

#4...June 8, 2019

Greetings to the 237 who would like to be kept up to date on Brooksville broadband!

As you know, Kerem Durdag was in Brooksville on June 5, to tell us what's up with the GWI loan application. (He's GWI's Chief Operating Officer.) The discussion was lively and his remarks were well received. This morning I had confirmation of the schedule, as follows:

Brooksville is included in GWI's second application for this particular pot of USDA funds. The first application, which includes Blue Hill, will have a determination by USDA next month (barring unforeseen things like another government shutdown). Then our application will go into the pipeline in August, which will start a 6-month clock that USDA allows itself for reviewing an application, which brings us to February of 2020. Assuming the loan involving Brooksville is approved in February of 2020, there is still the construction phase, which could take as much as a year: i.e. it could be January/February of 2021 before you actually can start using high speed, reliable, fiber based internet in your home.

Also briefly discussed at the meeting on June 5th was the fact that if the Town tries to sign up with another entity on behalf of some residents (as Brooklin has recently done for areas of town that were totally without internet), it would completely mess up the loan application and Brooksville would essentially be unable ever to get back into the pipeline.

There has been a lot of news lately about various other funding opportunities for municipalities. Our review of them indicates that we would either not qualify, would have to pony up considerable cash, and/or would have to assume day-to-day system management. None of these options is preferable to what GWI is offering.

Questions were asked about cost - about \$50-60 per month (for 100 Mbps upload AND download) without phone service. Add another \$25 or so for phone, and you can "cut the cord" (phone cord) as they now say, which makes the total package quite attractive.

Briefly discussed at the meeting were some strategies for assuring that the internet is affordable and accessible by everyone in Town who wants it. Various subsidy strategies were mentioned: this subject has proven to be of interest to other towns in our region as well. Yesterday Stephanie MacLagan of the Island Institute said she would help us in our process of designing a strategy that makes sense for Brooksville. GWI has also indicated an interest in helping us figure this out. Your thoughts are welcome!

On the question of seasonal users, GWI would allow the service to be turned off, or at least down, but of course would need adequate time to respond on either end of the season.

There were also questions about when people would need to sign up for service. Basically, for construction efficiency, everyone who wants the service would need to sign up within a certain "window of time" after the loan is approved. If you missed the deadline and wanted to sign up months later, there might be an installation cost to bring the fiber to your home, but if you signed up within the window, there would not be an installation cost. (There would probably

have to be some case-by-case discussions with people, if there are any, who have miles-long driveways, like those humorously mythical CCI customers in Snake Pond.)

Early in the design of the system, a location for the “brain” of the network would need to be found that is central, all-weather accessible, hooked up to electricity, and can accommodate a generator and air temperature controls. Some space with a footprint of about 10 feet square would be needed, either within an existing building, an addition to an existing building, or a stand-alone structure. Your ideas?

5G was brought up, and Kerem clarified that it is not an alternative solution to fiber. It requires even more installed fiber than our desired Fiber To The Premises (FTTP). It is mostly useful for things like self driving cars, it requires transmitters on every pole, and it is highly unlikely ever to be seen in a rural town like Brooksville. (From my perspective as a cell biologist, this is good news, as 5G has never been subjected to health and environmental risk assessment.) The newsworthy flurry of private satellite launchings was also brought up, and Kerem clarified that the most significant market for them will be countries like Africa which have no other options.

Finally, GWI is very concerned about you folks who have been abandoned recently by Redzone or Premium Choice, and wants to help find an interim solution for you. **Can you please let me know by return email what your current situation is?** Have you signed up with Consolidated, or Hughes, or Dish Network, or are you using your cell phone? Or are you driving to the library?

As you may know, a group of 8 towns has been meeting monthly for some time to discuss our internet woes and possible solutions. At our last meeting, the Deer Isle representative made the good suggestion that we develop a set of shared goals that each town can use to benchmark their proposed solutions. These goals could include universal, affordable, technically reliable, speedy access, that is “future proof”. Sounds reasonable to me.

Please let me know what you are thinking, and ask any questions you would like me to find answers to.