

Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 24, 2013

Notables

The AACT Executive Board meeting will meet from 10 AM to Noon and the Membership meeting will meet from 1:00 PM to 3 PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month except when noted.

AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) website at www.bostonmpo.org; click on "Get Involved" then scroll down to "Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA." Links can be found there for the following items: agendas, upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MBTA and AACT, and the AACT bylaws, and ADA regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, and information on accessibility at the MBTA. This page includes the contact information for the AACT Coordinator.

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Interim Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator,

Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice); 617-973-7089 (TTY); 617-973-8855 (fax); AACT@ctps.org (email); or at c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 (mail).

The AACT meeting location is accessible to people with disabilities and is near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of the meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages other than English, and interpreters in American Sign Language and other languages. Please contact the MPO staff at 617.973.7100 (voice), 617.973.7089 (TTY), 617.973.8855 (fax), or publicinformation@ctps.org.

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state non-discrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, ADA, or other non-discrimination statute or regulation may, herself/himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the MPO (see above) or at www.bostonmpo.org.

Members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services should do so through the MBTA Marketing and Communications Department at 617-222-3200 or 800-392-6100, TTY 617-222-5146, Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM and Sat/Sun from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, or the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/.

Please sign in at all meetings.

Announcements are always welcome. Please be prepared to give as many details as possible: date, time, location, contact person, and phone number. A written notice is always appreciated.

The meeting opened at 1:03 A.M.

IC White opened the meeting by asking everyone to join in a moment of silence; in memory of those who lost their lives and the many who were injured at the Boston Marathon-2013.

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees:

Interim Chairman Jim White, Allen M. Karon, Penny Shaw, Nancy Miller, Margaret Crowdis, Ian Perrault, Mary Ann Murray, Tyler Terrasi, Richard F. Mahoney, Kathryn Piccard, Reggie Clark, Don Summerfield, Lindsay Yazzolino

Agencies: Kathy Devin, Massachusetts Office on Disability; Theresa Casey, Theadora Fisher, Executive Office of Health and Human Services Office; Lisa Weber, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

MBTA Staff: Melissa Dullea, Larry Haile, Carol Joyce-Harrington, William J. Grant, Mike Hulak, Frank Oglesby, Kelli Ahola, and Philip Balcom

Vendor Staff: Victor Herrera, Joint Venture of Thompson Transit; Jacquelyn J. Reynolds and Randy Hendrickson, Greater Lynn Senior Services; Kevin MacDonald, Veterans Transportation

Others: David Guardino and Julia Mickenberg, DEAF, Inc.; Judge Patrick King, Federally Appointed Monitor; and Chris Iwerks, Bertaux+Iwerks Architects

MPO Staff/Coordinator: Janie Guion and David Fargen

Approval Membership Meeting Minutes for February 27, 2013

The meeting minutes were approved with one abstention.

Chairman's Report

IC White stated the following:

- He shared his experience at the Boston Marathon, including his feelings about being there with emotions he had not had in twelve years on that day. He commented that a plan to

evacuate persons on THE RIDE should be in place in the event of future emergencies or disasters.

- He has spoken with Michael Lambert, MassDOT's Deputy Administrator of Transit/Special Assistant to the General Manager, about AACT hosting a meeting on emergency preparedness (like the Marathon bombing aftermath). AACT would invite the Boston Police, Transit Police, THE RIDE contractors and dispatchers, the Office for Transportation Access, the City of Boston Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and AACT Executive Board of Directors. The goal would be to decide exactly who would be responsible for helping THE RIDE customers to evacuate in the event of an emergency. He also gave thanks to all first responders for their work during the crisis.
- He attended the Passenger Assistance Training class at Greater Lynn Senior Services.
- He also attended the MBTA bus operator recertification class in Charlestown where he shared information with bus operators regarding the importance of logging in blocked bus stops to the "transit master." He noted many veteran operators refuse to comply but he sees an opportunity to encourage new hires to do so.

He asked for questions.

D. Summerfield also commended the MBTA Police and first responders. He said he still believes that the MBTA should not have the Stryker Chairs behind lock and key.

AACT Nominations for Executive Board of Directors Terms 2013-15

IC White opened the nominations for the AACT Board of Directors by reading the guidelines. He named the current nominees for Board of Directors: Ian Perrault, Beverly Ann Rock, Mary Ann Murray and Tyler Terrisa, and for Vice Chairman, Rick Morin and Chairman, James White.

**Marilyn MacNab still has not accepted her nomination; she will be notified again.*

He then asked for nominations for the Executive Board of Directors.

D. Summerfield nominated Lisa Weber to the Executive Board of Directors.

L. Weber stated that she will need to notify her Director at Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission before she can accept the nomination.

