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

**Member Attendance**

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| Gerard P. Bringmann (Chair) | Present |
| Bryan Peranzo | Present |
| Marilyn Poterson | Present |
| Larry Rubinstein (Vice Chair)Christy Tolbert | PresentPresent |
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**Staff Attendance**

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| Lisa Daglian (Executive Director) | Present |
| Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager) | Present |
| Kara GurlJessica SpezioShaul Picker (Research Intern) | PresentPresentPresent |

**Non-member Attendance**

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| **Name** | **Affiliation** |
| Hector GarciaMatt KesslerChristopher Greif | LIRRConcerned citizenNYCTRC Member |
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| ***Approval of Agenda for November 4, 2021 meeting.******Approval of Minutes for October 14, 2021 meeting.*****Chair’s Report:** * Garden City still refuses to grant the necessary permits for certain Third Track work in their town, jeopardizing the current completion schedule. The major objection by Garden City is the installation of 90-foot poles along the right-of-way. It appears that it will take court action to get a resolution. There was a full-page story in Newsday last Sunday (10/31) regarding this issue.
* LIRR President Phil Eng recently announced that weekday ridership has finally cracked the 50% level of pre-pandemic ridership, which is a hopeful sign of recovery. However, with many firms embracing a hybrid work mode, there is still a very serious concern about getting ridership numbers up before the federal assistance money runs out.
* With LaGuardia AirTrain to Mets-Willets Point on hold, the future of full accessibility at the station is also up in the air. We are committed to asking for an elevator at Mets-Willets Point regardless of the future of the AirTrain project.
* Regarding our request for a “20/20” ticket (20 trips with a 20% discount from peak fares), MTA Chairman Janno Lieber has announced that the MTA Board is forming a committee that will meet over the next couple of months to discuss potential new ticket options that may be made available. Board Member Andrew Albert will be representing the PCAC on this committee. Janno has also indicated that Freedom Ticket may be among the options that the fare working group will consider, but has not committed to anything yet.
* Probably the most important development within the last month was the running of the first “official” test train into the new East Side Access station at Grand Central Terminal. I was privileged to ride that train with Governor Hochul and Congresswoman Maloney, as well as the MTA top brass and other dignitaries on Halloween morning. At a press conference held upon arrival at the terminal, Gov. Hochul spoke about the importance of funding our transportation infrastructure. Projects mentioned included Gateway, Penn Station Improvements, Metro-North Access to Penn Station, and reconsideration of the LaGuardia AirTrain (just not as last proposed).
* Yesterday, Governor Hochul announced plans for improving Penn Station that would not wait for the expansion project to the south that the former Governor prioritized. Instead, the plan to rebuild would open the station to a single level and move Penn "to the front of the line" to make "a Penn Station worthy of New Yorkers." It is slated to be a 4-5 year, $6-7 billion project. The Governor has said she will work with stakeholders for input, and we will reach out to request that PCAC be represented, since all of our riders have occasion to use Penn Station.

H. Garcia: There is track work scheduled for this weekend; they will be using school buses to shuttle service. Ridership is up to 55% of pre-pandemic levels. G. Bringmann: Fridays and Mondays have slightly lower ridership then Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. G. Bringmann: Anything new on mask mandates or compliance?H. Garcia: No new updates.L. Rubinstein: The online app that shows ridership seems inaccurate at times, is it in real time? H. Garcia: Yes. It is accurate. It measures in weight. It’ll say, for example, it’s 50% full, however people are not utilizing the middle seat in three seaters or one of the seats in the two seaters. L. Rubinstein: During peak and off-peak hours it seems as if they are only running six train cars. Why not run eight or 10 if the six are crowded?H. Garcia: We have the train cars ready and available if needed, however the need isn’t currently there right now. L. Rubinstein: I’ve noticed more of the ‘help point’ intercoms on the Bellmore/Babylon branch lines.H. Garcia: Yes, it’s the new standard as they remodel the stations. The newer stations have had them installed.L. Daglian: Who answers those calls?H. Garcia: During business hours they are answered by our call center. We also have a security office that answers them after 10 pm. G. Are there holiday train schedule adjustments? H. Garcia: We are adding extra trains for Thanksgiving.B. Perazno: Are they basing this schedule off of the 2019 schedule, since last year there was no parade? H. Garcia: It will be announced at the board meeting. I don’t know as of right now.H. Garcia: We will be running service to the new UBS Arena on November 19th, the night before the new Elmont Station opens, because they are having a charity event. There will be east-bound Hempstead branch trains stopping at Elmont. There will be some Huntington and Ronkonkoma trains stopping at Queens Village as well. G. Bringmann: When do you think the Elmont station will fully open?H. Garcia: If we go by the schedule, it should be next October 2022.M. Kessler: Do they still use the M3 equipment, or have they been retired? H. Garcia: Since the pandemic, we have shelved them, as we haven’t had a need to use them. They require some maintenance to upkeep and that can be expensive, so we try not to use them since they are not needed. S. Picker: When is the service plan for East Side Access going to be made available to the public?H. Garcia: I don’t have an exact date, however I’m guessing early next year as we are still 14 months out. C. Greif: I have used the access point intercom at Nostrand Avenue, and they do work and are helpful.L. Daglian: Can we ride the new test train?H. Garcia: Unfortunately, the signals and safety measures aren’t fully in place yet and for safety reasons we cannot allow that, however once that’s up-to-date we can put in a request for a train ride. H. Garcia: On Friday, there will be a press conference at the Carle Place station to commemorate the station that was completed that has new elevators and new platforms.G. Bringmann: Do the plans for Mets-Willets Point need to be revised due to what the city is doing there? We are going to continue to push for accessibility there.H. Garcia: They are building an overpass/boardwalk. Those plans can’t interfere with the plans we have. Whatever we are doing will have to tie into that work. L. Daglian: Sounds like a great project for the new mayor. CitiField, Arthur Ash, and Flushing Meadows would be great to do something as well and have the city pay for it.**Old Business:** G. Bringmann: We are trying to get our memberships up – we have been having issues with the Governor’s appointment office. We have Matt who was nominated by the Queens Borough office.L. Daglian: Well, he was recommended by Melinda Katz not Donovan Richards. Matt would have to reapply to the Borough President’s office since she’s no longer there.  **New Business:** L. Rubinstein: Do we have updated ID cards/ building passes? J. Spezio: We are working on updating all member ID cards and getting new cards for those who don’t have them. **Action items: None*****Adjourned*****Meeting recording:**  **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=689ebjTSnKA**The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.Respectfully submitted,Lisa DaglianExecutive Director |