

METRO-NORTH RAILROAD COMMUTER COUNCIL
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10, 2016

A meeting of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC) was convened at 4:30 p.m. on November 10, 2016, at the Metro-North Offices – Graybar Building at 420 Lexington Avenue – New York, NY

The following members were present:

Orrin Getz
Randolph Glucksman

The following members attended via phone:

Francena Amparo
Richard Cataggio
Francis Corcoran
Rhonda Herman

The following member was absent:

Wilhelm Ronda

In addition, the following persons were present:

William Henderson	-Executive Director
Richard Schulman	-Concerned citizen

Chair's Report

Randolph Glucksman presented the Chair's report, which had previously been distributed to the members. He summarized several of the issues discussed in the report and asked if there were any questions on the report. The members had no questions on the report. Mr. Glucksman noted that former Metro-North Railroad President Peter Cannito is working as a consultant for NJ Transit to assist them in addressing problems at the agency. He said that he and Orrin Getz had attended a recent NJ Transit Board meeting and had heard issues beyond those brought to light after the recent collision at Hoboken Terminal. Mr. Glucksman noted that cancellations by NJ Transit are seriously affecting Metro-North's west of Hudson riders.

Mr. Glucksman asked whether there has been movement on securing a guest for the December PCAC meeting. Bill Henderson said that staff has had difficulty getting much

of a response from the MTA on the issue of public engagement and that Allen Zerkin, an author of an independent study on the MTA's public engagement practices, has agreed to speak at the meeting. Mr. Henderson said that the program for the PCAC meeting would be on the MTA's public engagement in any case, and that the MTA would be invited to participate in the meeting. He also said that staff and Andrew Albert is working on getting PCAC members access to the Second Avenue Subway in advance of its public opening.

Board Report

Mr. Henderson said that there is not a written Board report for the meeting, as Metro-North's current performance statistics only became available within the last day. He noted several items of interest within Metro-North's report to the MTA Board. Mr. Glucksman noted that the information included the expansion of Tappan Zee Express service. Mr. Henderson said that Saturday and Sunday service is being expanded and that the MTA is assuming the full cost of subsidies for UniTicket fares that include the Tappan Zee Express. He said that the expanded schedule would continue until State-sponsored bus service is implemented in connection with the New New York Bridge, which will replace the Tappan Zee Bridge.

Mr. Glucksman noted that the State-sponsored service that will replace the Tappan Zee Express in 2018 leaves something to be desired as currently planned. He said that staff had assisted him in a presentation of the travel time increases that riders would face as a result of eliminating stops in Tarrytown for connection to Metro-North's Hudson Line. He said that he wished that the schedule for the new service would have been made clear when he attended workshops on transportation improvements in conjunction with the new bridge.

Mr. Glucksman said that planners need to spend some time interviewing those who ride the Tappan Zee Express to see what their travel needs are before they send all buses on the new service to White Plains. Regardless of the schedule for the new service, traffic congestion could make connecting with Metro-North at White Plains even less advantageous for riders. Mr. Henderson asked whether there is any indication why planners intend for service to go to White Plains. Mr. Glucksman indicated that the responses he has heard reference traffic signal improvements that supposedly will make travel to White Plains more efficient. Mr. Henderson said that there has been highway and exit work done in Tarrytown in the last decade and that he is surprised that the new transit service does not take advantage of the facilities to maintain a Tarrytown stop.

Old Business

Mr. Getz reiterated that he and Mr. Glucksman had attended the NJ Transit Board meeting but that there was little information about the operational problems that affect West of Hudson riders. Mr. Henderson said that staff would work on getting delayed and

cancelled train information for the West of Hudson area and noted that while NJ Transit has incorporated some positive features in its Board meetings, it is generally less publicly transparent than the MTA. Mr. Getz said that he knows that there were meetings between Metro-North operations planning staff and Rockland County officials to address the high number of cancellations on the Pascack Valley Line. In particular, they were looking for alternatives to cancelling trains such as Train 1618. He noted that on that day Train 1620 had been cancelled and Train 1618 had made local stops rather than operating express.

New Business

Mr. Glucksman said that Metro-North should return to its practice of holding a Croton-Harmon facility open house, as they have in the past. These events were instrumental in cultivating the relationship between the riders and the Railroad. He said that a good time for these events is either the second or third weekend of October. Mr. Henderson said that he will find out whether Metro-North is considering resuming its open houses.

Mr. Getz noted that Rockland County is working on the issue of accessibility at the Suffern station, which is maintained by NJ Transit despite its location within New York State. He also said that Metro-North needs to work with NYSDOT at Spring Valley station to upgrade the station in anticipation of the Lower Hudson Link being put in place. The station needs a police presence, which could be provided through use of a police booth. These actions are important for Rockland County.

Mr. Glucksman commented that he worked with PCAC staff to analyze traffic on the Tappan Zee Express in preparation for discussions of the plan to run all service on the Lower Hudson Link to White Plains rather than Tarrytown.

Mr. Getz stated he is looking forward to meeting with Rockland County Executive Ed Day in December.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Henderson
Executive Director