



# Meeting Minutes of April 8, 2021

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A virtual meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was convened at 4:00 pm on Thursday, April 8, 2021 via Zoom.

## **Member Attendance**

Gerard P. Bringmann (Chair)	Present
Bryan Peranzo	Present
Marilyn Poterson	Present
Larry Rubinstein (Vice Chair)	Present

## **Staff Attendance**

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager)	Absent
Shaul Picker (Research Intern)	Present
Gav Mazurek (Research Intern)	Absent

## **Non-member Attendance**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>
Hector Garcia	LIRR
John McCarthy	MTA
Joseph O'Donnell	MTA
Christopher Greif	NYCTRC
Matthew Kessler	Concerned citizen
Debra Greif	Concerned citizen
Ron Troy	Concerned citizen

**Approval of Agenda for April 8, 2021 meeting.  
Approval of Minutes for February 11, 2021 meeting.**

**Chair's Report, attached**

*Hector Garcia, LIRR External Affairs*

*Service Changes/Summer Update:*

We are getting ready to gear up for summer service. We got a call last month from the city of Long Beach and met with Suffolk County and all the various transportation providers to get a sense of what they are seeing, expecting and preparing for. So far, they have been busier than normal, but people are not seeing them coming from the train. They are really concerned about traffic out there. 2019 was a record year for them, and they are expecting a 2019-level number of people heading out east. We will start our normal summer service in May. We are going to scale it back slightly – the consists won't be as long. We usually take cars from Oyster Bay and Port Jefferson, and we are going to try not to do that. By July, we will probably add more trains.

*M9s:*

We have accepted 80 cars. They were out of service last month for a week for a planned software upgrade to implement the load weighing for the app. They are trickling in slowly, and they will all be in by the end of next year.

*Penn Station Vendors:*

Apparently, they did sign a contract with the vendor to do carts. They will have two locations, one fixed, one moving. They have to submit insurance and other stuff before they actually start.

L. Daglian: Do you know what kind of vendors they are going to be?

H. Garcia: It will be the Hudson Group that will have the two kiosks at Penn. They are going to sell retail products like hot and cold beverages, beer, wine, alcohol, prepackaged foods, snacks, newspapers and other things typically sold at other newsstands and coffee concessions at other stations. One kiosk will go right in front of the Lost and Found, and the other one will be in front of where the ticket office used to be. The contract will be presented to the board in May as an information item.

L. Daglian: When do you expect them to start if the information item will go up in May?

H. Garcia: They have to get things approved, get permits. It is a matter of how quickly they can do the contracts. They need to apply for a state liquor authority license and need to get our code compliance to approve their plans. It is already being reviewed by our fire marshals. They have to submit their insurance. They have two weeks to open the first kiosk after they get everything approved.

L. Daglian: When they present the information item at the May meeting, could you ask them to go into some level of detail, and since there are no committee meetings, could they talk about when they are going to open them, and include the locations in the Board books?

H. Garcia: Real estate is under C&D, so they submit whatever will go into the book.

G. Bringmann: Did they say anything to you about Hunterspoint Avenue and outdated signage?

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H. Garcia: We are going to remove the sign.

G. Bringmann: You have signs at the top and bottom of the stairs with the departures, half of which no longer exist. The platform is damaged and is a tripping hazard.

H. Garcia: I sent it to engineering and they have to follow up on it. Due to everything going on at Penn Station, the Cannonball will leave from Hunterspoint this summer. They will have to spruce it up.

L. Daglian: Has there been any update on the accessibility project for Hunterspoint?

H. Garcia: There had been funding for it in the earlier Capital Program.

L. Daglian: I thought it had been put back as part of the current Capital Program.

H. Garcia: They will be awarding the contract for the design, and we are trying to fit in all the remaining railroad stations that need elevators. The ones that have Capital funding for construction will remain the priority, but we are going to add as many of the remaining stations into it. If bids come back better than expected, we could potentially do more stations than we anticipated.

G. Bringmann: I understand they shutdown work on the Third Track for a while after that incident where the contractor got electrocuted. Are they back up?

H. Garcia: This Saturday will have been a month with no work on the railroad or in that corridor. Either last night or this morning, after all these audits, we heard that work will begin again. There will be a shutdown on Saturday to install a new switch in Mineola. Next weekend, there will be an outage on the Long Beach Branch, and partially on the Far Rockaway Branch for a new switch. Messaging will go out tomorrow or Monday.

R. Troy: At East Northport station, there are two on platform displays-one is almost towards the almost east end, one is toward the extreme western end. If you are anyway in the middle you cannot read them. We need one in the middle, especially as they now have more information. Could we get an official request for that? In the plaza area, by the station building, when they rebuilt it, they put up lights shining up from sidewalk into people's faces. Can the bulbs be removed so they do not blind people? They serve no real purpose and are harmful.

**Action item: Ask about installing a display at East Northport and about sidewalk lighting.**

H. Garcia: We are almost ready to begin replacing the easternmost pedestrian overpass at Huntington within the next month or so. It has been closed for about a year. Once work begins in April it will take six months to do the work.