IC White stated that Ms. Weber will also need attendance verification to accept the nomination. She will be notified by the Coordinator of her current standing.

There were no other nominees for the Vice-Chairman or for the Chairman.

There were questions and comments presented.

K. Piccard asked if Ms. MacNab had accepted her nomination. She also wanted to know if she arrived before the meeting ended would she be eligible to then accept the nomination. She was not sure if Ms. MacNab wanted to run for office. She also asked if others walked in later in the meeting would they also be eligible to be nominated before the meeting ended?

IC White stated yes to both inquires as long as they are otherwise eligible.

MBTA Way Finding Report

Judge Patrick King, the independent monitor who was appointed by the Federal Court in the 2006 settlement agreement between the MBTA and the Boston Independent Living Center, was in attendance. He and Chris Iwerks of Bertaux+Iwerks Architects presented the results of the recently completed three-year study by

Bertaux+Iwerks Architects of signage at MBTA stations. Mr. Iwerks, an expert on wayfinding, has studied the MBTA system and has made recommendations for improving the MBTA's wayfinding program. His recommendations are intended to improve the ability of people to navigate through the MBTA system visually, by using Braille signage and by other methods.

He then took questions.

K Piccard stated that she is concerned that the international symbol of accessibility is going to be black instead of the current blue.

Judge P. King stated that the color for the symbol was reviewed by many groups of people and the discussion was quite spirited. After much discussion everyone agreed on black as the new color.

A. Karon asked that signage designate where consumers can locate a private carrier or regional transit authority at MBTA stations.

C. Iwerks stated that this would be a decision made by MBTA Bus Operations.

MA. Murray commented that arrows for public parking are not detailed enough.

C. Iwerks stated that Bus Operations will make the final decision.

D. Guardino is concerned that in stations with many buses, a particular bus location is not easy to find. He suggested that a large map be available for people to view and locate their bus route.

C. Iwerks explained that there are several large complicated stations that serve many bus routes. He noted that Dudley Square is up for renovation and that there will be noticeable changes.

K. Piccard asked if bus stop signage would be reflective in the dark, and if there will there be any Braille signage.

C. Iwerks commented that the MBTA has the option to use “retro reflect” material. The MBTA is looking at many other effective ways for communicating during the design process.

Judge P. King shared his email address *pking@jamsadr.com* if anyone needs to contact him.

IC White thanked Judge King and Chris Iwerks for sharing the results of the MBTA Wayfinding study and for their time.

Deputy Chief Kenneth Green, of the MBTA Transit Police

Department is the night-time Commander and is also in charge of Community Partnerships for the Department.

IC White commented that with all that has happened in the last week it is understandable that Deputy Chief Green was not available for today’s meeting.

MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)/Fixed Route Services

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, presented his report with no further updates (please see the attached). He also noted that he would not be in attendance at the May 22 meeting, but a member of the SWA staff will stand in for him.

He then took questions.

K. Piccard asked if there was data to show how the fare increase had affected those persons using the Transportation Access Pass. She also asked that he make a comparison to last year's data.

L. Haile stated that he will need to do research.

IC White asked about the closing of Government Center and how will the MBTA coordinate the shuttle service.

L. Haile stated the closing will be near the end of summer; he will get more details to share.

IC White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -THE RIDE Program and THE RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC)

Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director presented his report (see attached).

Stated the following:

- He thanked all the MBTA employees, vendors and their staff for their dedication and commitment for ensuring that every consumer was transported safely to their destination during the events of last week.
- He noted that Ms. M. Cole would not be attending today's meeting.

IC White commented that from his recent meeting with Ms. Dullea, he believed that Ms. Cole would be attending today's meeting.

F. Oglesby stated that a report of TREC activities is listed on THE RIDE Activity Report.

IC White commented that he has a complaint from a consumer about the TREC staff asking personal medical questions that made her very uneasy. The consumer informed Massachusetts Office on Disability. IC Whites stated that the questions went beyond TREC authority and suggested that Mr. Oglesby meet with the MBTA Legal Department to

discuss that consumer's concern and that the consumer meet with him.

MA. Murray asked if the information on THE RIDE Report was accurate since he had a comparison for the same years listed.

F. Oglesby apologized for the mistake and stated that the comparison should be for the year 2012.

Vendor Reports

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Jacquelyn Reynolds, MBTA Contract Relationship Manager, distributed her report.

She then asked for questions.

IC White asked if GLSS had experienced more consumers calling for THE RIDE service.

J. Reynolds stated that in the last few weeks there has been an increase in ridership.

IC White thanked Ms. Reynolds for his report.

