

Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

Board of Directors:

Chairman - James F. White

Vice Chairman - Rick E. Morin

Executive Board

Mary Ann Murray

Ian Perrault

Beverly Ann Rock

Lisa Weber

Notables

The AACT Executive Board will meet from 10 AM to noon and the Membership meeting will be conducted 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 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.

Meeting opened at 1:05 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

AACT Member Attendees:

Board of Directors, Alan M. Karon, Kathryn Piccard, Don Summerfield, Audrey Armand, Angela Manerson, Reggie Clark, Deanne Sisco, Theadora Fisher, Human Services Transportation; and Robert Dias, Mass Office on Disability

Interested Parties:

Tyler Terrassi and Lori Maika

MBTA Staff: Larry Haile

MPO Staff:

Pam Wolfe, Maureen Kelly, and Matt Archer

Staff error:

Meeting Minutes Corrections: After further review of the April 23, 2014 meeting minutes an error was found on page 5, line 15: February 26 and March 26, 2013 should appear as February 26, and March 26, 2014.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman White requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes for April 23, 2014. The motion was carried with three abstentions.

Chairman's Report

The Chair stated the following:

- He attended Passenger Assistance Training at the Joint Venture and the MBTA bus operators Recertification Training class.
- He commented on his experience with THE RIDE no-show policy: without authorization from dispatch, drivers do not have the authority to “no-show” a consumer. Briefly, he stated that the AACT Board had worked closely with the Office for Transportation Access to endorse the new “No-Show” policy, making sure that the consumer is treated fairly and that drivers do not misuse their authority.

He then asked for questions or comments:

D. Summerfield stated that he had a couple of misfortunes with his Transit Access Pass (TAP); he was not aware that the MBTA deactivated the TAP once the customer gets THE RIDE Charlie Card. *Chairman White* noted that he would seek an answer.

*Dr. Beverly A. Scott, MBTA General Manager
and MassDOT Rail and Transit Administrator,*

spoke to the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) members and discussed a broad range of topics of interest to the membership, including projects and initiatives the MBTA will be undertaking in the coming year. She alerted AACT that the members will be asked to participate.

She discussed the following:

- While most MBTA fares are set to increase by five percent on July 1, the fare for THE RIDE paratransit service will remain at \$3.00 a trip and \$5.00 for premium non-ADA trips, which are $\frac{3}{4}$ miles outside the ADA-mandated service area or trips booked for later the same day.
- The MBTA will be addressing the issue of means testing for THE RIDE and developing a recommendation to give to the MassDOT Board of Directors. She encouraged AACT members to be involved with that issue.
- She asked for AACT's involvement in the development of the MBTA's Accessible Transportation Plan, an 18-month long system-wide review to determine what it would take to make the MBTA system fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Chris Hart, who brings his technical skills and knowledge, is working with the MBTA to work on this project.
- For the new transit vehicle procurements the MBTA wants to ensure that accessibility features are "baked into" vehicle

procurements rather than an “add-on.”

- MassDOT Board of Directors recently approved the purchase of 40 new buses, which are expected to go into service by February 2015.
- MassDOT Board also awarded a contract to CAF USA, Inc. for 24 new Green Line trains that will support the Green Line Extension project and help improve service reliability on the Green Line system as a whole.
- The MBTA is accepting proposals for the construction of new Orange Line and Red Line subway cars.
- The MBTA’s developing recommendations to the MassDOT Board for the elimination of cash fare handling on buses and the creation of a transit pass for university and college students.
- South Coastal Rail (Fall River) will be addressed at the June 18 MassDOT Board of Directors meeting with recommendations to move the project to the next phase.
- The latest purchase of THE RIDE vans are in full safety compliance with the installed lap belt seatbelts. *M. Hulak* was asked to give further details and noted that THE RIDE customer would have better seating choice while being transported; this will work well for customers whose disabilities are aggravated by the use of a shoulder harness. *M. Lambert* noted that in an effort to

save money the MBTA does procurements across the Commonwealth; a technical committee is brought in to review the specifications which helps balance the needs of the MBTA, the Regional Transit Authorities, the Councils on Aging, and others.

- Kelios Commuter Rail will be the new commuter rail contractor as of July 1st.

She then asked for questions and comments

Chairman White commented that Dr. Scott testified on Capitol Hill before Congress. He asked her to explain how the impact would affect the MBTA if funding were denied. *Dr. Scott* said that the good news is that the feedback is positive and that there are no proposals to reduce funding.

R. Clark is concerned that not enough buses are in service during off-peak and lunch time. *Dr. Scott* noted that she is also concerned since there are so many factors in play; they are working to make it better.

K. Piccard commented that as the oldest transit system in the nation, a good argument can be made that the MBTA should receive extra support from the federal government compared to other transit systems. The MBTA should be commended for not seeking any exemption due to the age of stations. She noted that once the ADA was passed, the MBTA put together a list of key stations and began making stations accessible. *Dr. Scott* explained that the

Commonwealth's strength is that it works well with local and state governments.

D. Summerfield commended Dr. Scott on her leadership and said that she is a wonderful addition at the MBTA. *Dr. Scott* thanked him for the very kind words.

Chairman White asked about the Boston Public Schools' (BPS) new policy that will force students, the disabled, seniors and the general public to travel on the local buses. *Dr. Scott* commented that her staff is working on the issue and that they are in contact with the BPS.

K. Piccard asked about transportation for students with special needs. *MA Murray* explained special transportation is arranged with the school.

MBTA Reports

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

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, distributed his report and added the following.

- June 17 - Phase One Bus Operator Training will be held at the Charlestown Garage. He noted that it is open to the public.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) - THE RIDE Program

Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director, submitted the OTA reports and gave a follow-up to a question from last month's meeting.

He stated the following:

- Regarding a question posed by Kathryn Piccard at the April meeting, on the “no eating and drinking” policy for THE RIDE, and that eating and drinking on fixed route service is allowed. F. Oglesby also reported that Karen Burns of Bus Operations stated that they would prefer no eating on any MBTA vehicles, but it is much harder to enforce on fixed route.
- He also noted that THE RIDE as a “no eating policy” due to the vehicles' enclosed space. Furthermore, he stated that there are people with chemical sensitivity and that “no eating/drinking” is easier to regulate on THE RIDE.

K. Piccard noted that it just is not fair that she is not able to even drink water when she sees others in stations eating and drinking. *F.*

Oglesby noted that he could find no federal regulation that would prohibit such a policy. She also commented that THE RIDE drivers often eat their lunch in the vehicles. *K. MacDonald* noted this would be a violation unless they are on a lunch break.

D. Hawksworth noted that the policy is working against people who

have medical issues. *F. Oglesby* stated that persons with medical conditions should have this noted in their file. *Chairman White* added that all drivers are trained to recognize the signs of a person who may be in medical distress.

A. Manerson asked about the process for updating the consumer profile. *M. Hulak* stated that any reservationist can take information that needs to be updated or you can contact OTA directly.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Oglesby for his report.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Jacquelyn Reynolds, MBTA Contract Relationship Manager, distributed her report. She then asked for questions.

D. Hawksworth commented that he was disconnected several times and was criticized by the reservationist for his comment on this. *J. Reynolds* stated that she would need to review the tapes.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and announced the dates of the Passenger Assistance Training classes. He then asked for questions.

D. Sisco asked about THE RIDE and Veterans taxi policy for cellular phone usage. *K. MacDonald* commented that taxi drivers are not allowed to use cellular phones while transporting THE RIDE

passengers. He also explained that he had met companywide with all Veterans taxi drivers to discuss the policy of THE RIDE.

A. Manerson commented on the recent problem with vehicles giving door-to-door service in Downtown Crossing. *Chairman White* remarked that the problem was due to overzealous police in the area but was quickly solved with the help of Mike Hulak.

D. Hawkesworth commented that drivers are very impatient when they arrive late; THE RIDE policy is unfair; and that the consumer is criticized. *K. MacDonald* stated that from the time of the vehicle's arrival you are allowed five minutes to get in the vehicle.

Chairman White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

National Express and the Joint Venture

Claire DiPillo, General Manager, distributed her report and answered questions.

A Consumer commented that she gets the nightly call for the next day THE RIDE service and often needs to renegotiate her times. She stated that she is often told that she will be assessed a fee to change the time. *C. DiPillo* explained how the negotiation process works. *M. Hulak* stated that often the consumers are confused on the difference between negotiation and the actual cancellation.

Chairman White thanked Ms. DiPillo for here report.

Open Discussion

Chairman White commented that he would like to have that same type of cooperation with MassPort for parking THE RIDE vehicles at Logan Airport so drivers have a dedicated parking area for their vehicles while they go inside to locate their passenger.

Announcements

- June workshops presented by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Gubernatorial Forum at the Boston Public Library
- June 25 MPO staff presentation at the next AACT meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:05PM.