

RESOLUTION 79-23

Inducement Resolution for Economic Development Bonds
for the Agency for Instructional Television

WHEREAS, the City of Bloomington, Indiana (the "Issuer") is authorized by IC 18-6-4.5 (the "Act") to issue revenue bonds for the financing of economic development facilities, the funds from said financing to be used for the acquisition, construction and equipping of said facilities either directly or by loan to a company and said facilities to be either directly owned by a company or leased to a company or sold to a company; and

WHEREAS, the Agency for Instructional Television, a not-for-profit corporation (the "Applicant") has advised the Bloomington Economic Development Commission and the Issuer that it proposes that the Issuer acquire, construct and equip an economic development facility and sell or lease the same to the Applicant or that the Issuer loan the proceeds of such a financing to the Applicant for such purposes, said economic development facility to be an approximate 50,000 square foot office, warehouse, storage and shipping facility, including the real estate on which it is to be located, and equipment to be installed therein, for the purpose of expanding its services to users of instructional television programs and related materials, in Bloomington, Indiana, on a site to be selected (the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, the diversification of economic development and increase in job opportunities (approximately 130 new jobs) to be achieved by the acquisition, construction and equipping of the Project will be of public benefit to the health, safety and general welfare of the Issuer and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, having received the advice of the Bloomington Economic Development Commission, it would appear that the financing of the Project would be of public benefit to the health, safety and general welfare of the Issuer and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition and construction of the facility will not have an adverse competitive effect on any similar facility already constructed or operating in or about Bloomington, Indiana:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

1. The Common Council finds, determines, ratifies and confirms that the promotion of diversification of economic development and job opportunities in and near Bloomington, Indiana, and in Monroe County, is desirable to preserve the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the Issuer; and that it is in the public interest that the Bloomington Economic Development Commission and said Issuer take such action as it lawfully may to encourage diversification of industry and promotion of job opportunities in and near said Issuer.
2. The Common Council further finds, determines, ratifies and confirms that the issuance and sale of revenue bonds in an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000 of the Issuer under the Act for the acquisition, construction and equipping of the Project and the sale or leasing of the Project to the Applicant or the loaning of the proceeds of such a financing to the Applicant for such purposes will serve the public purposes referred to above, in accordance with the Act.
3. In order to induce the Applicant to proceed with the acquisition, construction and equipping of the Project, the Common Council hereby finds, determines, ratifies and confirms that

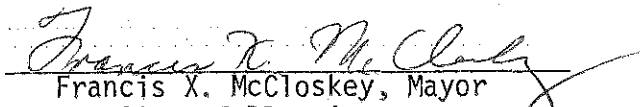
(i) it will take or cause to be taken such actions pursuant to the Act as may be required to implement the aforesaid financing, or as it may deem appropriate in pursuance thereof, provided that all of the foregoing shall be mutually acceptable to the Issuer and the Applicant; (ii) it will adopt such ordinances and resolutions and authorize the execution and delivery of such instruments and the taking of such action as may be necessary and advisable for the authorization, issuance and sale of said economic development bonds.

4. All costs of the Project incurred after the passage of this inducement resolution, including reimbursement or repayment to the Applicant of moneys expended by the Applicant for planning, engineering, interest paid during construction, underwriting expenses, attorney and bond counsel fees, acquisition, underwriting expenses, attorney and bond counsel fees, acquisition, construction and equipping of the Project will be permitted to be included as part of the bond issue to finance said Project, and the Issuer will thereafter either sell or lease the same to the Applicant or loan the proceeds of such financing to the Applicant for the same purposes.

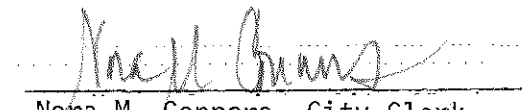
PASSED and ADOPTED by the Common Council of the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 30th day of September, 1979.


Tomilea Allison, President
Bloomington Common Council

SIGNED and APPROVED by me upon this 29th day of September, 1979.

