



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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**Manhattan Community Board Four Resolution in Support of the Establishment of
Civic Channel TV (CCTV)
January 2, 2008**

Whereas, in September, 2006, the New York City Council unanimously passed a resolution authorizing the Mayor's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications to start re-negotiations with telecommunications companies for the granting of telecommunications franchises to provide cable television services in the city of New York; and

Whereas, in 2008, Time Warner, Verizon, Cablevision, and RCN are seeking new or renewal franchise agreements with the City of New York; and

Whereas, public access cablecast channels have long established themselves in local communities nationwide as critical forums for free speech, the development of a marketplace of ideas, and the exercise of residents' First Amendment rights; and

Whereas, the City Council Resolution requests that the City of New York require cable companies to provide the capacity and support for Public, Educational and Government (PEG) government access; and

Whereas, the Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN) is the non-profit organization that administers currently four public access cable channels in Manhattan as part of the City of New York's Public, Educational and Government (PEG) channels; and

Whereas, for the last fifteen years, MNN has been providing the residents of Manhattan with video training, television production, equipment, studio facilities, resources for not for profit organizations, youth outreach, and free access to cablecast channels reaching more than half a million subscribers; and

Whereas, in a telephone survey conducted by MNN, almost 70 percent of all respondents said it was "important" or "very important" to have local cable television channels that feature programs about Manhattan organizations, residents, ethnic groups, youth, seniors, and others, and 100 percent of all respondents from a series of thirteen focus groups felt it was either "very important" (85 percent) or "important" (15 percent) to have noncommercial cable channels that feature programs about Manhattan residents, organizations, community events and issues; and

Whereas, democracy is strongest when its citizens can engage in the full and free exchange of information and ideas; and

Whereas, critical communication channels between Manhattan residents, local government, and civic leaders must be made open and accessible in order to provide greater opportunity for Manhattanites and all New Yorkers to discuss and debate key issues that affect their communities; and

Whereas, there is a need to partner the new digital technologies with the processes of local democracy and civic engagement in the Borough of Manhattan and throughout the City of New York; and

Whereas, such a partnership will use the transformative power of technology and innovation to provide residents with greater engagement in, and knowledge of, local government deliberations and decision-making, and will connect borough residents with each other and with their political and civic leaders in a collective effort to help identify and solve the problems that face Manhattan; now

Therefore be it resolved, that the Manhattan Community Board Four recognizes and applauds the fine work of Manhattan Neighborhood Network in providing public access to new media skills and services for the last fifteen years, and recognizes the urgent community needs across the Borough for the continued growth and expansion of MNN's multimedia services, the needs to strengthen and deepen media training, support and access for young people, and the need to provide greater access for residents to local government and civic leaders; and be it further

Resolved, that the Manhattan Community Board Four supports the establishment of a professional-quality cablecast channel, "Civic Channel TV," to increase public access to the day-to-day workings of local civic processes and institutions, including the broadcasting of community board meetings, public hearings, public policy for a (sic), issue debates and community events with both live and archived television and internet broadcasts. The channel will also broadcast neighborhood profiles, civil leadership training sessions, educational and historic documentaries about Manhattan and the City of New York, significant community events and round-table discussions featuring journalists, academics, community leaders, and prominent public figures and others; and be it further

Resolved, that the Manhattan Community Board Four urges the New York City Franchise and Concession Review Committee and the Mayor of the City of New York to ensure increased capital, operating, technology and bandwidth support for Public Access channels and services in the upcoming franchise agreements, and to support the establishment of additional channels, including a new civic channel to be operated by the Manhattan Neighborhood Network.