

**LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD COMMUTER COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2017**

A meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was convened at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 12, 2017, in the LIRR Transportation Services Conference Room, at 1 Penn Plaza, Penn Station, New York.

The following members were present:

Gerard P. Bringmann  
Mark Epstein  
Michael Godino

The following members participated in the meeting via phone:

Bryan Peranzo  
Larry Rubinstein

The following members were absent:

Sheila Carpenter  
Ira Greenberg  
Raymond Pagano

In addition, the following persons were present:

William Henderson	-PCAC Executive Director
Bradley Brashears	-PCAC Transportation Planner
Hector Garcia	-LIRR
Ryan Attard	-LIRR
Vanessa Local	-LIRR

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### ***Approval of Agenda and Minutes***

The agenda for the October 12, 2017 meeting was approved. The minutes of the July 13, 2017 meeting were approved.

### ***Chair's Report***

The Chair's Report is attached to these minutes.

### ***Board Report***

Mr. Henderson briefly discussed issues that had been raised at the September LIRR Committee meeting of the MTA Board.

### ***Staff Report***

Mr. Henderson said that there were few contacts from riders in the past two months, and that Angela Bellisio is leaving the PCAC to accept a position with the NYC Department of City Planning, focusing on integrating transit into the future development of the City.

### ***Member Reports***

Michael Godino stated that the announcements on the LIRR are terrible and that there need to be more and more timely announcements. Signs do not get the message to visually impaired community. In a recent incident on the Long Beach line there were no announcements although service was disrupted. Mr. Godino said that he had to take a guess about what was happening and make a decision on what he had to do to get service. Ultimately, he guessed correctly by going to the other platform to catch a train. Mark Epstein said that the visually impaired community is critical in raising issues that impact the LIRR.

Bryan Peranzo said that he did not have any local issues to discuss.

Gerry Bringmann stated that in Patchogue there is community issue connected with long dwell times in the station that cause crossing gates to be lowered. There was a situation with an ambulance that had to go around a lowered gate because the train could not be moved without receiving train orders. He said that this will cause a major problem at some point and that not all community issues are the usual problems with trains idling near residential areas.

Hector Garcia stated that the LIRR will be having a meeting with local officials to talk about these issues. There is an upcoming cutover of signals in December

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where there will be more trains turning at Patchogue to allow for this work to proceed.

### ***New Business***

Mr. Epstein asked about the LIRR's involvement with the Gateway project. Mr. Garcia responded that Amtrak is doing the work and that the LIRR's role is to minimize the impact on the commuters. Right now in West Side Yard, Amtrak has a future need for access for Gateway and the LIRR had to relocate a shop that allows an access tunnel to be built before development occurs at ground level. The LIRR is monitoring what Amtrak is doing.

Mr. Henderson said that there is an employee-only pilot to allow riders to use the e-Tix system at subway turnstiles. Mr. Garcia said that the LIRR's marketing people are involved with the pilot, but it is generally being managed outside of the LIRR.

Mr. Bringmann asked whether if credit cards are accepted on board system wide. Mr. Garcia said all equipment has been distributed to conductors and that he believes it is active.

Mark Epstein said that there has been discussion that federal tax reform could pose a threat to pre-tax commuter benefits and that the Council has written a letter to Long Island's Congress members reminding them of the importance of this issue for commuters.

### ***Old Business***

Mr. Garcia said that the reconstruction of the Hicksville station has been completed on the north platform and that the south platform will be finished soon. Contractors will be closing the station's central staircases and escalators in two to three weeks and riders who want to access the central portion of the platforms will have to use elevators.

Mr. Epstein asked where the Wyandanch station project stands. Mr. Garcia said that the award of the contract for building the station is imminent, but that before it can proceed there needs to be an agreement with the Town to use the Town-owned land as a site for the station. The station will be built between the current 7/11 store and the parking garage. He said that the LIRR has some renderings that he can share with the LIRRCC. Mr. Garcia said that the station will include a pedestrian overpass with elevators and that the plan is to complete it by August when the double track project will be completed.

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Mr. Epstein asked whether ticket machines will be placed inside or outside of the station. Mr. Garcia said that he did not know.

Mr. Peranzo said that he had recommended that the "next train" monitors at the Hicksville station be placed closer together, but that in seeing the station recently the monitors seem to be even farther apart. He also noted that having different colors on the monitor makes the information on it very difficult to read and that the old yellow on black color scheme was better. Mr. Garcia said that he will get back on to the Council on that issue.

Mr. Peranzo asked when the Hicksville waiting rooms will be finished and hoped that they will be usable before cold weather. Mr. Garcia said he will get back to him on the schedule. Mr. Peranzo said now there is only a footing for the waiting rooms.

Mr. Epstein asked about the Pinelawn station. Mr. Garcia responded that the current station will be demolished in the track construction. The LIRR is currently negotiating with the neighboring private cemetery to add a drop off area on the cemetery land.

Mr. Epstein stated that Ronkonkoma station is having parking problems. Mr. Garcia replied that he does not know what is causing the shortage.

Mr. Epstein asked about the status of Metro-North service to Penn Station. Mr. Henderson said that he has heard that there is preliminary design work being done in the Bronx, but that planners doing little with regard to Penn Station itself because of the other work being done there.

Mr. Garcia said the LIRR is working on the Wyandanch to Farmingdale portion of the second track for an August completion. The downside is that there will be lots of outages to allow them to complete it.

Mr. Epstein said there is problems with busing at Farmingdale. The buses get lost and taxis were overcharging. He said that bus drivers seemed to have no idea where they were going and taxis were taking advantage of the situation

Mr. Garcia said there were road closures which made the directions that drivers were provided inaccurate. He said that the LIRR might want to notify the Suffolk County taxi commission when there will be busing to guard against overcharging. Mr. Garcia said that the LIRR may have some leverage where they either lease space in parking lot to taxis or lease taxi offices, which is the case at some stations. Mr. Bringmann suggested that a poster be placed in stations to allow riders to contact the taxi commission to make price gouging complaints.

Mr. Garcia also stated that work in Harold Interlocking next weekend will result in reduced service and that there is also Babylon concrete tie work. There will also

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be two upcoming weekends where Brooklyn riders will have no service from Jamaica.

Mr. Garcia said the LIRR will be reaching out to promoters and sports teams to put together a calendar of events. This will allow the Rail Road to work around major events as much as possible.

Mr. Godino wanted to know if there is a calendar of events and work online. Mr. Garcia stated they are working on putting together this calendar, but there are challenges because of changing plans and last minute events.

### ***Adjournment***

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Henderson  
Executive Director