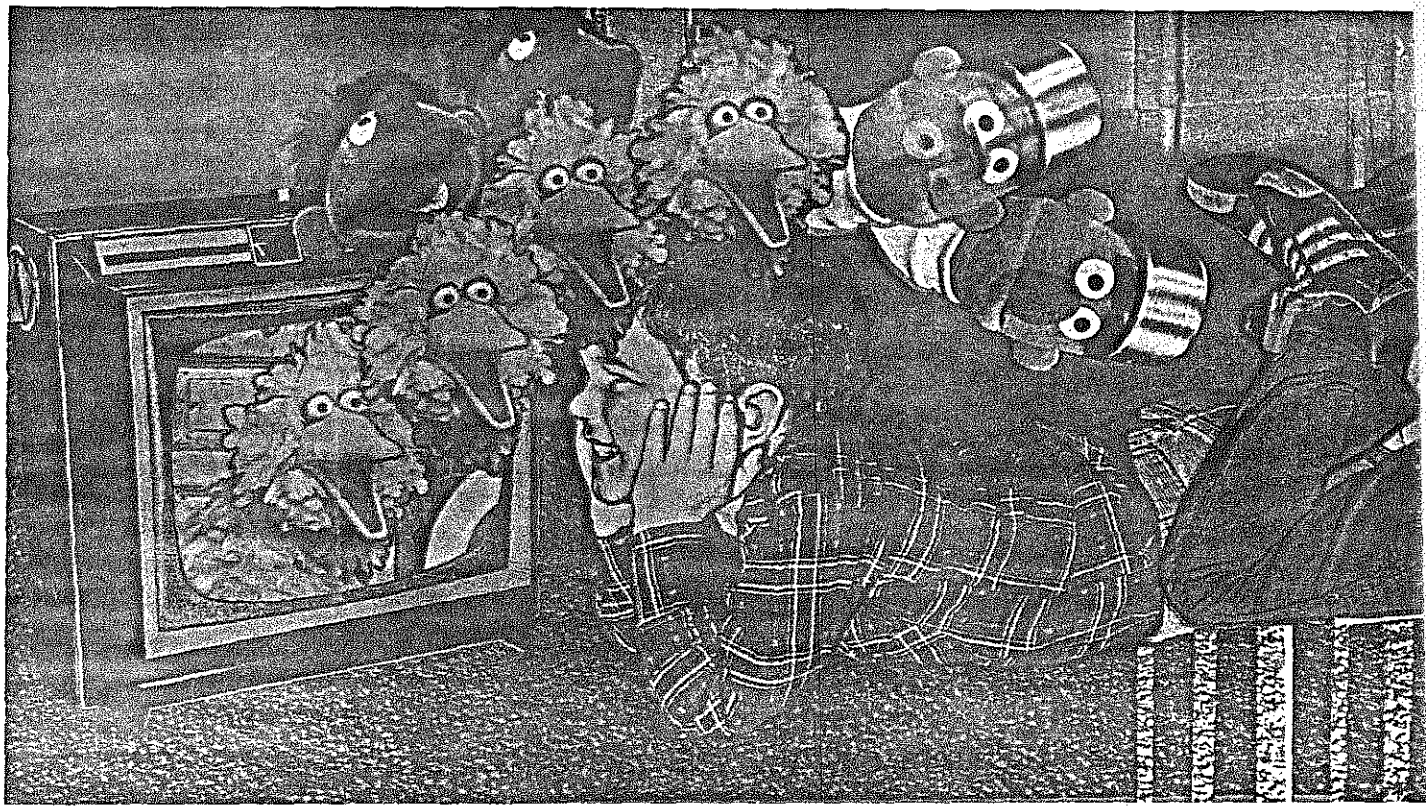

Francis X. McCloskey, Mayor
City of Bloomington

ATTEST:


Nora M. Connors, City Clerk

SYNOPSIS

IC 18-6-4.5 authorizes the City of Bloomington to issue revenue bonds for the financing of economic development facilities. The Agency for Instructional Television wants to construct a new 50,000 square foot facility in Bloomington, providing 130 new jobs. This resolution states that if all necessary statutory, planning, legal and financial requirements are met then the Council will pass an ordinance authorizing the issuance of bonds for the construction and development of the Instructional Television Facility. A similar resolution was passed by the Economic Development Commission on August 8, 1979. The City has no liability or responsibility for these bonds if they are approved.



