

WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of the
PUBLIC MEETING of the
WTTW Community Advisory Board (CAB)
Tuesday, March 25, 2014
WTTW Studios
5400 N St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Introductions were made by the following present members of the Community Advisory Board:

Joseph Morris, Chairman
Ava Holly Berland, Secretary
Yvette Brown
Janice Goldstein
Sharon Meroni
Mary Lou Mockus
Heather Penn
Donna Rook
Renee Summers
Maggie Steinz
Rita Tandaric
Felicia Townsend
Christopher Vaughn

Note: Jeff Berkowitz, Susan Buckner, Leatrice Campbell, Kimberly Frost, Lennette Meredith and Arlene Swartzman were present, but arrived after the introductions.

In addition, the following persons were present and introduced themselves:

Daniel J. Schmidt, President and CEO of WTTW/WFMT
V.J. McAleer, Senior Vice President of WWCI for Production and Community Partnerships and Management Liaison
Yvonne Davis, Administrative Assistant to Chicago Tonight and Staff Liaison

Finally, the following member of the public was present and introduced herself:

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The Chair noted a quorum was present, and the meeting proceeded.

Approval of Minutes

The Chair requested approval of the April 2013 Minutes. Ms. Summers moved the minutes be approved; Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion; and, the minutes were adopted unanimously.

The Chair requested approval of the December 2013 Minutes. Ms. Steinz moved the minutes be approved; Ms. Mockus seconded the motion; and, the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Revision and Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair requested revision and adoption of the Agenda. Ms. Tandoric so moved, Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion; and, the Agenda was revised and adopted unanimously.

Public Comment

None

Response of WTTW Management to the CAB 2013 Annual Report

Daniel J. Schmidt initiated the discussion, by stating that he had little to add to his written response to the 2013 Annual Report, and by thanking CAB Members for their hard work and commitment to WTTW. (A copy of Mr. Schmidt's Response was circulated prior to and distributed at the meeting. A copy also has been attached to the Minutes.)

The Chair asked Mr. Schmidt the following questions:

- (1) Who reviews the CAB reports and proposals, and what is done with them?
- (2) What questions do management want CAB to explore/answer?
- (3) What are management's ("big picture") goals?

The Big Picture: Mr. Schmidt addressed the Chair's last question first. He initiated the discussion by noting, and explaining the background of, the recent generous donation by the Crown family in honor of Renee Crown, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, ~~which he described as "transformational."~~ That donation has put WTTW on its way to reach its endowment target of 75 million over the next five years, as set forth in the WWCI Strategic Plan. (Currently, the endowment is at 31 million.)

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Mr. Schmidt explained the big picture in terms of the following three pillars:

First, Mr. Schmidt stated that WTTW looks toward expanding its programming production on a local, national and international scale and on multiple platforms (television, radio, digital and web). By way of example, Mr. Schmidt noted the well-received Geoffrey Baer "Ten Buildings," stating that three more such programs will be produced. Mr. Schmidt further noted the series "Nature Cat," which it is producing in collaboration with Highland Park's Spiffy Pictures and for which it has received PBS funding. The series features a house cat's exploration of nature while its owners are at work/school. Mr. Schmidt mentioned that test audiences' responses have been very positive. He also mentioned that the series will have great revenue generating potential (e.g., marketing, PBS and Disney licensing).

Second, Mr. Schmidt stated that WTTW seeks to be more proactive in its community outreach and engagement efforts, building partnerships with organizations that are within and serve the metropolitan area. Mr. Schmidt strongly believes that public television can play a critical role and add value in areas, such as family and child wellness, early childhood literacy (particularly with Title I preschoolers). Citing as an example, Mr. Schmidt mentioned WTTW's involvement with various organizations (e.g., United Way and After School Matters) in producing the "American Graduate."

