier, which includes the retransmission of local television broadcast signals as defined by the FCC.
- h. "Application" is the Company's Application for Renewal of Municipal Consent.
- i. "Primary Service Area" or "PSA" consists of the area of the Borough currently served with existing plant as set forth in the map annexed to the Company's Application for Municipal Consent.

SECTION 3. STATEMENT OF FINDINGS.

A public hearing concerning the consent herein granted to the Company was held after proper public notice pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Act. Said hearing having been held and fully open to the public, and the Borough having received all comments regarding the qualifications of the Company to receive this consent, and the representations of the Company that the Company possesses the necessary legal, technical, character, financial and other qualifications and that the Company's operating and construction arrangements are adequate and feasible.

SECTION 4. DURATION OF FRANCHISE.

The non-exclusive Municipal Consent granted herein shall expire ten (10) years from the date of expiration of the previous Certificate of Approval issued by the Board.

In the event that the Borough shall find that the Company has not substantially complied with the material terms and conditions of this Ordinance, the Borough shall have the right to petition the OCTV, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-47, for appropriate action, including modification and/or termination of the Certificate of Approval; provided however, that the Borough shall first have given the Company written notice of all alleged instances of non-compliance and an opportunity to cure same within ninety (90) days of that notification.

SECTION 5. FRANCHISE FEE.

Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Act, N.J.S.A. 48:5A-30(d), the Company shall, during each year of operation under the consent granted herein, pay to the Borough 3.5% of the gross revenues from all recurring charges in the nature of subscription fees paid by subscribers for cable television reception service in the Borough or any higher amount permitted by the Act or otherwise allowable by law. The current franchise fee paid to the

Borough is 3.5%.

SECTION 6. FRANCHISE TERRITORY.

The consent granted under this Ordinance for the renewal of the franchise shall apply to the entirety of the Borough and any property subsequently annexed hereto.

SECTION 7. EXTENSION OF SERVICE.

The company shall, during the franchise period, be required to offer service to any present or future dwelling unit, school, institution, and business located and to be located along any public rights-of-way in the primary service area, as set forth in the company's application. Any extension of plant beyond the Primary Service Area shall be governed by the Company's Line Extension Policy, as set forth in the Company's Application, with a HPM ("homes-per-mile") of 35 dwellings per linear mile from the nearest active trunk or feeder line.

SECTION 8. CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS.

- a. Restoration: In the event that the Company or its agents shall disturb any pavement, street surfaces, sidewalks, driveways, or other surface in the natural topography, the Company shall, at its sole expense, restore and replace such places or things so disturbed in as reasonably good a condition as existed prior to the commencement of said work. All such work shall be performed in accordance with federal, state, county and local governmental requirements which shall be subject to approval of the Borough Engineer.
- b. Relocation: If at any time during the period of this consent, the Borough shall alter or change the grade of any street, alley or other way or place the Company, upon reasonable notice to the Borough, shall remove, re-lay or relocate its equipment, at the expense of the Company. In requiring Company to remove, re-lay or relocate any portion of its property, the Borough shall treat Company the same as, and require no more of Company than, any other similarly situated entity utilizing the Public Rights of Way, including with respect to reimbursement of costs.
- c. Removal or Trimming of Trees: During the exercise of its rights and privileges under this franchise, the Company shall have the authority to trim trees upon and overhanging streets, alleys, sidewalks or other public places of the Borough so as to prevent the branches of such trees from coming in contact with the wires and cable of the Company. Such trimming shall be only to the extent necessary to maintain proper clearance of the Company's wire and cables. Except in an emergency, the Company will not, without the prior consent of the Supervisor of

the Borough's Department of Public Works, or his/her delegate, trim or remove trees in the public rights-of-way or parks in the Borough. The Supervisor or delegate will respond to a request for authorization within 48 hours, Monday through Friday. If requested, the company will perform any trimming under the direct supervision of the Supervisor or his designee.

- d. Temporary removal of cables: The Company shall, upon request of the Borough, at the Company's expense, temporarily raise, lower or remove its cables and associated facilities in order to facilitate the moving of Borough-owned buildings, equipment, vehicles and machinery and to accommodate other like circumstances. In light of a temporary removal request by other than the Borough for non-Borough-owned buildings, equipment, vehicles and machinery, the cost of such temporary removal shall be the responsibility of the requesting party.

SECTION 9. CUSTOMER SERVICE.

In providing services to its customers, the Company shall comply with N.J.A.C. 14:18-1, et seq. and all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations. The Company shall strive to meet or exceed all voluntary company and industry standards in the delivery of customer service and shall be prepared to report on it to the Borough Council upon written request of the Borough Manager or Clerk.

