

A virtual meeting of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC) was convened at 1:00 p.m. on May 20, 2021 remotely on Zoom.

Member Attendance

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| Randolph Glucksman (Chair) | Present |
| Orrin Getz (Vice Chair) | Present |
| Francena Amparo | Present |
| Richard Cataggio | Present |
| Francis T. Corcoran | Present |

Staff Attendance

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

Non-member Attendance

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Affiliation</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Walter Zullig | Concerned citizen |
| Peter Ramos | Metro-North Railroad |

***Approval of Agenda for May 20, 2021 meeting.
Approval of Minutes for April 15, 2021 meeting.***

Chair's and Board Report

R. Glucksman: I had a call this morning with Metro-North senior staff about increased running times, and it is due to a lot of work going on. They are looking to reduce it as projects wrap up.

L. Daglian: Does Metro-North generally change their timetable for the summer?

R. Glucksman: They historically changed them from standard time to daylight saving time in March/April and October. It became construction driven, and now it is ridership-driven. HudsonLink needs five weeks lead time to change their schedules.

Old Business

R. Glucksman: There was supposed to be a White Plains dedication ceremony, but there were some last-minute details someone wasn't happy with, so it got postponed.

L. Daglian: We have been working to advance the issue of people who have funds trapped in pre-tax transit benefit accounts. For the past year, we have been trying to raise the issue's

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profile and see if any regulatory mechanism could be put into place to allow people to access these funds. Senator Schumer is interested in pursuing this, and reached out to the IRS, which does not understand why this is a big issue. I have had several conversations with the Senator's staff and explained how this happened, and we have been documenting people's cases.

We also connected Len Resto of New Jersey Association of Rail Passengers, with a commuter who has done a lot of work on the issue and including developing draft language for regulatory fixes and are pursuing resolution on both sides of the Hudson. We were supposed to have a press conference last Monday at Merrick station on Long Island on this, but it looks like it will happen this coming Monday at 11:30.

We're excited that we have been given permission to hire. Bradley and I have interviews for an admin starting on Monday.

R. Glucksman: Does the executive committee get to choose the candidates?

L. Daglian: Bradley has advised me that in the past, the first round of interviews has been with staff, and for the second interview we bring in the executive committee. We also got permission to hire a Research and Communications Associate.

R. Glucksman: The LIRRCC got their first new member in three years.

L. Daglian: We also have a new vacancy as Sheila Carpenter from Suffolk left. I continue to follow up with Nassau and the Governor's appointments office to see if there is traction for this council. We have the LIRRCC's MTA Board vacancy, and the legislative session is ending soon. Gerry and I reached out to contacts in the Governor's office and the Senate, and this morning he was advised he has a Zoom interview with the Governor's appointments office on Monday. From Senator Comrie's office, I heard a flurry of appointments might come before the end of session.

R. Glucksman: Walter, when did you submit your papers to the state?

W. Zullig: January or February. I got one or two questions from the Governor's appointments office mid-April, which I answered, and I did not hear back.

L. Daglian: I had a conversation with Wilhelm Rhonda, who was recommended by the Bronx borough president, who has a number of personal issues and was hoping to withdraw his name from consideration. I asked him to fill out the paperwork as there will likely be a new borough president seated before anything happens. He is extremely knowledgeable.

There is a lot of happening with Penn Station Expansion. Penn South, as part of Gateway, would get eight more tracks. \$1.3 billion was approved in the budget for the project, and the MTA and the Governor's office are seeking support for it. Development to the east of Penn, which would take several blocks, is where there has been a lot of negative input from the community.

R. Glucksman: I raised the issue of train 49, which leaves Hoboken, goes to Middletown, and returns as an equipment train with Cathy Rinaldi, who said she would bring it up with NJ Transit.

New Business

R. Cataggio: I am on the Village of Woodbury board, and many hotel chains have been buying property by the Commons. There are rumors that the guy that owns Harriman train station-adjacent property might sell to a casino. Have you heard anything?

R. Glucksman: I have not. Orrin has pushed for a station at Woodbury Commons for some time.

O. Getz: It was originally planned by the Governor. The Port Jervis Line goes right past it.

R. Glucksman: Can you find out if it is still planned?

Action item: Find out the status of a project to add a station at Woodbury Commons

W. Zullig: In 2001, Metro-North negotiated a deal with Woodbury Commons. It ended when the Town of Woodbury said they would not allow it, fearing increased traffic.

B. Brashears: I did not find anything about Woodbury Commons in the Capital Program.

W. Zullig: Does anybody know if the MTA has an agreement with Amtrak to use the railroad between New Rochelle and Harold Interlocking? We should not give up on the objective of getting printed timetables back.

R. Glucksman: The website timetables site should look like the LIRR timetables they post on their website, meaning a complete timetable, with all fares, connections, and special instructions, and you could print it. For Metro-North, it is simply a schedule itself. It does not look very professional.

W. Zullig: It is very hard to read even when it is printed out because it is so small.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Daglian
Executive Director

Meeting recording: [link](#)