Third, Mr. Schmidt stated that WTTW endeavors to secure its future, as set forth in the WWCI Strategic Plan (a plan that was enthusiastically embraced by the Board of Trustees, and was presented to CAB at the August Meeting by Reese Marcusson, Executive Vice President and CFO of WTTW). As mentioned at the outset, Mr. Schmidt reiterated WTTW's fundraising 75 million dollar target. That target, according to Mr. Schmidt, will provide the station with the funding necessary to enable it to expand programming production and upgrade its equipment and technology, and ultimately to sustain itself given ever-diminishing federal and state funding.

Review of CAB Reports and Proposals:

Responding to the Chair's first question, Mr. Schmidt stated that his management team carefully reviews, and shares with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, all CAB reports and proposals, and strives to take into account CAB's comments and recommendations. Mr. Schmidt added that his management team prepares summaries, and presents same to all the Trustees. Mr. Schmidt noted that the current Chairman of the Board, Norman R. Bobins, generally adheres to a hands-off, delegation style -- but that the incoming Chairman may take a different approach, and he will encourage the next Chairman to attend a CAB Meeting in 2014, or to accompany him to the CAB meeting at which he responds to CAB's 2014 Annual Report.

CAB's Input: Finally, responding to the Chair's second question, Mr. Schmidt stated that CAB could play an important role in assisting WTTW in its efforts to outreach to and engage community organizations/groups, by identifying such entities with the potential of future partnering. Also, he stated that he would carefully consider specific questions on which management and the trustees might seek CAB's advice, and will respond further at a later time.

Mr. Schmidt acknowledged that the channel of communications this past year has been limited, given Barbara Proctor's absence. Noting Ms. Proctor's interest in continuing interest in serving, Mr. Schmidt stated that the appointment of a replacement has been a rather sensitive issue. Nevertheless, Mr. Schmidt recognized that it would be appropriate to consider appointing an alternative, not a substitute, liaison to serve in her absence.

Discussion with Mr. Schmidt

Ms. Rook asked Mr. Schmidt to reconsider the CAB "Violence in Chicago" programming proposal. Mr. Schmidt agreed that this is a very important subject, and stated that he would review the proposal again.

Ms. Steinz' suggested a documentary on the history of WTTW. Mr. Schmidt thought the idea was interesting, particularly given that WTTW will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2015, and stated that he would confer with Mr. McAleer about it.

Ms. Steinz further suggested that, as part of its community outreach and engagement and educational mission, WTTW consider airing local robotics competitions. Ms. Steinz stated that such competitions inspire and are very popular with school children, and further that corporations (e.g., Lego, Boeing, Baxter) attend and potentially may serve as sponsors for such programming. Mr. Schmidt was quite enthusiastic about Ms. Steinz' suggestion. Mr. McAleer noted that Motorola was approached a few years ago regarding same, but perhaps with robotics' growing popularity, the timing is better now.

In response to Ms. Summers' question as to what specifically CAB can do to assist WTTW, Mr. Schmidt stated that, working with Mr. McAleer, members could play a critical role in identifying community organizations/groups in areas dictated by the station's programming/outreach/engagement goals. Mr. Schmidt stated that those areas are still being formulated/developed. Ms. Swartzman suggested that CAB members will need to consider their contact groups in the

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future. Ms. Frost stated that the Chicago Public Libraries sponsor many programs, and suggested that it would be an interesting government entity for WTTW to partner with -- an idea Mr. Schmidt endorsed.

Ms. Goldstein's asked about early childhood programming, and the dispersion of caregivers (parents and nannies). Mr. Schmidt responded by noting that WTTW is going beyond over-the-air content, engaging in interactive, web-based delivery and activities, and achieving measurable results. Responding to Ms. Goldstein's second question, Mr. Schmidt stated that "Nature Cat's" target audience is ages 4-8. Ms. Meroni asked Mr. Schmidt if "Nature Cat" would address global warming. Given the target audience, and the objective of the program (getting children off the couch to explore the outdoors), Mr. Schmidt stated that global warming is outside the [scope of the program](#).