- a. The Company shall continue to comply fully with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations regarding credit for outages, the reporting of same to regulatory agencies and notification of same to customers.
- b. The Company shall continue to fully comply with all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations regarding the availability of devices for the hearing impaired and the notification of same to customers.
- c. The Company shall use every reasonable effort to meet or exceed voluntary standards for telephone accessibility developed by the National Cable Television Association (NCTA).
- d. Nothing herein shall impair the right of any subscriber or the Borough to express any comment with respect to telephone accessibility to the Complaint Officer, or impair the right of the Complaint Officer to take any action that is permitted under law.
- e. Upon written request of the Borough Council or its designee, the Company shall meet with the Borough Council or its designee to discuss customer service issues.

SECTION 10. MUNICIPAL COMPLAINT OFFICER.

The Borough Administrator or their designee is hereby designated as the Complaint Officer. All complaints shall be received and processed in accordance with N.J.A.C. § 14:17-6.5.

SECTION 11. LOCAL OFFICE.

During the term of this franchise, and any renewal thereof, the Company shall maintain a business office or agent in accordance with N.J.A.C. § 14:18-5.1.

SECTION 12. PERFORMANCE BOND.

During the life of the franchise the Company shall give to the Borough a bond in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000). Such bond shall be to insure the faithful performance of all undertakings of the Company as represented in its application for municipal consent incorporated herein.

SECTION 13. SUBSCRIBER RATES.

The rates of the Company shall be subject to regulation as permitted by federal and state law.

SECTION 14. PUBLIC, EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENTAL ACCESS

- a. The Company shall continue to provide residents with a system-wide public access channel maintained by the Company. Qualified individuals and organizations may utilize public access for the purpose of cable casting non-commercial access programming.
- b. The Company shall continue to provide a system-wide leased access channel maintained by the Company for the purpose of cablecasting commercial access programming in conformance with the Company's guideline and applicable state and federal statutes and regulations.
- c. The Company shall continue to provide a shared local access channel to be maintained by the Company and operated by the municipality's access or PEG designee (so long as the organization or its successor continues to be the borough's access or PEG designee), for the purpose of local governmental and educational access programming in conformance with the Company's guidelines and applicable state and federal statutes and regulations. If the shared local access channel goes black or is devoid of all programming and ceases to be used for a period of ten (10) consecutive weeks, the municipality access channel and, shall therewith forego its right to use the shared local Channel and thereafter, Comcast, in its full discretion, shall be entitled to utilize the channel without

restriction.

- d. The Company shall continue to provide a dedicated local access channel to be maintained by the Company and operated by the municipality for the purpose of local government and educational access programming in conformance with the Company's guidelines and applicable state and federal statutes and regulations. The Company shall continue to provide and maintain the existing channel return lines and switching capabilities at high school and municipal building. The company shall provide an additional return feed for this channel at the high school football field or other location of the city's choosing, provided that such location is within 200 feet of active cable plant.
- e. The Company shall take any steps that are necessary to ensure that the signals originated on the access channels are carried without material degradation, and with a signal whose quality is equal to that of the other standard channels that the Company transmits.

SECTION 15. COMMITMENTS BY THE COMPANY.

- a. The Company shall continue to provide standard installation and basic television service on a total of 50 outlets to the four existing public schools in the municipality, 10 outlets for future schools constructed in the municipality, and on 10 outlets to each private school at no cost, provided the school is within 200 feet of active cable distribution plant. Provision of digital equipment (converter boxes, DTAs, etc.) for all outlets shall be outlet installed, if any, shall be paid for on a materials/equipment and plus labor basis by the school requesting services. Monthly service charges shall be waived on all additional outlets, except for equipment. Conversion of non-Company authorized outlets to Company standard, including wiring, equipment and installation charges shall also be charged on a material plus labor basis.
- b. The Company shall provide standard installation and basic cable television service at no cost, on one (1) outlet to the Municipal Center, Police Station, Fire House, EMS Station, Municipal Center Maintenance (lower level), DPW, WWTP, Board of Education (Municipal Center), Public Library, Senior Citizen Center, Board of Education (Maintenance Facility) behind Salt Brook school, Community Pool, and William Paca Club, Academy Building and Salt Box Museum, provided the facility is within 200 feet of active cable distribution plant. Each outlet installed, if any, shall be paid for on a materials/equipment and plus labor basis by the facility requesting services. Monthly service charges shall be waived on all additional outlets, except for equipment. Conversion of non-Company authorized outlets to Company standard, including wiring, equipment and installation charges shall also be charged on a material plus labor basis.
- c. The Company shall continue to provide one free non-network high speed Internet

connection and service (one outlet at each location) at public library buildings and all public and private schools. Connections are to be located in areas accessible to student and community use, not to be restricted to administrative use, provided the facility is within 200 feet of an active cable distribution plant.

