

Policy for the Operation of The City of St. Clair Shores Government Access Cable Channels (SCSTV)

PREAMBLE:

It is the purpose of this policy to provide a means, in conformity with acceptable standards of dignity, propriety, and decorum with the City of St. Clair Shores Charter and its ordinances, of access to the Government Access Channel (SCSTV).

OBJECTIVES:

The programming objectives of the City of St. Clair Shores Cable Channel (SCSTV) shall be as follows:

- A. To provide public service information to the citizens of the City of St. Clair Shores.
- B. To provide information regarding events and activities that are sponsored by the City of St. Clair Shores or St. Clair Shores volunteer boards and commissions.
- C. To increase the knowledge of the citizens of St. Clair Shores as to various functions performed by their local government and volunteer boards and commissions.
- D. To widen the dissemination of the activities of the legislative and advisory bodies of the City of St. Clair Shores.
- E. To provide additional information to citizens needing access to the various City departments.

OVERALL POLICY:

- A. **Programming:** The intent of the Government Access Channel will be to provide direct, non-editorial information to the citizens of St. Clair Shores. The Government Access Channel is not to be used to build support for a particular candidate, policy, program, or issue.

1. The purpose of programming on this channel must be public service in nature.
2. Announcements for authorized City events and events within the City shall be allowed.
3. Tape delayed cablecasting of public meetings shall be aired in their entirety.
4. To ensure that compliance with this policy is achieved, programming will be subject to review by the Communications Director and/or the Communications Commission.
5. Programming of events and activities of committees and commissions of the City of St. Clair Shores shall be integrated into existing locally produced shows such as *The Mayor's Corner*, *The Council Connection*, *SCS Local Matters* and others as the Communications Commission/Communications Director deem appropriate.

B. Operation of the Channel: The Government Access Channel shall operate in such a manner as to minimize capital and operating costs while maximizing service to the public. Specifically:

1. All costs or fees for programs must be borne by the users or official department of the City.
2. All users are responsible for the care and maintenance of any tape or equipment used, and hold the City of St. Clair Shores harmless for and damage to equipment or tapes resulting from said use.
3. Any and all damages to St. Clair Shores equipment are the responsibility of the users and they must bear the cost of fixing the damages.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES:

A. Channel Assignment: The government access program shall operate on the Government Access Channel(s) designated by the cable provider(s).

B. Modes of Cablecast: The Government Access Channel shall utilize five basic sources of programming.

1. *Live Cablecast*: Live cablecast coverage will generally consist of City Council meetings, hearings, public meetings, and events of community interest.
2. *Tape Delayed Cablecast*: Videotaped public meetings or events may be taped for delayed or repeated playback, in addition to the live cablecast.
3. *Locally Produced Programs*: Programs may be locally produced to illustrate community activities, functions, or operations within city government.
4. *Outside Source Programs*: Programming concerning local government operations or community information may be available elsewhere and may be obtained for local use. This material will be used when appropriate to the City of St. Clair Shores and must meet all copyright, user fee and license requirements. Every attempt will be made to avoid producing something locally that is already available elsewhere.
5. *Bulletin Board*: A message generator will be used to provide a continuous display of current information of interest to the public during all hours of operation when no other programming is scheduled. All messages, except those relating to the Parks & Recreation Department (including the Golf Course and Country Club) shall be generated through City Hall. A back-up character generator is located at the Parks and Recreation Department. A character generator for emergency situations is located at the Police Department.

C. Access Policy

1. City functions shall have priority for access to the Government Channel.
2. Access shall be limited to city departments, offices, councils, advisory boards, and commissions of the City of St. Clair Shores.
3. Programming shall be informational rather than advocacy. This is not meant to exclude the cablecasting of public hearings, community meetings, or other meetings where advocacy may take place.

4. Only those programs that are consistent with the overall operating policy of the cable channel shall be cablecast.
5. Generally, individual statements will not be permitted unless it is a part of an overall programming strategy to solicit personal interviews with equal time provisions for all. At some point, a series of interview or call-in sessions, with various elected or appointed officials may be scheduled as part of regular programming. Additional specific ground rules shall be established and recommended prior to this type of program implementation.
6. Programs highlighting individual elected officials and candidates as a featured guest shall be suspended from 60 days prior to a state or City of St. Clair Shores mayoral/city council election (including primary election) until after the completion of the general election, unless a scheduled series of statements from all candidates are programmed. This suspension does not apply to individual elected officials who host a locally aired cable program providing the program is not used to promote an individual candidate's campaign platform.
7. Announced candidate for public offices shall not be permitted to make personal statements over the Government Access Channel, except as may be part of formal public meetings. This provision shall apply from the time of his/her announced candidacy in the primary until after the general election. If a scheduled series of statements from all candidates is programmed, with equal time to all candidates, then this section of the programming policy shall not apply. In such an event, all such programming shall have prior programming rules and policy established in advance by the Communications Commission, subject to the approval of the City Council.
8. Information for the Bulletin Board shall be submitted by any city department in accordance with the guideline set forth below:
 - a) Only department heads will be permitted to make requests for messages to be displayed on the bulletin board.
 - b) All cable message requests are to be submitted in memo form, approved and signed by the department head, and thereafter submitted to

