



Access Advisory Committee

to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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AACT Meeting Minutes for Wednesday,

April 22, 2008

NOTABLES

- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to the Chairman.
- Chairman Haynes recommends that AACT members needing information, or wanting to inquire about MBTA services, do so through the Customer Support Service Center at 617-222-3200 or the MBTA Web Site 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 would be appreciated.
- The Federal Transit Administration does not research local issues of parking nor the local Regional Transit Authority.

ATTENDANCE

Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, John Kane, April Maselli, Reggie Clark, WillieMae Pete, Barbara Garlington, Marilyn MacNab, Paul Barresi, Tammy Perrault, John Marshall, Ellen Frith, Jim Oliver, Sears Cummings, Deanne Sisco, Alice Fonseca, Crystal Jenkins, Christopher Emery, Bill McCarthy, John Kneeland, and Don Summerfield

MBTA Representatives

Michael Hulak, Kathy Cox, Mike Festa, Paul Strobis, Carol Joyce-Harrington, and Annette Holder Griffith

Vendor Representatives

Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc and YCN – Carlton Jones
Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. – Ron Airey
Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Lars Kiessling, and M. Claire Dipillo
Veteran Transportation LLC – John Tuttle and Derek Marcon

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

Chairman Haynes called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM

- He extended a welcome to all.
- Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.
- The motion to accept the meeting minutes was approved.

The nominations were opened for the AACT Board.

Executive Board

Linda Blair was nominated for the Executive Board. She was not present. Ms. Blair will be contacted concerning her nomination.

Vice-Chairman

None was presented.

Chairman

Ben Haynes was nominated as Chair and he accepted the nomination.

The nominations were closed and the election for new officers will take place at the May 27 meeting.

Chairman Haynes Update:

- He and John Kane attended the MBTA implementation of the newly signed State Bus Stop Parking bill, which was held in Cambridge and offered comments. The new bill increases fines to \$100.00 for persons who illegally park at bus stops. The State, City and Transit Police officers are authorized to write tickets in any municipalities and have vehicles towed. THE RIDE vehicles are not exempt. THE RIDE drivers must find a safe area to park than escort their passenger door-to-door.
- He is concerned that drivers continue to be lackadaisical when applying their training skills towards the consumer. The vendors' management staff should address these issues with better training and driver hiring.
- Vendors were cautioned that members and other consumers would be encouraged to file complaints if they continue to be improperly assisted by driver(s).
- The ADA states in Section 37.173 that all employees in transportation including private transportation providers be trained to proficiency.

He then asked for questions.

M. MacNab: There seems to be some discrepancies with the nomination rule #4. Are you saying that people who have not yet arrived, or have been delayed will be eligible to be nominated up to May 8?

Chairman Haynes: There will be no more nominations from the floor. I will review this and return after the break with a correction.

J. Oliver: How will the candidates get their five signatures for the nomination? No one has asked me for my support.

Chairman Haynes: Nomination papers were given to those who asked for them. Many have asked for support and received signatures.

M. MacNab: Where are the nomination papers?

Chairman Haynes: The coordinator has nomination papers for anyone who wants a copy.

J. Oliver: Is it a requirement by the AACT Bylaws that members get five signatures?

Chairman Haynes: All nominees who wish to accept the nomination must get five signatures from eligible members of AACT if they wish to run for the Board, Vice-Chair or Chair.

Presentation by Margaret Griffin, Civil Rights Officer, Region 1, Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights

Ms. Griffin stated that she is the officer for the New England states and is in charge of three areas. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is one. She gave an overview on ADA and accessibility issues that describe compliance with the Federal and State Laws.

A copy on compact disk (CD) or hard copy of the presentation can be obtained by contacting the AACT Coordinator by phone at 617-973-7507 or by e-mail at AACT@ctps.org

She then asked for questions.

D. Summerfield: A bus stop is a block away from a Green Line stop. Is this considered a transfer point and is a stop announcement required? Should the Bus Operator announce, "Transfer here for the Green Line?"

P. Griffin: An announcement is required when two or more transit modes or two or more routes in the same transit mode actually touch or intersect.

J. Marshall: There have been lots of concerns about accessible space for wheelchairs and scooters on buses. How can an individual or a group of persons with disabilities bring a complaint to amend the ADA regulations that would give mandatory priority seating to persons with disabilities?

P. Griffin: Work with a committee like AACT, and check the signage on vehicles.

M. MacNab: I am concerned that the MBTA is using the public service announcements for matters other than for the reminders to the consumer. This issue has been brought to their attention on several occasions. The advertising can be very annoying and very

obnoxious to the riding public. I have asked about who makes the decision, and what are the criteria.

P. Griffin: I have not encountered this issue. You are welcome to file a complaint with my office.

P. Barresi: You mentioned your findings for booking rides with other paratransit agencies. Can you give us your findings for booking on MBTA's THE RIDE Program? Someone from the MBTA should feel free to add any comments.

P. Griffin: The FTA has not done a review of THE RIDE.

Chairman Haynes: Thank you Ms. Griffin, I would like to invite you back in the future.

