



Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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Wednesday, March 23, 2011

AACT Meeting Minutes

NOTABLES

- Nominations for March 23:

Vice-Chairman	Ben Haynes	(Accept)
Chair	Ellen M. Frith	(Accept)
	James White	(Declined)

Previous nominations from February 23

Chairman	Philip Beaulieu	(Accept)
Vice-Chairman	James White	(Accept)
Board of Directors		
	Mary Ann Murray	(Accept)
	Beverly Rock	(Accept)
	Reggie Clark	(Accept)
	Donnie Summerfield	(Declined)

**See additional text on page(s) 10-11*

- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman Haynes by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice), 617-973-7089 (TTY), 617-973-8855 (fax), or at AACT@ctps.org (e-mail).
- Chairman Haynes recommends that members wanting to inquire about MBTA services, concerns, compliments, or complaints regarding THE RIDE or Fixed Route Services

should provide the following Who? What? When? Where? And Why? Do so through the MBTA Customer Communications and Marketing Department at 617-222-3200 (voice), 800-392-6100 (voice, toll-free), 617-222-5146 (TTY), or the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/

- AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at www.bostonmpo.org. 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, the AACT brochure, and ADA regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access, and the AACT Coordinator.
- The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meetings are conducted in accessible locations, and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages other than English. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation, please contact the MPO at (617) 973-7100 (voice), (617) 973-8855 (fax), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or publicinformation@bostonmpo.org (e-mail).
- The MPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related 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, or military service. Any person who believes herself/himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI or related statutes or regulations may herself/himself, or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than thirty calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred.

- 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.

ATTENDANCE

Members

Ben Haynes, Lillian Haynes, Richard Mahoney, Cheryl Ravalli, Paul Barresi, Angela Manerson, Kathryn Piccard, Tammy Perrault, James White, Reggie Clark, John Cappuccio, Barbara Garlington, MaryAnn Murray, Phil Beaulieu, Chuks Ezewuzie, Georgia Feronberg, Beverly Rock, Marilyn MacNab, and Ellen Frith

MassDOT - MBTA Representatives

John Lewis, Frank Oglesby, Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, and Kathy Cox

Vendor Representatives

Kevin MacDonald and Jon Cristina – Veterans Transportation LLC
M. Claire DiPillo – Joint Venture of Thompson Transit Inc. and YCN
John Soucy and Cindy Rodriguez– Greater Lynn Senior Services

Other Representatives

Kathy Devin–Massachusetts Office on Disability
Sharon Harrison–Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/ Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

MEETING

Chairman Haynes called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

- Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of the AACT Meeting Minutes

- The AACT minutes from the February 23 meeting were approved with one abstention.

Chairman's Report (No written report was submitted)

Chairman Haynes was the featured speaker and he addressed the following issues:

- Complaints
 - the legal status between allegations of safety and civil rights violations
 - legal procedures between state and federal laws
 - legal access to public information
 - legal right to file allegations at agency, state and federal levels
 - you are not limited to filing complaints against
 - cautioned against filing frivolous complaints
 - all issues are not complaints
 - responses to complaints should be completed in ten days
- A failure to categorizing complaint
 - Safety
 - Mass State General Law
 - MBTA Policy
 - Civil Rights
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Transportation Policy

- Your right to public records law
 - requested information is free when it benefit others
- The disregard for the purpose of THE RIDE Program
 - It is not a personal chauffeured limo
 - It is federally funded

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: The process you just mentioned for review might include amending THE RIDE Guide to provide more information to consumers and provide other resources for finding information. Consumers could also be given information about places to file complaints and not just the MBTA. There could be a cross-training for those who process complaints.

Chairman Haynes: A portion of the meeting held this morning with OTA was to discuss some of the issues you just raised. Such as how to find the specific sections of the law which refer to making requests and complaint filing? I will attempt to do research within the next month to publish a list of where services can be found.

M. MacNab: On March 15 the new legislation that was regarding a stronger complaint process became effective when signed by President Obama. These are federal guidelines, federally funded, so please include this information.

Chairman Haynes: I shall definitely seek all available information on avenues of access that you have as a public transportation user.

The Chairman's update was accepted as presented and one abstention.

Open Discussion

A. Manerson: Is there a number on this building? THE RIDE driver stated he could not find this building.

Chairman Haynes: Yes, there is a number on the Stuart and Charles Street entrances. The number is 8-10 Park Plaza.

C. Ezewuzie: I'm concerned with THE RIDE transfer system. What is the maximum length of time you may be required to wait at the transfer point? I arrive at the transfer point and have to wait one hour for a ten-minute ride. Why not a direct drop-off? Can the driver have discretion?