- d. Within six months of the issuance of a Renewal Certificate of Approval by the BPU, the Company shall provide to the Borough a one-time PEG Access Capital Grant in the amount of \$25,000 to meet the Access capital needs of the community.
- e. The Communications Act of 1934, as amended [47 U.S.C. §543 (b)], allows the Company to itemize and/or identify: (1.) the amount on the subscriber bill assessed as a franchise fee and the identity of the governmental authority to which the fee is paid; (2.) the amount on the bill assessed to satisfy any requirements imposed on the Company by the cable franchise to support public, education, and/or governmental access channels or the use of such channels; and (3.) any grants or other fees on the bill or any tax, assessment, or charge of any kind imposed by any governmental authority on the transaction between the operator and the subscriber. The Company reserves its external cost, pass-through rights to the full extent permitted by law.

SECTION 16. EMERGENCY USES.

- a. The Company will comply with the Emergency Alert System (“EAS”) rules in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes and regulations.
- b. The Company shall in no way be held liable for any injury suffered by the Borough or any other person, during an emergency, if for any reason the Borough is unable to make full use of the cable television system as contemplated herein.

SECTION 17. LIABILITY INSURANCE.

The Company shall at all times maintain a comprehensive general liability insurance policy with a single limit amount of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) covering liability for any death, personal injury, property damages or other liability arising out of its construction and operation of the cable television system, and an excess liability (or “umbrella”) policy in the amount of Five Million Dollars (\$5,000,000).

SECTION 18. INCORPORATION OF THE APPLICATION.

All of the statements and commitments contained in the Application or annexed thereto and incorporated therein, and any amendment thereto, except as modified herein, are binding upon the Company as terms and conditions of this consent. The Application and other relevant writings submitted by the Company shall be annexed hereto and made a

part hereof by reference provided same do not conflict with application State or Federal law.

SECTION 19. COMPETITIVE EQUITY.

Should the Borough grant municipal consent for a franchise to construct, operate and maintain a cable television system to any other person, corporation or entity on terms materially less burdensome or more favorable than the terms contained herein, the Company may substitute such language that is more favorable or less burdensome for the comparable provision of this Ordinance subject to the provisions of N.J.A.C. § 14:17-6.7.

SECTION 20. SEPARABILITY.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court or federal or state agency of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision, and its validity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the Ordinance.

SECTION 21. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

The Company shall not be required to disclose information which it reasonably deems to be proprietary or confidential in nature. The Borough agrees to treat any information disclosed by the Company as confidential and only to disclose it to those employees, representatives, and agents of the Borough that have a need to know in order to enforce this Ordinance Agreement and who agree to maintain the confidentiality of all such information, unless such information is deemed to be subject to New Jersey's Open Public Records Act.

The Company shall not be required to provide Customer information in violation of Section 631 of the Cable Act or any other applicable federal or state privacy law. For purposes of this Section, the terms "proprietary or confidential" include, but are not limited to, information relating to the Cable System design, customer lists, marketing plans, financial information unrelated to the calculation of franchise fees or rates pursuant to FCC rules, or other information that is reasonably determined by the Company to be competitively sensitive. The Company may make proprietary or confidential information available for inspection but not copying or removal by the Borough representative. In the event that the Borough has in its possession and receives a request under a state "sunshine," public records, or similar law for the disclosure of information the Company has designated as confidential, trade secret or proprietary, the Borough shall notify the Company of such request and cooperate with Company in opposing such request.

SECTION 22. FORCE MAJEURE.

The Company shall not be liable or responsible for, in whole or in part, any delay or failure to perform any of its obligations hereunder which may result from accidents, pandemics, floods, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes or other acts of God; war, acts of war (whether or not a declaration of war is made), civil disobedience; civil disturbance, sabotage or vandalism, customer tampering or interference, or act of public enemy; strikes, other labor or job actions or unavailability of materials or equipment; or other events or circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the Company.

SECTION 23. THIRD PARTY BENEFICIARIES.

Nothing in this Franchise or in any prior agreement is or was intended to confer third-party beneficiary status on any member of the public to enforce the terms of such agreements or Franchise.

SECTION 24. NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Borough, for its part, shall endeavor to exercise reasonable efforts to require developers and utility companies to provide the Company with at least fifteen (15) days advance notice of an available open trench for the placement of necessary cable.

SECTION 25. EFFECTIVE DATE.


This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon issuance of a Renewal Certificate of Approval from the BPU.

INTRODUCTION: February 27, 2024


PUBLIC HEARING: March 12, 2024

ADOPTED: March 12, 2024

BOROUGH OF NEW PROVIDENCE
COUNTY OF UNION
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

By: 
Allen Morgan, Mayor

ATTEST:


Denise Brinkofski, Borough Clerk