

Policy for the Operation of The City of St. Clair Shores Government Access Video 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, by which the City of St. Clair Shores Government Access Channels (SCSTV) shall operate, and by which municipal meetings, which are open to the public, shall be covered by 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, activities, and programs that are sponsored by the City of St. Clair Shores or its volunteer boards and commissions.
- C.** To increase the knowledge of the citizens of St. Clair Shores as to the 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.
- F.** To provide additional community and quality-of-life programming.

OVERALL POLICY:

- A. Programming:** The intent of the programming on SCSTV shall be to provide direct, non-editorial information to the citizens of St. Clair Shores. SCSTV shall not be used to build support for a particular candidate, policy, program, or issue.
 - 1.** The purpose of programming on this channel shall 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 shall 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 and/or Communications Director deem appropriate.

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

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES:

A. Channel Assignment: The government access program shall operate on the Government Access Channel(s) designated by the cable/video provider(s). Specifically, Comcast Channels 5 and 12, Wide Open West Channels 10 and 18, and AT&T U-verse Channel 99 and any other channels designated by future video providers

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

1. **Live Cablecast:** Live cablecast coverage shall generally consist of City Council meetings, hearings, public meetings, and selected events of community interest.
2. **Tape Delayed Cablecast:** Public meetings or events shall be taped for delayed or repeated playback, in addition to the live cablecast.
3. **Locally Produced Programs:** Programs shall 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 shall be used when appropriate to the City of St. Clair Shores and shall meet all copyright, user fee and license requirements. Every attempt shall be made to avoid producing something locally that is already available elsewhere.
5. **Bulletin Board:** A message generator shall 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.

C. Access Policy

1. City functions shall have priority for access on SCSTV.

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 channels shall be cablecast.
5. Generally, individual statements shall 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 interviews or call-in sessions, with various elected or appointed officials shall 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 shall 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 Channels, 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 SCSTV Community Bulletin Board shall be submitted by any city department in accordance with the guidelines set forth below:
 - a) Only department heads shall be permitted to make requests for messages to be displayed on the bulletin board.
 - b) All cable message requests shall be submitted in memo form, approved and signed by the department head, and thereafter submitted to the Communications Director.
9. The City may shall 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 shall 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 shall submit a signed release to the City of St. Clair Shores that gives permission to air the debate, meeting or forum.
- 3) The program shall 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 shall 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 shall 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 shall be at the discretion of the Communications Director or designee and shall 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 shall not include commercial sponsorship content.

b) General "Third Party" Programs:

- 1) At least one member of the Production Team of the programming for consideration shall 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 shall be suitable for "general audience" viewing. Nudity and profanity, or any act considered illegal in nature are prohibited.
- 3) Programming content for consideration shall be non-political

and non-commercial in nature. Acceptable subjects shall include, but are not limited to, features, how-to, interviews, demonstrations and general information topics.

- 4) Programming for consideration shall 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 shall 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 or designee and shall not interfere with regularly scheduled programming.
- 7) "Third Party" General Programming shall run for a two week period under the umbrella designation of a single program title (ex. *Resident Showcase*). Programming shall be considered in order of submission and limited to one submission per two week period.
- 8) "Third Party" General Programming shall 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 shall 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 shall be subject to review and consideration for channel use in accordance with this operational policy. Such review shall be conducted by the Communications Director or designee.

3. **Bulletin Board:** Messages displayed on the SCSTV Community Bulletin Board shall be edited if necessary 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 shall be 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. Loaning of equipment for personal use is not authorized.
- H. Visual Presentations During City Council Meetings:** Citizens shall be permitted use of the Overhead Projector in City Council Chambers during the *Audience Participation* sections of the Council agenda under the following conditions:
- a) Material(s) to be presented (flyers, presentations stored on CD or flash drive) shall be submitted to the Communications Director or designee a minimum of three (3) business days prior to the day of the meeting.
 - b) The material(s) shall be reviewed by the Communications Director or designee for content and/or technical quality.
 - c) In accordance with the City of St. Clair Shores communications policies, material(s) that include the following content shall not be permitted:
 - Nudity or pornography, profanity and/or hate language.
 - Encouragement of hostility or violence.
 - Attacks on individuals based on ethnicity, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
 - Illegal discrimination against any group.
 - Sexual, obscene, indecent or explicit messages including those with sexual overtone or innuendo.