Chairman Haynes: The method is designed to accommodate the greatest number of people in the shortest amount of time. The drivers cannot have that discretion; the system needs to run on an orderly basis. I recommend you speak with someone from your vendor's Operations or Planning Department.

C. Ezewuzie: If drivers cannot carry a cellphone how do they reach the dispatcher in an emergency?

Chairman Haynes: This is policy developed by the administration and therefore is not challengeable in this meeting. Drivers are trained to by-pass the system in the event of an emergency to reach dispatch.

C. Ezewuzie: When the driver is more than thirty minutes late he is required to give you a late card that will entitle you to a free ride. Is there some way that the dispatcher can give you instant credit the same day when the driver arrives over 30 minutes late? In many cases the dispatcher knows the driver is late. Why can't the driver credit you for your guest? Why go through the process of filing the late card? In many instances the drivers do not have the late cards.

Chairman Haynes: Record-keeping is an important part of any system. The administrative process needs to run with checks and balances to ensure that all claims are valid. You may contact OTA or the vendor to get an explanation of their administrative process.

K. Piccard: A request to have the late refund credited to one's account seems only reasonable. This could be easily done electronically. The potential glitch would be that the driver may record the pick-up before arriving at the location and that would leave some people without a refund. Many people don't know about the late card refund and others don't bother to file. This would eliminate staff time in processing late cards. This would be my

consideration. I don't see why the software can't be adjusted automatically to record a refund. I think that would be terrific.

Chairman Haynes: We have the MBTA staff from Operations, OTA and the three vendors present. I hope they have heard Mr. Ezewuzie's comments and will follow-up on making the software compatible. I know that OTA is present and all three vendors and someone from MBTA Operations have heard your discussion.

J. White: The vendors are not responsible for sending the refund for late pickups. There needs to be checks and balances.

M. MacNab: What is the number of bags you can take on THE RIDE? Are companions and guests allowed to also have shopping bags on board?

M. Hulak: In the old guide it was three shopping bags. In the newer guide you are allowed "a reasonable number." What may be reasonable to you may or may not be to someone else. There are times when supervisors are called due to a person having a large number of bags. The consumer is then reminded that they are really pushing the limit.

Chairman Haynes: For a person who shops once a month the three bags may not be a reasonable limit. Both the companion and personal care attendant (PCA) can also have bags and be assisted by the driver.

M. MacNab: My understanding of the law is that a driver is to only help the consumer with an ID number. It seems the drivers are going beyond what the law says assisting the PCA and a guest. This extra "assisting" delays other pick-ups. I would suggest research into this area.

K. Piccard: One solution is that the consumer can inform the dispatcher when making reservations for THE RIDE that they will be having lots of bags and request a van. They should also be asked to use a collapsible cart.

K. Starks: I have several complaints regarding THE RIDE service.

Chairman Haynes: We don't take complaints during the meeting. If you have filed a complaint we are willing to help you resolve it. Please address your complaint to the vendor or the MBTA. You are welcome to raise an issue of concern.

Chairman Haynes: The number of persons traveling with a person with a disability has been addressed many times. **According to the American with Disabilities Act and can be found in THE RIDE** guide, you may travel with as many as ten people as long as they can be accommodated. The fact that someone wants to limit the number of persons traveling with someone with a disability can only be affected if there is no room on the van. As long as there can be accommodated no one will be excluded.

Kathy Cox, MBTA Manager for Fixed Route Services and System-Wide Accessibility (report attached)

She reported the following:

- Green Line three-car service has expanded during peak hours on the B and D branches; and three-car trains are running for the first time on the E Line, also, during peak hours.
- Bus Recertification Training Program Phase Two (ADA Refresher class) at the Charlestown Bus Garage is underway Monday – Friday (no holidays) at approximately 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm. Phase I eight-hour classes will continue to be held monthly.

She then asked for questions.

J. White: I attended a Phase I class. I would like to commend you on how well it was done. I have noticed that the drivers on the Route 32 still lack the ability to know how to operate the “transit master” or know its function. Does the Phase Two training include instructing the operators to use the “transit master” when a bus stop is blocked?

Should a memo be sent out to operators reminding them the function of the “transit master”?

K. Cox: A large section of Phase Two focuses on the “transit master.” I should mention that the training area for Phase Two is compact and class size is limited to a maximum of six students and one observer. A portion of the Phase Two training is conducted with bus simulators which take up a significant amount of space.

R. Mahoney: How long is the Phase Two training?

K. Cox: There are about 2,000 operators in Phase Two; training is done five days a week one-day for two hours and will go on for a year. Contact Robin Howard if you would like to attend to make your travel arrangements from Sullivan Station.