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Finally, Mr. Berkowitz commended "Chicago Tonight" as the only local public policy forum on the air, but criticized the apparent youth oriented, and at times superficial coverage and left wing bias of the commentators and panelists. Mr. Schmidt and Mr. McAleer took issue with Mr. Berkowitz' criticism, stating that WTTW strives to present complete and balanced coverage. They added that the program is live, airs daily during the week, and whereas particular shows may not be perfect, on the whole, the program gets it right. Indeed, Mr. Schmidt noted that his friends on the right side of the aisle have expressed their appreciation for the balanced and fair programming. The Chair noted that this discussion is a testament to the importance of "Chicago Tonight." Mr. Vaughn concurred, noting that, unlike FOX or MSNBC, "Chicago Tonight" stands out, and is appreciated for its balanced reporting.

Trustee's Liaison:

In Barbara Proctor's absence, no report was presented.

Management Liaison

At the outset, Mr. McAleer noted several calendar items. On March 27, 2014, at 8 p.m., WTTW will air a documentary, featuring the Driehaus architectural prize winner Pier Carlo Bontempi. Beginning April 25, 2014, the premiere of "My Chicago" will air, following "Check Please." Mr. McAleer described the series as a talk show in a car (equipped with five or six cameras) that will explore Chicago. According to a recent Chicago Tribune article, it will be similar in format to "Check Please," with various residents showcasing their neighborhoods/areas of interest. Mr. McAleer also noted the return of "Midwives" and "Mr. Selfridge." Finally, Mr. McAleer noted that PBS' Antiques Roadshow will be taping in Chicago this summer.

The Chair commended WTTW's recent airing of religious historical documentaries. In line with such noteworthy programming, the Chair noted that the five-part series "[Simon Schama's The Story of the Jews](#)" begins this evening.

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Reports of Officers and Committees

1) Membership and Nominating Committee

Ms. Meredith reported that at the April Meeting, elections will be held for nine vacancies as well as for officers.

2) Program Committee

In Ms. Cragan's absence, no report was presented.

3) Outreach Committee

The Committee did not present a report.

4) Technology Committee

The Committee did not present a report.

5) Committee on Cultural Research and Development

The Committee did not present a report. Mr. Berkowitz, however, stated that the Committee will schedule a meeting within the next two weeks. If interested, contact Mr. Berkowitz at jbcg@aol.com.

6) Committee on Education

Ms. Steinz reported that the Committee’s first step was to promote CAB involvement and participation with robotics competition. In furtherance of that step, Ms. Steinz distributed a sign-up sheet for members to attend a robotics competition in April, details to follow by email. Ms. Steinz also reported that the Committee has eight members.

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7) Secretary

The Secretary did not present a report, but thanked Ms. Mockus for all her work on preparing the April 2013 Minutes.

8) Vice Chairman

In Dr. Wiese’s absence, no report was submitted.

9) Chairman

The Chair advised members and Mr. Schmidt that each discussion with management helps CAB to assist WTTW in fulfilling its mission to inform, inspire and meet the cultural and educational needs of its audience, and further helps CAB to produce a better, more useful Annual Report.

The Chair thus reminded members and advised Mr. Schmidt that CAB plans to invite “Chicago Tonight” Executive Producer Mary Field and Hosts Phil Ponce and Carol Marin to a future CAB meeting. The Chair also suggested it would be beneficial and informative to extend an invitation to Daniel Soles, Senior Vice President and Chief Television Content Officer.

Old Business

None

New Business

The Chair prepared and distributed a Resolution, cautioning against the Federal Election Commission’s regulation of broadcast candidate debates and election-related journalism. The Resolution will be addressed at the April meeting.

Good and Welfare

Jan Goldstein recently was honored for her 25 year service to the Village of Skokie. Along with her volunteer work at the Botanical Gardens, the CSO and the CAB, her care for her granddaughter, she is quite the dynamo.

Felicia Townsend just completed 18 interviews for her dissertation, and is well on her way.

Next Public CAB Meeting: April 22, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ava Holly Berland