P. Griffin: As you can see there is a lot of history here. Thank you. I'd like that.

Chairman Haynes: Addressing the concern raised by M. MacNab. Nominations can be made between parties at any time. The April meeting is the last day to nominate candidates at a meeting. The correct date to have papers to the Coordinator at CTPS is May 8 and not May 15.

Kathy Cox, Manager, MBTA System-Wide Access (SWA) and Fixed Route Services Report

Ms. Cox distributed her written report and commented on the implementation of the new Bus Stop bill that took effect on April 7. The new bill will ensure that any illegally parked vehicle at any bus stop in communities throughout the Commonwealth will pay a \$100 fine (report attached).

She then asked for questions.

D. Summerfield: I am concerned that the low-floor car on Green Line trains is not consistently positioned at either the front or back of the train. It used to always be the front car on the Lechmere Line. It is easier for persons with disabilities to know which of the cars entering the station is going to be the low floor car.

K. Cox: I checked with the Deputy Director for Subway Operations. I was informed that it is not possible to always have the low-floor car in one consistent position due to the way the trains operate. Often the train does not loop around when it gets to the end station; instead the operator gets out of what was the front car and operates the train from what was the rear car. So while the low-floor car may have been the front car on an inbound trip; it is now the rear car on an outbound trip. However, I will check on this again for you.

Paul Strobis, Assistant Manager for the Office for Transportation Access (OTA) THE RIDE

He reported that OTA staff made service observations of THE RIDE drivers for several days. When drivers are not performing to training standards complaints are filed against them. He also appealed to the AACT Board and members to call his office at 617-222-5123 if they witness drivers not performing to the level expected. His office will file a service complaint on individual's behalf. He commented that consumer complaints are the best record of problems and first step to fixing them.

He requested the help of the AACT members to get the word out to those persons in the Natick-Framingham area to contact THE RIDE concerning their eligibility records. The new Metro West Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) has agreed to accept the records from the MBTA. The MBTA would like to have a smooth transition of the records to the new MWRTA. Due to the privacy laws authorization to transfer records requires the signature of the consumer.

He stated that a few years ago OTA had an access study done by an outside consultant using the "on-hold times" as one criterion for evaluation. THE RIDE vendors generally have an "on-hold time" of less than two minutes. There has never been a standard before; this is now added to THE RIDE's new contract. There is now a two minute "on-hold time" applied and there are now penalties involved for non-compliance.

He then asked for questions.

J. Oliver: Will you be requesting individuals to sign-off on turning over records to the new vendor.

P. Strobis: This request is only for the Natick and Framingham area people. There will be no more MBTA service in that area.

E. Frith: I have witnessed THE RIDE vehicles illegally parked in bus stops especially if the driver is new. Would you clarify this issue? If we wanted to report this, whom should we call?

P. Strobis: You are correct. THE RIDE vehicles are not to park at any bus stop. Please contact OTA at 617-222-5123 with the property number from the vehicle, date and time of day and we will file a service complaint on your behalf.

D. Sisco: Is there a maximum time that you should be on THE RIDE vehicle once you have been picked up?

P. Strobis: In the manual we state that you may be on the vehicle one-hour per service zone. We would not ask you be on a vehicle more than one-hour per zone.

D. Sisco: What should I do if a violation of this occurs again?

Chairman Haynes: Are you clear on the term “per zone”?

D. Sisco: No, I am not.

Chairman Haynes: You are in the Joint Venture zone. The sixty minutes would apply coming to Boston. If you were going to Waltham this would be two zones.

C. J-Harrington: Consumers may also file complaints with the MBTA Customer Support Services Center (CSSC) at 617-222-3200.

E. Frith: I have called the 222-3200 number and have been on hold for a long time. Many times the people are not clear. Maybe this office can have the 2 minutes wait limit. When you speak with the people at CSSC they are not very clear.

P. Strobis: OTA does not have any jurisdiction over CSSC. I will pass on the information to the director.

B. Haynes: If I recall, all THE RIDE complaints are to be called into OTA and the vendor only.

C. J-Harrington: This not a requirement for anyone, but an option. Complaints may also be filed online at THERIDE@mbta.com.

Open Discussion

E. Frith: I would like some feedback on how to deal with merchants, mostly in Cambridge and Somerville but other communities as well who refuse to see that the bus stop in front of their business is not personal parking for their customers. I am attacked, harassed and the police are called.

R. Clark: I think you should take your case to the legislators on Beacon Hill.

Chairman Haynes: I do not expect persons with disabilities or seniors to confront anyone who parks illegally. If someone who is operating a business confronts you aggressively, approaches you, or assaults, you have every right to file charges and have them respond in court. I am willing to forward the photos, plate numbers, time/date, and physical descriptions of the violators to the Governor's office.

New Business: None was presented.

Announcements:

J. Oliver: On Monday, May 11, 2009 at 4 PM the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority will be holding a meeting at 150 Waverly in Framingham.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM.