



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS DARIEN TV79?

Founded in 2007, Darien TV79 is the government television station run by the Town of Darien and available to subscribers of Cablevision in the town.

WHO FUNDS TV79?

Our capital equipment is bought using grants from Cablevision accrued from annual cable charges paid by subscribers. In addition, those subscriber funds help defray some of the costs of camera operators. The balance of our operating costs is paid by budget allocations by the town.

WHO RUNS TV79?

Co-founders David Dever and Jim Cameron volunteer as General Manager and Program Director, respectively. They report to The Darien TV79 Advisory Board which is appointed by The Board of Selectmen and meets quarterly.

WHAT KIND OF RULES DOES TV79 OPERATE UNDER?

We have extensive "Operating Guidelines", detailing what we can and cannot cover. You'll find a copy on the Town website.

WHO DO I TALK TO IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT OR SUGGESTION?

You can call our TV booth (203-656-7484), send us an e-mail (Channel79@DarienCT.gov) or contact TV79 Advisory Board Chairwoman Lynn Hamlen (LynnHamlen@DarienNatureCenter.org).

WHAT KINDS OF MEETINGS DOES TV79 COVER?

TV79 tries to cover all major town meetings including Board of Selectmen, RTM, Board of Finance, etc. Meetings in town hall's rooms 206, 213 and the Town Hall Auditorium are usually covered live, while others are recorded. All meetings are re-aired for at least one week.

WHAT GIVES TV79 THE RIGHT TO COVER THESE MEETINGS?

TV79 has the same rights as any citizen to attend any public meeting in town. Citizens have the right to take pictures (still or video), just as TV79 does. The only exceptions are meetings held in "Executive Session" (see below).

HOW DO I KNOW IF A MEETING IS BEING AIRED OR RECORDED?

The camera operator covering a meeting will post signs in the meeting room to remind all participants that the meeting is being recorded. Every effort will be made by the camera operator to speak to the Chair of the meeting in advance to also remind them that the meeting is aired live or being taped?

WHY CAN'T WE HAVE A RED LIGHT SHOWING THE CAMERAS ARE "ON"?

Our cameras are run by remote control from our booth and are not equipped with "tally lights". Because we switch frequently from camera to camera, meeting participants won't know which camera is "on" or what it's focused on. Just assume you're on camera and don't worry.

WHAT DO THE CAMERAS FOCUS ON?

We only point the camera at who is speaking and any charts they may be showing. We occasionally may pan across the dais or the audience, but we do not seek "reaction shots" of people.

WHERE ARE THE MICROPHONES?

In room 206 we have permanent mic's on the dais, the podium and an audience mic usually on the front table. In rooms 119 and 213 there are mic's hung from the ceiling. In the Auditorium we use the room's PA system mics. All mics are left in the "on" position, so please be careful not to cover them with papers or make excessive noise.

WHEN DO THE CAMERAS START RECORDING?

When we are taping a meeting we start recording before the meeting begins to check audio levels, lighting and focus. When we air a meeting live, we are also recording before the meeting is called to order. (If we weren't recording we would miss the "call to order".) But what is seen on the air, either live or on replay, is ONLY the "gavel to gavel" portion of the meeting from the "call to order" to "we are adjourned".

If you are Chairing a meeting it is very important that you clearly delineate those two points with that language: "I call this meeting of the XYZ Board to order" and "The meeting is adjourned".

Again, anything that may be recorded by TV79 before the meeting convenes or after adjournment will NOT be aired.

HOW CAN I HELP MAKE TV79's COVERAGE OF OUR MEETING BETTER?

While we make every effort to have our cameras and mic's unobtrusive, getting good audio at a meeting can be a challenge. Please be sure the mic nearest you is not covered by paper and encourage anyone at the podium to keep the gooseneck mic pointed in their direction.

In the Auditorium all members of the public offering comments must use the PA system mic's, either at the podium or hand-held. Casual comments from the seats won't be picked up by the mics, leaving viewers wondering what they missed.

WHAT IF THERE ARE CHARTS OR GRAPHS BEING SHOWN?

Very often presenters use maps or charts, especially at land use meetings. But if they are pointed only in the direction of the Board or Commission and not visible to the TV cameras, the viewers at home have no idea of what's being discussed. Remember... more people watch your meeting on TV79 than ever attend in person, so always keep our viewers in mind and keep any visual aids visible to our cameras.