The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation (JV)

Victor Herrera, General Manager for the Joint Venture, distributed his report and made the announcement that JV had rehired all the drivers who were dismissed in November.

He then asked for questions.

P. Shaw asked why as an add-on to THE RIDE she has to go past her neighborhood and go to Weymouth and then back into Boston to before she is dropped off.

V. Herrera stated that she should call him directly when that occurs.

IC White stated that in the past, drivers were trained to call dispatch for authorization if a consumer informs a driver that they are going near his or her home.

V. Herrera stated that drivers are obligated to make the call. He noted that he will reinforce the issue when he returns to the office.

IC White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

R. Clark stated that drivers arrive early to take you to your destination.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and added that passenger training classes will be held every Tuesday in May; in addition, the CPR training class will be held on May 6.

He then took questions.

R. Morin asked for an update from last month's problem with the increased rush hour pickups.

K. MacDonald explained that the problem still exists, especially if there is a sporting event. He said that he has made adjustments by adding more drivers.

R. Clark stated that drivers arrive early to take you to your destination.

K. MacDonald explained that when THE RIDE arrives at your door early you are under no obligation to come out before the time that you have requested. The driver should wait or another vehicle may be directed to your location.

IC White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

Mobility Priority List Update

Due to unforeseen circumstances Rick Morin was unable to make his presentation.

OPEN DISCUSSION

P. Shaw asked where you should a person stand when there are two bus stop signs; bus operators make it impossible to know where to stand.

L. Haile commented that the two signs indicate the bus zone and that the operator stops at the second sign.

D. Summerfield commented that when bus operators get to a stop they do not observe when a person with a mobility device or someone who is visually impaired is waiting; this could make boarding unsafe.

R. Morin recommended members visit the website for the Disability Rights Education Defense Fund <http://dredf.org>. He commented that there are seven Topic Guides on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) concerning transportation written through the perspective of persons with disabilities; it is also a guide to interpreting the ADA on many topics such as No-Shows, On-Time Performance, Origin to Destination Service in ADA and Eligibility for ADA Paratransit. The guide is written by persons with disabilities and used by both the transit and the disability communities.

M. Crowdis stated that she is very disappointed in the new spring bus schedule for Salem Routes 455 and 459 Loring Avenue. She commented that a bus leaves Vinnin Square heading to downtown Salem at 7:33 A.M. and the next bus is not scheduled to leave until 8:30 A.M (57 minutes later). She made a plea for the MBTA to schedule the buses to leave downtown Salem every 30 minutes at 10 minutes and 40 minutes past the hour. She would like to see this service operated in the same manner that Eastern Massachusetts Railway operated. She remarked that Aspen, Colorado, operates a free on-time bus service; she would like the MBTA to do the same.

M. Dullea stated they have been trying to improve the service on many of the routes; congestion today is not like it was twenty years ago. She stated that schedules need to reflect actual traffic conditions to be timelier and be more reliable in general. They have the same number of buses on the route; it's the traffic that makes the schedule. They have been looking into coordinating Routes 455/459.

MA. Murray is concerned about the Salem bus service cutback.

L. Haile stated that there are many reasons for service cuts; he stated it may have been the number of people taking the bus.

IC White commented that in a recent meeting with General Manager Beverly Scott, she commented that the MBTA will be doing individual analysis on every route counting the number of riders to determine the number of buses needed with an hour-to-hour count. He did not know the exact time this project would begin.

He also asked for an update on the Key Bus Route Improvement Program.

M. Dullea stated that contracts have been awarded and work should begin in the spring and summer.

R. Clark commented that he travels the Route 66 bus which is always crowded.

M. Dullea stated that the Key Bus Routes includes Route 66. She said that with these changes the MBTA is looking to improve reliability with less bunching of buses and to reduce overcrowding.

D. Summerfield commented that that the MBTA made a commitment in 2006 to not add banners to the buses due to peoples disabilities that may be cognitive, visual, or psychiatric among others. He understands that there may be a need due to special circumstances, especially after the act of violence that was committed on the City of Boston last week. He stated he has missed his bus not knowing it was there due to the banner flashing in the rear. He does believe there should be exceptions, but is concerned about the inconvenience.

M. Dullea said that the current campaign –We are One Boston or Boston Strong– is not up continually, the sign flashes intermittently, then the route number appears. She stated that she would do some research for more information.

K. Piccard shared her observation that on a THE RIDE van she has noticed that the on-board computer console is located on the dashboard and interferes with the driver seeing the mirror on the right.

M. Hulak noted her comments.

IC White thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and wished them safety and wellness. And he hoped that he would see them next month.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.