

Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council
Chair's Report
July 10, 2014

First, I want to thank everyone who participated in our Meet the Commuter Council session in Penn Station on Monday June 23. This was a great event for the LIRRCC, since it gave us the opportunity to speak to commuters and urge them to get prepared for a possible strike, a message that was not being heard even from the MTA and LIRR. Our impact went beyond the commuters that we met at the event, as media coverage that we received discussed the flyer that we handed out and our recommendations for commuters to prepare for a possible strike. Other media outlets picked up that story and so we got additional exposure. Also, the buttons that we produced have been popular and I've had a State elected official ask me for them so that he can hand them out.

We still need to push the LIRR and MTA to communicate with their riders about contingency plans in case of an LIRR strike. Our press release this week called upon the State to provide specific information in a number of areas. This was followed quickly by a reply from the MTA that they have provided or plan to provide all of the information that we recommended. The MTA's advertisements that began yesterday, however, fall far short of what needs to be done.

As you know, we had arranged to have LIRR President Patrick Nowakowski with us at today's meeting. Unfortunately, I am unavoidably unable to be at our meeting today, and we are seeking to reschedule the meeting between our Council and the LIRR President at a later time. Staff will be in touch to let members know when this meeting is rescheduled.

As you know, on Friday, May 30 I met with President Nowakowski at the LIRR offices in Jamaica. I've discussed with many of you the changed tone of our relationship with the LIRR and it will clearly take time for us to know where we stand under the Rail Road's new leadership. In our discussion I presented to President Nowakowski the issues that are important to the LIRRCC, as well as ways that the LIRRCC and the Rail Road have worked together in the past and our hopes for a good working relationship in the future. I put special emphasis on the continuing need to improve communication with the riders.

We've all been monitoring news reports in the labor dispute between the LIRR and the unions representing its workers. It's important for us not to give any indication that the LIRRCC is taking sides in this dispute, but that we want the parties to negotiate with each other and reach a settlement. Also, please be mindful that some of what is said and later reported in the media is strategic in nature and that news reports may not tell the whole story.

I hope that all who are interested can attend the briefing that we have been offered on the transit oriented development projects that are being planned by

Renaissance Downtowns, which is a major developer of these projects both in Nassau and Suffolk Counties and nationally. Our briefing is scheduled for 7:00 pm on July 14 in Renaissance Downtowns' Plainview offices. When we schedule these briefings, we aren't looking to endorse any project, but to gain information and point out elements of the planned developments that could be improved from the riders' point of view.