WHAT IF MY MEETING INCLUDES A POWERPOINT SLIDE SHOW?

Advise the TV79 camera operator in advance and ask the presenter to give them a copy of their "deck" for copying to our computer BEFORE the meeting. The camera operator also has a thumb drive in the TV79 booth and can make a copy of the PowerPoint from your laptop. Then, when the slides are being shown live at the meeting, we can show a clean, digital "original" of the same slide at the same time via our in-booth PC.

WHEN ARE MEETINGS IN 'EXECUTIVE SESSION'?

Just as members of the public are excluded from such privileged discussions of personnel or legal matters, so too is TV79. So it is essential that the Chair of the meeting advise the camera operator before the meeting if the body plans to go into Executive Session, at what point in the meeting and for how long.

If the Executive Session is at the end of the meeting and the body will reconvene only to then adjourn, TV79 will end its coverage when Executive Session is begun.

WHAT IF OUR MEETING ADJOURNS FOR A QUICK BREAK?

Here again, let the camera operator know if this is likely (for example, if you know the meeting may run 2 - 3 hours) and when you call the adjournment, please say for how long. On air we will put up a slide indicating that the meeting is on a break and will reconvene.

During the adjournment we will NOT air any audio or pictures from the room, so conversations that may occur that are not part of the official meeting will NOT be aired.

When the meeting is re-aired, we will edit out the "break" and advise viewers what they missed and why.

WHEN WILL MY MEETING BE AIRED ON TV79?

Whenever possible, we air meetings live. But if there are two or more meetings happening simultaneously, we have to make a judgment call as to which should go live and which should be aired on tape delay. All live meetings are also taped and re-aired.

Our new program week starts Friday afternoon when we issue our Program Guide for the week ahead. In most cases, the program rotation is the same day to day, but we have been experimenting with airing different shows in "prime time" (8 pm - 11 pm) on different nights.

To get a free copy of our Program Guide, just send us your e-mail address to Channel79@DarienCT.gov. You'll also find our Program Guide on the town website and in The Darien Patch (www.DarienPatch.com).

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHOSE NAMES I NOTICE ON THE CREDITS FOR A MEETING?

We want everyone watching our coverage to know who's been involved, so we often will list the members of a board or commission, so viewers can know who's who. We also list the person who ran the cameras (Camera Operator or Videographer) and who edited the meeting (Producer).

DO YOU ALWAYS LIST THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING?

We try to, if it has been posted on the town website. Sometimes the agenda runs to many pages, and we will try to summarize it on our title slides at the beginning of a meeting. You can also link to the website agenda from our Program Guide by clicking on "AGENDA" next to the meeting in question.

CAN I GET COPIES OF SHOWS ON TV79?

Yes. DVD copies are \$25 each and are usually ready for pick-up in a few days. Just e-mail us your request to DarienTV79@gmail.com

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE DVD's OF OLD MEETINGS?

They all go to The Darien Library where you can view them or request copies.

WHAT OTHER KINDS OF PROGRAMMING DOES TV79 AIR?

In addition to town hall coverage, TV79 also airs other meetings of civic interest from The Darien Library, Darien Community Assoc., Darien Center for the Arts and similar venues. We also cover the Memorial Day Parade and Remembrance Services, Veterans Day, the July 4th "Push Pull Parade", etc.

We always air the League of Women Voters' "Candidates Night" (debate) before each election.

We also have two continuing series of interview programs, "Inside Town Hall" and "Community Matters", hosted by Program Director Jim Cameron.

And occasionally TV79 airs a program from a neighboring town's Government TV station, but only when the subject matter pertains to Darien.

DOESN'T DARIEN HIGH SCHOOL HAVE A TV STATION?

Yes, Channel 78 is "Blue Wave TV" and is programmed out of Darien HS. The Faculty Advisor is Ivan Crowther icrowther@darienps.org (203-655-3981 x 2234). The Darien Board of Education is responsible for programming on this station.

HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER TO HELP TV79?

We are always looking for camera operators and video producers, especially folks with experience at this work. Even without experience, we offer hands-on training for several weeks before allowing you to "solo" and cover a meeting. Our camera operators are paid \$25 for their time and can work as little as one evening a week. For more information, contact us at DarienTV79@gmail.com

JIM CAMERON / Program Director

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