C. Ezewuzie: When the bus stops are blocked by illegally parked vehicles the operator is forced to go beyond the stop. When you are visually impaired the operator will pass you by and there is nothing you can do when they are forced to stop further away. What enforcement is being done to make sure vehicles are not in the bus stop?

K. Cox: Unfortunately, this is an ongoing challenge with the transit, the local police and other police departments. Ticketing is sporadically enforced. Anything you can do to help by calling your town or city officials to help increase enforcement would be greatly appreciated. I would think that cities and towns would want to enforce this law as they get to keep and use the funds raised from the issuance of the \$100.00 tickets. I will report your concerns to Operations.

J. White: The City of Cambridge has a unique way of preventing vehicles from obstructing bus stops. The Cambridge has extended the sidewalks (in certain locations) to prevent vehicles from illegally parking at bus stops. This also gives the bus a platform and prevents illegal parking. Do you think this is something that could work here?

K. Cox: Yes, but it is up to the cities and towns to allow extended sidewalks. It could be done in theory.

Chairman Haynes: Thank you Ms. Cox, for your report.

Frank Oglesby, MBTA Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations – The Office of Transportation Access (OTA), THE RIDE (reports attached)

He reported that no information was received since his report was submitted.

He then asked for questions.

K. Piccard: I would like to see a cost-benefit analysis of the different transfer points. Has one ever been done before?

K. MacDonald: The best time to arrive at the transfer point is always the same time as the other vendor. The carriers do have what is called a direct transfer, in which a vendor would go into another service area if the town is bordering their service area.

J. White: Is there a rule about the time between pick-up and requested time of drop-off? Should this time be more than sixty minutes?

F. Oglesby: That's what we aim for; it is not always possible.

K. Piccard: The rule is that they must to be at your destination for a minimum of one hour before a scheduled departure if it is with the same vendor. Several years ago AACT and OTA agreed on a change for people traveling to a destination where they would be for less than an hour. This agreement was created with the previous management. The new modification gave you the option to book a return trip after you had arrived at your destination. This is no longer being implemented. AACT should have a copy of that correspondence. I hope that this change can be reinstated. It is inconvenient to stay some place for two hours when you have only ten minutes of business to conduct.

F. Oglesby: I will do research and report back next month.

M. Murray: Why is the trip from Lynn into Boston two-hours long? This happens continuously with trips into Boston.

J. Soucy: A trip into Boston should be ninety minutes depending on the traffic. A two-hour trip is too long.

C. Ezewuzie: What is the rule for a trip from Peabody to Somerville? THE RIDE will arrive at 8 AM for an 11 AM drop-off.

K. MacDonald: There are three components that go into planning a trip. You have the load time, travel time and the service window. This helps us share rides with other people. The two-hour rule is an old rule which pre-dates computers.

Chairman Haynes: Thank you Mr. Oglesby, for your report.

****Nominations text continued:***

Chairman Haynes: Have all of the nominations been recorded?

J. Guion: Yes, they have all been recorded.

Chairman Haynes: At this time, there being no other nominations, nominations for this month are now closed. Final nominations will take place at the next AACT meeting April 27. There will be no further nominations after that time. Please be aware that in order to nominate, vote, or run for office in AACT you must have attended two of the regular meetings out of the last four meetings prior to the election. The month of May being the election will not count.

He then asked for questions.

E. Frith: If you run for Chair, Vice-Chair, or Secretary/Clerk and you do not get that position you are not then able to be part of the Board of Directors? My understanding is that the Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary/Clerk is separate as far as being nominated and then voted in has part of the Board of Directors?

Chairman Haynes: In order to serve on the AACT Board as a voting Board member you must run for Chair, Vice-Chair, or Secretary/Clerk.

E. Frith: If you run for Chair, Vice-chair, or Secretary/clerk then you cannot run for the Board of Directors?

Chairman Haynes: If you want to run for or be nominated for more than one position, you can be nominated, but before the election you must select which position you wish to run for and delete the other.

E. Frith: Is that affirmative? If you are running for Chair, Vice-chair, or Secretary/clerk and you are not selected then you are not able to be on the Board of Directors?

Chairman Haynes: That is correct.

E. Frith: Is there a place where I can look and see what that standard is and compare that to some other Boards?

Chairman Haynes: You are asking the right people, those who are at this table. If you read the AACT Bylaws it will explain the idea and what the issue of running for office means and how it is to be carried out.

E. Frith: To change the bylaws, would it be the Board that would make the change? Would this include the Chair, Vice-chair, or Secretary/clerk; is that correct?

Chairman Haynes: The board has the authority to recommend changes to the bylaws.

Meeting adjourned at 2:44 pm.