COME BACK, MISTER ROGERS, COME BACK

By Jerome L. Singer and Dorothy G. Singer

One view, from two authorities on children's imagination: the rapid-fire tempo of television programs like "Sesame Street" not only shortens the attention span of young children, but also inhibits their ability to reflect on and retain new information.

No sane parent would present a child with a fire engine, snatch it away in 30 seconds, replace it with a set of blocks, snatch that away 30 seconds later, replace the blocks with clay, and then replace the clay with a toy car. Yet, in effect, a young child receives that kind of experience when he or she watches American television.

As psychologists who have been investigating television for the past decade, we have become concerned about the ways in which television's rapid-fire delivery may be affecting young children's capacities for imagination and reflective thought. Our research on imaginative play in early childhood suggests that private fantasy has significant benefits for a growing child. Children of three or four who engage in pretending or make-believe play not only appear to be happier but also are more fluent verbally, and show more cooperation and sharing behavior. They can wait quietly or delay gratification, can concentrate better, and seem to be more empathic and less aggressive, thanks to their use of private fantasy.

Can television enhance or inhibit imagination in young children? We think the latter is true, and are increasingly disturbed about the emphasis in American television on extremely short action sequences, frequent interruptions, and drastic changes in the visual field. Producers—even the producers of "Sesame Street"—argue that they need rapid change to hold children's attention. Yet it seems possible that they are actually creating a psychological orientation in children that leads to a shortened attention span, a lack of reflectiveness, and an expectation of rapid change in the broader environment. The pacing of television itself may be stimulating an appetite for novelty and lively action, as well as an expectation that problems can be resolved in a very short space of time.

The development of young children's imaginative skills requires that they periodically shift their attention away from a rich visual environment—television—and assimilate new information or engage in their own mental imagery. Television, with its / (Continued on page 59)

Singers (Continued from page 56)

constantly changing sequences, may well prevent the elaboration of such private images, and preclude the inner rehearsal that is critical in transferring material from the short- to the long-term memory system.

In effect, the major result of watching television may simply be to train children to watch the screen in a fashion that permits surprisingly little subsequent retention. Learning numbers and the names of letters by rote may be a useful outcome for children who watch "Sesame Street." But, according to psychologists Donald Meichenbaum and Lorraine Turk, children need to learn thinking strategies that will provide them with a variety of active learning attitudes for coping with new material. Fast-paced shows like "Sesame Street," "The Electric Company," and, of course, most commercial children's shows, leave little time for the response and reflection that are important ingredients of such strategies.

Children also need adult models who are thoughtful, who seem to listen, and who ask youngsters to think or to express themselves as part of a total learning process. One of our favorite programs for preschoolers does just this: "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." Unfortunately, it has been limited to reruns for some years now. Mister Rogers' show is perhaps the best-thought-out program for young children, from a psychological standpoint. It does not focus primarily on cognitive skills, but attempts to reassure children about their own uniqueness and to convey to them a sense of security and personal worth. Significantly, Mister Rogers' manner is slow and he repeats himself often. His sugary style irritates many parents. They feel his pace is too slow and that he is perhaps not sufficiently masculine in his manner. *But Mister Rogers is not talking to parents.* He is talking to three- and four-year-old children who are still having lots of trouble making sense of the complexities of the outside world. Children seem to benefit enormously from his relaxed rhythm, the way he follows a subject over a period of days, his reassuring attitude, and his willingness to ask a question and then, in defiance of most television conven-

tions, to say nothing for a few seconds—while children answer for themselves.

Independent research studies have shown that children exposed to about two weeks of watching "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" become more willing to share with other children, more cooperative in their play behavior, and more imaginative. In addition, our own study, carried out with Roni Tower and Ann Biggs, found some interesting patterns in what young television-watchers re-



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of time to talk
back to and walk
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call from Mister Rogers' program.