the Communications Director. Any messages for the Parks and Recreation Department including the Golf Course and Country Club will be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department staff person designated to that duty.

9. The City may air "Third Party" Programming under the following conditions: ("Third Party" Programming is defined as programming not filmed or edited by the City of St. Clair Shores Communications Department or Communications Commission.)
 - a) *Candidate or Issue-Oriented Debates, Meetings, or Forums:*
 - 1) Parties responsible for the technical filming or editing of the "third party" program must submit a signed affidavit which states that the political debate, meeting or forum is in compliance with the City's *Policy for Operation of the City of St. Clair Shores Government Access Cable Channels (SCSTV)*, particularly in regards to Section D. Editing Policy (see Section D. 1 below).
 - 2) Any candidate, speaker or moderator who appears on the political debate, meeting or forum must submit a signed release to the City of St. Clair Shores that gives permission to air the debate, meeting or forum.
 - 3) The program must include at least two viewpoints on a ballot issue or at least two opposing candidates, be of relevance to the residents of St. Clair Shores and be moderated by an impartial third party.
 - 4) The tape of the debate, meeting or forum must be submitted in a format compatible with the City's broadcast system, including, but not limited to mini-DV, large cassette DV or large cassette DVC-Pro or any future technology that may be employed by the Communications Department. The Communications Department is not responsible for the conversion of any non-conforming tape.

- 5) The broadcast schedule including air times, dates, and channel designations is at the discretion of the Communications Director or designee and may not interfere with regularly scheduled programming.
 - 6) The City of St. Clair Shores reserves the right to refuse "third party" candidate or issue-oriented debate, meeting or forum programs that are not in compliance with the policy noted here. Appeals may be made in writing to the Communications Commission directly at a regularly scheduled meeting and their decision is final.
 - 7) Any submitted "third party" candidate or issue-oriented debates, meetings or forums may not include commercial sponsorship content.
- b) *General "Third Party" Programs:*
- 1) At least one member of the Production Team of the programming for consideration must be a resident of St. Clair Shores, a business located in the City, or a student who attends a school located in St. Clair Shores.
 - 2) Programming content for consideration must be suitable for "general audience" viewing. Nudity and profanity, or any act considered illegal in nature are prohibited.
 - 3) Programming content for consideration must be non-political and non-commercial in nature. Acceptable subjects may include, but are not limited to, features, how-to, interviews, demonstrations and general information topics.
 - 4) Programming for consideration must accommodate the technical parameters of the City's broadcast system, currently a minimum of 10 minutes to a maximum of 25 minutes in length.
 - 5) Programming for consideration must be submitted in a format compatible with the City's broadcast system, including, but not

limited to mini-DV, large cassette DV or large cassette DVC-Pro or any future technology that may be employed by the Communications Department. The Communications Department is not responsible for the conversion of any non-conforming tape.

- 6) The broadcast schedule including air times, dates, and channel designations are at the discretion of the Communications Director designee and may not interfere with regularly scheduled programming.
- 7) "Third Party" General Programming will run for a two week period under the umbrella designation of a single program title (ex. *Resident Showcase*). Programming will be considered in order of submission and limited to one submission per two week period.
- 8) "Third Party" General Programming will be screened by the Communications Director or designee prior to broadcast for video and audio quality and content.
- 9) The City of St. Clair Shores reserves the right to refuse "Third Party" General Programming based on substandard video or audio quality, non-conforming content or non-compliance with the City's cable operating policy. Appeals may be made in writing to the Communications Commission directly at a regularly scheduled meeting and their decision is final.

D. Editing Policy:

1. *Public Meetings*: Any public meeting cablecast shall not be edited or subject to editorial comment. Meeting coverage shall be from gavel to gavel. Supplementary information on agenda items that will aid the viewer in understanding the issues may be provided. Cable-casting of public meetings will be performed with no commentary whatsoever. Let it also be noted that in the event that a meeting goes beyond the length of a tape, it is upon the discretion of the videographer whether or not to begin a second tape for said meeting.

