



Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2023

Per Open Meeting Law requirements, an in person meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was convened in a publicly accessible location at 4:30 pm on Thursday January 12, 2023; the public and members unable to attend via Zoom.

Member Attendance

Gerard P. Bringmann (Chair)	Present – in person
Bryan Peranzo	Present – virtual/extraordinary circumstances
Larry Rubinstein (Vice-Chair)	Present – virtual/extraordinary circumstances
Christy Tolbert	Absent
Peter Gorry	Absent

Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Liam Blank	Present
Kara Gurl (Research & Comms. Associate)	Present
Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant)	Present
Shaul Picker (Research Intern)	Absent

Non-member Attendance

Name	Affiliation
Anabel Frias	External Affairs (LIRR)
Ron Troy	Concerned Citizen
Christopher Greif	NYCTRC Member
Stuart Desser	Concerned Citizen
Mindy Germain	Transit Solutions

***Not Approved- Agenda for January 12, 2023 meeting.
Not Approved- Minutes for November 10, 2022 meeting.
(Due to a lack of in-person quorum)***

Chair's Report:

- As you are aware, the opening of Grand Central Madison did not make the originally announced deadline of late December 2022, due to safety concerns raised by testing, which showed insufficient exhaust values when readings were taken. Everything else appears to be in order for the opening and we're anxiously awaiting news from the LIRR, as to when exactly that will be. In fact, the reason we scheduled our January meeting in Jamaica was in hopes of being able to take a ride on the shuttle to the new station.
- Service to Grand Central Madison will begin with approximately 3-4 weeks of shuttle service from Jamaica before the major schedule changes (& one seat rides) take effect. Once the new schedules have commenced, the LIRR/Metro North will offer a single ticket (with a transfer at GCM) leaving from stations on one railroad and arriving at a station on the other (such as Hicksville to White Plains).
- Following up on "non-diesel powered" service on the Oyster Bay branch, President Cathy Rinaldi has assured me that she has staff members investigating possible options, mostly likely a dual electric/battery powered train. However, there is nothing to announce at this time.
- I'm continuing to push for a formal policy regarding the battery/gas powered scooters on our trains and will be following up with the MTA (Pat Warren) prior to this month's Committee & Board Meetings.
- The PCAC is pushing the MTA to create a more robust campaign to get riders on both Commuter Rails, as well as buses & subways to wear masks. We are asking that the announcements & print materials say "masks are strongly recommended" for the duration of the "tri-demic". Please note: we are NOT asking for a mask mandate.

Executive Director/ Staff update:

Lisa summarized the Governor's list of priorities for 2023 announced at her State of the State Address, stating the Governor is committed to funding the MTA; supports congestion pricing; and announced light rail as the mode of choice for the Interborough Express. Lisa also highlighted housing and mental health as priorities for the Governor, including a \$250 million pot for affordable housing, some of which could be used for nearby transit improvements. Lisa mentioned that the Governor's State of the State is the beginning of budget talks in advance of her Executive Budget. Lisa explained legislation proposed through the Fix the MTA Package to fully fund the MTA, with some ideas but no specific plan, and legislation that would grant PCAC's MTA Board members voting seats. Lisa introduced Liam, PCAC's new Associate Director, who started in December. She also noted that we've posted and are awaiting resumes for our Planning and Advocacy Manager position.

Kara gave a social media update, stating the biggest topic has been the opening of East Side Access. There are a lot of questions on Twitter about the delay in opening. We also received an email in December from a rider who was specifically concerned about the new timetables and questioning whether there will be service cuts on the West Hempstead branch, which Hector addressed.

LIRR Updates:

Anabel Frias provided the following updates.

Ridership: We are relatively at the same place, with ridership between 60 to 70% of the pandemic ridership on different days. The biggest ridership days are during office weekdays, particularly between Tuesday and Thursday. Friday is lower, and weekends are much higher.

Penn Station Updates: Thanks everyone for their patience during the construction of the Penn Station concourse. Phase one started back in 2020, with substantial completion of the whole project expected by March of 2023.

East Side Access/Grand Central Madison: The latest news is that the system testing is still ongoing, and the opening date will be provided once testing is completed. Hopefully, we can open soon, and the idea is still to open with a shuttle service to Jamaica. The full final schedule will be released once an opening date is finalized.

Third Track/Station Improvements: The highlights at Floral Park are that the crews are installing emergency and maintenance access doors and stairs this month. They will start paving at Stewart Avenue, Second Avenue, Third Avenue, and Fourth Avenue (weather permitting). At Garden City and Garden City Park there is continuing snowmelt installation and rail installation. At Carle Place, there is an ongoing installation of snowmelt.

*For more details on station updates: [LIRR Expansion Project](#).

The LIRR will be making accessibility improvements at seven stations. The accessibility upgrades will include: Laurelton, Locust Manor and St. Albans. The upgrades will provide street and platform elevators, new sidewalks and curb ramps that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and all necessary signage. They are part of a seven-station package that also includes Massapequa Park station in Nassau County and Amityville, Copiague, and Lindenhurst stations in Suffolk County.

Larry and Gerry inquired about the signboard at the Bellmore station. They mentioned people tend to congregate at the base of the escalators. They used to have a signboard with train times. Someone moved the sign and put it facing the parking lot instead of the platform.

Anabel and Gerry discuss the Combo Ticket, stating that their understanding was that if you bought a regular off peak ticket on the LIRR, you could make it a Combo Ticket for an additional \$8 to go anywhere on Metro-North. Anabel confirmed that this is correct and it can be purchased once Grand Central Madison opens.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Discussion of LIRRCC goals and potential projects for 2023. Lisa, Bryan and Gerry discussed the requirements for filling the vacancies on the Council and their hope to get clarity on the Bike/ Ped member appointing mechanism as well. PCAC is also working on getting fully staffed and has listed the Planning and Advocacy manager opening. Another important goal is to have voting seats for our 3 Chairs, who currently sit on the MTA Board. Fare evasion was discussed, including how college students can't always afford the fares. LIRRCC would like to see if we can work on getting them a discount going forward.

Action items:

None

Adjourned

Meeting recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHA0FhASUo4>

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.
Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Daglian
Executive Director