



CITY OF NOVI  
Public Utilities & Technology Committee Meeting  
**August 5, 2024, 5:30 p.m.**  
Mayors Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road  
(248) 347-0445

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	5:30 PM
<b>ROLL CALL</b>	Council Members Heintz, Smith, and Thomas
<b>PRESENT</b>	Council Members Heintz, Smith, and Thomas
<b>STAFF LIAISON</b>	Rob Petty, Chief Information Officer

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motioned by: Member Heintz; Seconded by Smith

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

N/A

### **REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON**

Chairperson Thomas thanked the committee members for taking the time to participate on this committee. She shared the importance of the community having reliable electrical service, a robust broadband offering that included service options for each residence, and consistently fast speeds and reliability.

### **MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

#### 1. Introductions

Council Member Heintz introduced himself and stated his desire for the team to address stable electrical service and accessible internet for everyone. Both services should be reliable and offered at affordable prices.

Council Member Smith introduced himself and suggested that the committee look at best practices in neighboring communities. He noted that Farmington has done a lot with DTE and their work with broadband. He expressed a desire to bring the best to the City of Novi.

Chairperson Thomas introduced herself and expressed excitement about this committee. She expressed that there is a lack of high-quality broadband service for all residents in the community and would like to see more broadband competition. Chairperson Thomas shared her concern that there are limited things we can do but felt we need to, if nothing else, make sure our voices are heard.

#### 2. Meeting schedule and meeting norms

The group's consensus was to hold a meeting every two weeks on a Tuesday at 5:30 PM. The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 20th, at 5:30 PM, followed by Tuesday, September 3rd, at 5:30 PM.

### 3. Purpose of the committee

Chairperson Thomas requested that Rob Petty provide a copy of the Council Rules Committee's definition of the Public Utilities and Technology Committee's purpose. She wanted to ensure we understood the purpose and stayed within the committee's drafted scope. Chairperson Thomas' desired focus is energy and broadband. She felt we had limited control over what we could require DTE to do. Still, she thought that we could get our voices heard by reaching out to DTE, seeing if there are ways that we can partner and possibly advocate, even if it's showing up at the meetings, making sure that people understand what their resources are in an outage and if they're alternatives. Additionally, she felt the committee should focus on the broadband challenges faced by our community.

### 4. Discussion of goals and next steps

Chairperson Thomas started with the broadband topic. She noted that we had a Broadband Committee, and the Broadband Committee hired a company to do some research. I would like to see if we can get someone; I don't know if the staff liaison is still here, but could we get someone who was part of that to come in and talk about it?

Council Member Heintz felt the flash vote system could help better understand the residents' energy and broadband issues. He wants the committee to ask Spectrum about their coverage areas and average speed.

Council Member Smith noted that SEMCOG and Oakland County had data that could be valuable to the committee.

Council Member Heintz shared his experiences with alternative Internet options like Verizon 5G Wireless.

Council Member Smith inquired about the cost difference between putting up a 5G tower and laying cable or fiber. He also noted that cities with community broadband can leverage that fiber for their network requirements, including public safety.

Chairperson Thomas shared that she has seen examples of how the municipal broadband model can save communities and school districts money. She indicated that she did not say that is how we should proceed, but she wanted to share the information.

Council Member Smith asked if new developments are required to install fiber conduit to individual buildings or residential homes. This might encourage broadband competition and provide a higher level of service. He also inquired if we had maps giving a general idea of where the fiber backbone is within the city.

Rob Petty shared that, generally speaking, the providers will not share this information. The Foresite Group, which prepared the Broadband Report, did, however, provide a general idea of the location of fiber within the city.

Chairperson Thomas wants the team to list the problems we want to address. Items include the cost of Internet access, which is affordable, High-quality Internet access, and competition. We still need to discuss the topic of energy.

Chairperson Thomas shared that our neighbors, Farmington and Farmington Hills, have been through this process. They did some work with fiber cities. I know Joe LaRussa has offered to come and talk to us about it. She thought this would provide valuable information for the committee.

Council Member Smith said that Joe LaRussa may also be able to speak about DTE. He would like to know where the trouble spots are and what DTE is doing to address them. He would also like to know what can be done to accelerate moving DTE wiring to an underground solution.

Council Member Heintz would like to know if the committee's scope can include environmentally friendly options like solar and heat pumps.

Chairperson Thomas wants our goal to be 100% energy. She and Council Member Smith want to ensure we have data to back up our positions. She wants to know the difference between above-ground and below-ground DTE installations concerning reliability. Does DTE offer pilot programs that might benefit the City of Novi?

## **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

The group produced the following items to be addressed before the next meeting.

- Provide the committee members with a copy of the Foresite Group Broadband Report. (Rob Petty)
- Committee members to provide any questions about the report before the next meeting. (All)
- Schedule Joe LaRussa to speak at one of the committee meetings. (Chairperson Thomas)
- Acquire data from SEMCOG and Oakland County related to DTE and broadband. (Council Member Smith)
- Arrange for City Staff to present an overview of the Broadband Report and answer any questions.

## **REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

N/A

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by: Member Smith; Seconded by Member Heintz

Approved 3:0