2. *Departmental Programs*: Any program prepared by or provided by an individual city department is subject to review and consideration for channel use in accordance with this operational policy. Such review shall be conducted by the Communications Director.
3. *Bulletin Board*: Messages displayed on the Bulletin Board may be edited to provide clarity and to maximize use of the space available.
- 4 *Errors*: The City of St. Clair Shores, its employees or its commissions shall not be liable for any inaccuracy or incorrect information being displayed or used on the system.

- E. **Endorsements**: At no time will the channel endorse specific brand names of products for consumer use.
- F. **Promotions**: Promotional announcements for City-sponsored events and for events held in City facilities are acceptable for cablecasting. Promotional announcements for events, charities, or outside organizations, in which the City has no official interest or sponsorship shall be allowed with the consent of the Communications Director and/or the Communications Commission. Any questions regarding the appropriateness of an announcement or any change to existing policy, shall be reviewed by the Communications Director and the Communications Commission and a recommendation for action forwarded to the City Council for final action.
- G. **Use of City Equipment**: Use of City-owned equipment shall be limited to City employees or Communications Commissioners who have had prior training in the proper operation thereof.
- H. **Retention of Tapes**: It shall be general policy to retain video tapes of public meetings for a period not to exceed two weeks, starting with the first cablecasting of the program. At the end of that time, the tapes may be reused, thereby erasing the originally recorded material. Any requests for longer retention of material shall be made in written form to the Communications Director within one week of the broadcast and, if possible, a duplicate tape may be made available. In the case of locally produced programming of such shows as *The Mayor's Corner*, *Spotlight on Recreation*, *Business in the Shores* (or any future locally produced programming) , the programs upon completion of airing, will be

catalogued at the St. Clair Shores Public Library for public use. Copies of these types of programs will be made at the discretion of the Communications Director and/or the Communications Commission. These tapes shall not be considered an official record of the meeting and there shall be no liability resulting from erasures or omissions. Retention of tapes other than those mentioned in this item shall become the property of the St. Clair Shores Communications Commission and will not be returned.

- I. **Transmission Room Access:** Access to the cable distribution (transmission) room shall be restricted to employees of the City of St. Clair Shores and Communications Commissioners during all live broadcasts.
- J. **Channel Operating Hours:** The Government Access Channel shall operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week cablecasting locally produced taped programming, live programming or the Bulletin Board continuously during that period.
- K. **Through Normal Operations:** The transmission room at City Hall shall be the center for Government Access Cable Channels where all messages will originate except in an emergency or in the case of the Parks and Recreation Department (including the Golf Course and Country Club).

OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONAL VIDEOTAPING:

Any person, group, company, or organization that wishes to record, videotape, broadcast live on radio or telecast live on television a public meeting shall be subject to the following rules and regulations:

1. Video or television cameras that are used for purposes of recording or broadcasting live reports from the City Council Chambers must remain, at all times, at the rear of the City Council Chambers unless prior approval of the City Council, City Manager, or Communications Director has been obtained to place said video or television cameras in a different location. The location of the video or television cameras shall not interfere on any way with the City of St. Clair Shores equipment or telecast. the use of monopods or tripods should ordinarily be prohibited unless special permission is given by the Communications Director.
2. All audio or video equipment is prohibited from being attached, connected or in any way joined to the existing

cable television equipment operated by the City of St. Clair Shores in the City Council Chambers. All such audio or video equipment must be completely self-supportive and will not be allowed to use any electrical power of the City.

3. Interviews of interested parties shall be prohibited in the City Council Chambers and adjacent hallways during the time meetings are in session.
4. Only television, videotape, photographic and audio equipment that does not produce distracting sound or light shall be utilized to cover public proceedings.

Should any person fail or refuse to comply with any rule promulgated by these guidelines, after being appraised of such non-compliance by the Communications Director or designee, may be deemed to have committed a breach of the peace and may be subject to removal of their audio/video/photographic equipment from the City Council Chambers and adjacent hallways.

APPEALS/CLARIFICATION:

An appeal process can be made to the Communications Commission in written form addressed to the Communications Director. Appeals to these Programming Policies will be subject to a majority ruling by the Cable Commission.

Approved by the City of St. Clair Shores City Council on January 17, 2000
Amended by Communications Commission on October 11, 2006
Amended by St. Clair Shores City Council on December 15, 2008