We compared the behavior of nursery-school children watching "Sesame Street" with that of children watching "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." The children watching "Sesame Street" kept their eyes glued to the set, while children watching "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" allowed their eyes to wander from the TV screen and occasionally walked away from the set. Nevertheless, when we measured recall of particular details from both programs, including story content, the children watching "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" did as well as those watching "Sesame Street." There seemed to be distinct advantages in watching "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" for children who were less intellectually gifted and less

imaginative. Those children could follow Mister Rogers' material better than children of comparable intellectual capabilities who watched "Sesame Street." After two weeks of watching "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" every day at school, they increased their level of imaginative play and showed more positive emotional reactions to the other children than did children who watched "Sesame Street" or a group of control films.

We are not plugging a specific show. Rather, we feel that the research evidence and an analysis of the cognitive properties of the television medium suggest that it would be far more useful for children if producers of children's shows learned the lesson of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" and began providing children with longer sequences, slower pacing, and more personal communication.

Children can actually learn a good deal from television and acquire some constructive social habits. But children, particularly preschoolers, need relatively simple material that lends itself to imitation in action or words. They need bits of time to "talk back" to the TV set. They need to be able to walk away from it, develop pictures in their minds, or try out for size something they have just watched by playing it out on the floor for a few minutes.

Currently, hearings are going on under the auspices of both the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission that deal primarily with commercials directed at children, but that also are raising fundamental questions about the overall impact of television on children's information-processing.

We think that, rather than attempt to ban commercials, it would be helpful if the networks and producers could use a larger percentage of the huge income derived from advertising to children to generate creative and imaginative programming. There should be continuous consultation with child-development specialists and careful research on children's reactions to programming and the clustering of commercials.

We think Mister Rogers had the right idea and we'd like to see more of him. But there could be even better shows that would reflect a genuine

STATEMENT OPPOSING TAX-EXEMPTION FOR AGENCY FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION'S
BOND ISSUE

20 Sept 1979

I oppose tax-exempt status for an A.I.T. bond issue for two reasons:

First, I think it an economic injustice to the private sector to grant additional tax advantages to an organization which is already entirely supported by tax funds and by grants from tax-exempt foundations. Investment capital should be encouraged to flow into the economic activities which provide tax funds — not to organizations which are already supported by tax-funds.

Second, the economic future for this particular industry is poor. The public schools — who are the customers for educational television — are caught between tax ceilings and inflation. When teachers' salaries are not raised, we see teachers picketing schools. In this situation, educational television is doomed.

At the same time, the demand for Basic Education is becoming insistent. The grassroots demand for a return to tested teaching methods in reading, penmanship, spelling, composition, and arithmetic will become more insistent. Tested teaching methods require doing, not watching. (No-one would try to teach swimming by having swimmers watch television; writing requires continuous practice, too.)

Television — even so-called "educational television" — is at last being recognized as injurious to learning. Dr. Jerome Singer and Dr. Dorothy Singer describe the effect as follows:

"... it seems possible that [producers] are actually creating a psychological orientation in children that leads to a shortened attention span, a lack of reflectiveness, and an expectation of rapid change in the broader environment

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, Mar 1979 pp 56,59-60

They also express alarm over television's stunting of imagination and reflective thought.

Neil Postman, professor of media ecology at New York University, phrases it this way:

"One of the more serious difficulties teachers now face in the classroom results from the fact that their students suffer media-shortened attention spans and have become accustomed, also through intense media exposure, to novelty, variety, and entertainment."

Neil Postman, "Order in the Classroom"

Atlantic

Please note that I chose experts who write for "liberal" audiences; we always prefer to let our adversaries speak for themselves.

Most City Councils across the country would regard it as peculiar to have Samuel Johnson quoted at them, but this council will regard it as quite normal. Dr. Johnson spoke with experience about teaching; he had been an unsuccessful teacher himself.

"Every man that has ever undertaken to instruct others, can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension"

"Life of Milton"

Television cannot rectify absurd misapprehension; indeed, it often spreads confusion, misunderstanding, and shallow conceit.

When a medicine proves to have bad side effects, it is taken off the market. When a food-additive is suspected of causing cancer, whole industries are shut down. The educational side-effects of television are now being associated with declining academic standards. Drastic reductions of educational-television use must come.

Municipal exemption of interest on bond issues is justified as a method of increasing local employment and stimulating the economy. ATT plans to increase its payroll from 80 to 130. Present trends in education make this prediction unrealistic. I oppose granting exemption.

Thank you for your attention.

Jean Patton