- Deliberate false, misleading or deceptive messages (i.e. material(s) that have been manipulated by editing software)
- Identification of “personal” data such as, but not limited to, street names, addresses or license plate numbers.
- Language or information that is obscene, foul, vulgar, or abusive in any way.
- Encouragement of cruelty to animals.

This listing is not exhaustive and can be added to at the sole discretion of the City of St. Clair Shores.

- d) The Communications Director or designee will contact the citizen in writing regarding the approval or denial of the materials submitted for review on or before one (1) business day prior to the day of the meeting.
- 1) Material(s) approved for use during the *Audience Participation* sections of the City Council agenda will be retained by the Communications Director and placed on the overhead projector by the Communications Director or designee at the appropriate time during the citizen’s presentation. No additions or deletions to the material(s) may be made after approval has been given.
 - 2) Original material(s) denied for use during the *Audience Participation* sections of the City Council will be returned to the citizen who originally submitted it (them) with a written explanation detailing the reasons for the denial. A stamped, dated copy of the material(s) submitted will be retained by the Communications Director or designee. Corrected material(s) may be submitted by the citizen per section H, subsection a of the *Policy for the Operation of The City of St. Clair Shores Government Access Video Channels (SCSTV)*.
- e) The cablecasting of the presentations stored on CD or flash drive, due to technical constraints, shall not include any recorded audio.
- f) The visual presentation shall not exceed the two (2) or five (5) minute time limitation per the *Audience Participation* agenda item regulations.
- g) The City of St. Clair Shores reserves the right to superimpose the words ***Audience Participation*** including the City’s official logo on the bottom of all visual presentations to differentiate between information provided by the City of St. Clair Shores and information provided by citizens.
- h) The City of St. Clair Shores reserves the right to air the following disclaimer before and/or after *Audience Participation*: “The views and opinions expressed under *Audience Participation* are those of the individual citizen only and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Mayor, City Council or Administration of the City of St. Clair Shores.”
- i) The City of St. Clair Shores reserves the right to refuse visual presentation material(s) based on non-conforming content or non-compliance with the City’s communications policies or incompatibility with the City’s equipment.

Appeals shall be made in writing to the Communications Commission directly and addressed at their regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the Communications Commission is final.

- I. 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 shall 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 shall be made available. In the case of locally produced programming of such shows as *The Mayor's Corner*, *The Council Connection*, *SCSPD EYE ON CRIME*, *SCS Local Matters* (or any future locally produced programming) , the programs upon completion of airing, shall be catalogued at the St. Clair Shores Public Library for public use. Copies of City Council Meetings shall be retained for one year. These tapes shall not be considered an official record of the meeting and there shall be no liability resulting from erasures or omissions. Copies of other programs shall be made at the discretion of the Communications Director and/or the Communications Commission. Retention of tapes other than those mentioned in this item shall become the property of the St. Clair Shores Communications Commission and shall not be returned.

- J. Transmission Room Access:** Access to the SCSTV Production Room shall be restricted to employees of the City of St. Clair Shores and Communications Commissioners during all live broadcasts.

- K. Channel Operating Hours:** The Government Access Channels shall operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week cablecasting locally produced taped programming, live programming or the Community Bulletin Board continuously during that period.

- L. Through Normal Operations:** The SCSTV Production Room at City Hall shall be the center for SCSTV, the Government Access Cable Channels where all messages shall originate.

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 shall 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 in any way with the City of St. Clair Shores equipment or telecast.

2. All audio or video equipment shall be 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 shall be completely self-supportive and shall 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.

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

APPEALS/CLARIFICATION:

Except as otherwise provided in these rules, an appeal from a decision made under these rules shall be submitted to the Communications Commission in written form and addressed to the Communications Director within seven days. The Communications Director shall notify the members of the Communications Commission within three business days of the appeal. Appeals to these Programming Policies shall be subject to a majority ruling by the Communications 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
 Amended by Communications Commission on April 14, 2010
 Amended by St. Clair Shores City Council on May 3, 2010