G. Bringmann: I have been getting some complaints about sloppy railroading of late. There was a missed connection Montauk train, and other issues too. One of the early trains at Babylon is supposed to open doors on both sides, but only opened doors on one side, stranding people on the platform. We had a situation at Mineola the other day when it said the train would arrive on

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Platform A, when it arrived on Platform B, and people did not have time to get to the other side. Can you ask whoever is in charge of this to tighten up their game?

### ***Approval of Agenda for April 8, 2021 meeting.***

### ***Approval of Minutes for February 11, 2021 meeting.***

*Presentation: John McCarthy, Chief of Staff, MTA Construction & Development*

G. Bringmann: What is the word with the AirTrain connection? I bring it up as I have been yelling for years that we need to get the CitiField station ADA accessible. We keep hearing that they are waiting on the AirTrain. We are putting elevators in smaller stations. We have Major League Baseball, a World Series not too long ago, the tennis center, the US Open. It is embarrassing. What are the prospects of getting that done?

J. McCarthy: It is a part of the AirTrain project. I am not aware of the status of that project.

H. Garcia: The Port Authority is the lead, and as soon as that project starts, we have the funding to do it. It is part of a bigger thing.

L. Daglian: The Record of Decision for the project that is imminent. There were some rule changes made by the FAA allowing funds to be used differently and options that are now permissible. There are a lot of people saying louder than they have before that there should be a consideration of a route different than selected. There had been a conversation among the chairs of the different councils at PCAC who agreed, and we put out a statement, that our preferred routing would either be an extension of the N or to have something to connect to Woodside rather than Mets-Willets Point so that people don't have to go backward on the Port Washington Branch and can have a connection to Jamaica.

C. Greif: Some of the advocate groups have been asking whether there will be new elevators at the new entrance at 33<sup>rd</sup> Street/7<sup>th</sup> as part of the work.

J. O'Donnell: An elevator will be installed as part of phase two of the work.

D. Greif: How do I get out now? Last time I came in, the guard told me the elevator was not working in the Hilton Corridor.

J. O'Donnell: I will find out for you what the status is of the other elevator.

D. Greif: We also need more signage. Some staff don't understand where to send people.

J. O'Donnell: As the work advances west, and then across, they do need to increase signage. I commute through Penn, so I can take a look later today to see some common-sense places where signage should be.

**Action item: Look into the need for more and improved signage at Penn Station.**

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S. Picker: Given that the M9A order has been substantially delayed, has the MTA considered taking advantage of newer FRA alternative crashworthiness performance standards, which took effect in January 2019, which would enable the LIRR to order lighter weight and higher performance European-style rolling stock, which would massively reduce costs by avoiding the need for customization, increase competition by opening up the U.S. railcar market to more manufacturers. The M9's being built now (factoring in the options) are costing \$43.6 million per 12-car set. A European trainset of equivalent length would cost just about \$24 million—a savings of almost 45%. Has this been looked into?

**Action item: Find out whether the MTA/LIRR have looked into taking advantage of newer FRA crashworthiness performance standards.**

H. Garcia: I am not aware of that stuff, but if you send it, we can take a look at it.

J. O'Donnell: As far as rolling stock goes, Hector would know more than me, and if he doesn't know about the 2019 guidance, we will definitely take a look at it and find out. As part of the Transformation and the new C&D, our folks work a lot closer now with the commuter railroads. We have integrated people for each of the agencies underneath us so it allows us more access.

R. Troy: Are they going to reopen and expand the whole corridor between Penn Station and Herald Square, regardless of the plan with the Empire Station Complex? How would we in diesel country make the transfer each way to get to Grand Central? In 1996, the LIRR took us on a tour of the tunnels and told us we would do a quick switch over the platform at Sunnyside. We know that has been cancelled. I asked the railroad officials back then if they would design new diesel trains to fit through the tunnels to Grand Central, and they said no. The railroad is now doing another order of dual mode bilevels and has a chance to get it right this time. We are talking a matter of inches.

**Action item: Find out about whether the LIRR is looking into ordering new diesel trains that can fit into the tunnels to Grand Central.**

J. O'Donnell: All lines will have service to Grand Central. It just is a matter of where the transfer will be.

L. Rubinstein: Is the demolition of the Penn Hotel going to affect the infrastructure going in?

J. O'Donnell: I would have to talk to our TOD folks about that.

L. Daglian: Gerry talked about moving the meetings to 4. I am not sure if we want to vote on that.

L. Rubinstein: If Gerry doesn't catch the train he currently gets now, he would have to wait close to ninety minutes for the next one.

**Vote taken, agreed to start meetings at 4PM going forward.**

C. Greif: We should have a moment of silence in honor of Edith Prentiss. We should be hearing in the next couple months about a memorial service for her.

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### **Adjourned**

#### **Action items:**

- Ask about installing a display at East Northport and about sidewalk lighting at the station.
- Find out the status of the elevator project at Penn Station.
- Find out whether the MTA/LIRR have looked into taking advantage of newer FRA crashworthiness performance standards.
- Find out about whether the LIRR is looking into ordering new diesel trains that can fit into the tunnels to Grand Central.

#### **Meeting recording: [Link](#)**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian  
Executive Director