

Press Release

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Online at <https://isen.com/GigiSohn.pdf>



NATIONAL BROADBAND ADVOCATE TO VISIT FALMOUTH Falmouth Broadband Forum will spotlight local network projects.

FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS, January 29, 2024 - Gigi Sohn, Executive Director of the American Association of Public Broadband (AAPB), will keynote a Falmouth Broadband Forum for town leaders and Falmouth citizens. It will be on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 7:00 PM at the Falmouth Historical Society, 55 Palmer Avenue, in Falmouth. There will be no admission charge. Members of the press and the public are encouraged to attend.

Ms. Sohn will present the national context for Falmouth's initiative to build a town-wide fiber-optic Internet access network. Ms. Sohn's speech will be followed by a round table with Falmouth town government and Falmouth Broadband Municipal Light Plant (MLP) officials. There will also be a public Q and A session.

Ms. Sohn's multi-decade career in Washington, DC, has focused on the democratizing uses of technology. She served as Counselor to former FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler, 2013-2016. In 2021, she was the Biden Administration's first choice for fifth (tie-breaking) FCC Commissioner, but her nomination was blocked in the US Senate. In Ms. Sohn's current position with AAPB, she advocates at federal, state, and local levels to ensure that public broadband projects will flourish.

The national context for Falmouth's network project includes some 450 operating US municipal networks, with several dozen more, including Falmouth's project and several others in southeastern Massachusetts, in pre-construction planning.¹

Ms. Sohn says, "Community-based broadband networks have transformed the Massachusetts Berkshires from sleepy hamlets to vibrant centers of economic opportunity, education, and culture. Now we have the chance to extend the advantages of locally controlled networks to the rest of Massachusetts."

Ms. Sohn's visit is sponsored by FalmouthNet, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit citizen's organization that developed the idea of a fiber optic Internet access network for all of Falmouth. FalmouthNet inspired the Falmouth Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) to fund a 2020 feasibility study. Then it obtained a state grant to execute a high-level design that produced a blueprint for building the network. It sponsored the proposal for Falmouth Town Meeting to create a Falmouth Broadband Municipal Light Plant (MLP) to oversee the network. Now FalmouthNet is sponsoring Ms. Sohn's visit to continue advocacy for Falmouth's network.

Ms. Sohn's schedule for her entire visit to southeastern Massachusetts, February 12-14, includes the following events:

- February 12, 6:30 PM - Ms. Sohn briefs the Falmouth Select Board, Falmouth Town Hall, [public]
- February 13, 9:00 - 10:00 AM - Ms. Sohn addresses the Cape Cod Technology Council, Cape Space, 100 Independence Dr, Hyannis. [invitation only, steve@cctechcouncil.org]
- February 13, 11:00 AM to 3 PM - Ms. Sohn visits OpenCape. [sjohnston@opencape.org].
- February 13, 7:00 PM - Falmouth Broadband Forum, Falmouth Historical Society, 55 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth. [public, in person, and Zoom] - Zoom registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUoc--trjMuH9FyQLX4CfhtDiDVSmLta6O4>
- February 14, 10:00 - 11:30 AM - Ms. Sohn meets with members of the Massachusetts Broadband Coalition, Auditorium of the Fairhaven Town Hall, 40 Center Street, Fairhaven. [MBC Members only, respindola@fairhaven-ma.gov]

About FalmouthNet, Inc.: FalmouthNet is a Massachusetts 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with an all-volunteer board and management. It was formed on October 15, 2020 to promote, plan and guide the financing, construction, marketing and operation of a reliable, affordable, locally directed, state-of-the-art Internet access network capable of serving all residents, businesses, non-profit and government entities in the town of Falmouth, Massachusetts for the benefit of the citizens of Falmouth. For more information visit: <https://falmouthnet.org>

About the Falmouth Broadband Municipal Light Plant: The Falmouth Broadband MLP was established by Falmouth Town Meeting in 2022 to create a municipal broadband internet utility under the Commonwealth's Municipal Light Plant structure (MGL Chapter 164). The inaugural board was elected in May 2023. For more information, visit: <https://falmouthbroadband.net>

About the American Association for Public Broadband: AAPB is A 501 (C)(6) non-profit organization that will build a diverse membership of public broadband networks from around the country and advocate in support of municipal broadband and local choice at federal, state and local levels. For more information, visit <https://aapb.us>

PRESS CONTACTS:

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- **American Association for Public Broadband:** Gigi Sohn, Executive Director, 202-253-0876, gsohn@aapb.us

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¹ *New Municipal Broadband Networks Skyrocket in Post-Pandemic America As Alternative To Private Monopoly Model*, by Sean Gonsalves, January 18, 2024 <http://tinyurl.com/gonsalves2024>