

# Local

## ✓CF Cable TV RP City cable TV panel outlines complaints for new Sonic chief

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By CHELA ZABIN  
STAFF WRITER

Members of the Watsonville Cable Television Committee went over a long list of complaints with Sonic Cable's new general manager last night.

The list was compiled from testimony the committee heard at three public meetings in March.

For the most part, Sonic general manager John Adams didn't seem to give the committee much satisfaction. He defended the cable company's current service, policy and prices. On several occasions, he responded to the complaints by saying he would get back to the committee or that he was working on the problem.

Committee member Robert Chacanaca said that kind of response is what the committee has been getting from Sonic over the same issues for months.

Some changes have been made, but the committee wants more. Sonic's office hours have been extended — the office is now open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Committee members would like to have someone at the company answering the phone on evenings and weekends, when most TV viewing is done.

Adams said it was too costly to have someone from Sonic on duty then. He said he was in the process of looking for a better answering service for taking evening and weekend calls.

The only company service after business hours is response to serious outage problems (three or more calls from one general area).

Adams told the committee that in an attempt to clear up interference on Channel 44, Sonic was going to join a consortium of cable operators to put together a microwave feed of San Francisco stations. He said interference on cable channels 8, 11 and 21 comes from a strong local signal and couldn't really be helped. Chacanaca challenged that, saying that those stations come in fine in Monterey County and in Santa Cruz. Adams promised to get a second engineer's opinion on the

matter.

When asked about providing locally transmitted channels for the school district and the city, Adams said that was a matter that could become part of the franchise agreement renegotiations. But committee members told him that those items were already in the franchise agreement and that they had been provided previously.

"We have had it," Chacanaca said. "We'd like it back."

Adams said he was working on airing more Asian programs. Members of Watsonville's Japanese-American community packed the March meetings to demand more Japanese-language programs. He said he has talked with the manager at KTSF, a San Francisco foreign-language station, and that he is considering putting that station's programming on Channel 4, which is usually blanked out because of duplication. One of the problems with that, however, is that a Japanese-language news program that many Watsonville residents want is on at the same time as local news on Channel 4. He promised to look into getting Radio Tokyo over cable FM.

Adams said the company will give credit for down time, although the compensation "doesn't turn out to be much." Cable service is figured at about 75 cents a day, divided by the 36 channels. People only get compensation for the channels that are down.

On the average, the compensation turns out to be 20 or 25 cents, he said.

Adams said he would not consider a discount for the elderly.

"We're not a utility," he said. "We don't provide a lifeline service."

Assistant City Manager Gary Smith gave a report on the discussions between the city and the cable company over some back franchise fees the city says the company owes.

"There seemed to be a good, solid agreement" on many issues, Smith said. Another meeting is planned, and Smith said he believes they will "come to some further agreement."