

**Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority**

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AACT Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 27, 2013

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 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.

Meeting opened at 1:03 PM

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees:

Interim Chairman Jim White, Allen M. Karon, Nancy J. Miller, Ian Perrault, Beverly Ann Rock, Mary Ann Murray, Tyler Terrsai, Richard Mahoney, Kathryn Piccard, Reggie Clark, Cynthia Shaughnessy, Merrian L. Williams, Barbara Garlington, Angela Manerson, Marilyn MacNab, Diviniah Payne, and Rick Morin

Agencies:

Kathy Devin Massachusetts Office on Disability; Theresa Casey and Theadora Fisher, Executive Office of Health and Human Services;

Lisa Weber, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

MBTA Staff:

Deputy Chief Green, 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, Greater Lynn Senior Services; Kevin MacDonald, Veterans Transportation; and Marilyn Cole, Innovative Paradigm, Inc.

MPO Staff:

Janie Guion and Pam Wolfe

IC White recognized and thanked the MPO staff intern Daniel Amstuz who has assisted with AACT meetings for the last two months.

Approval Membership Meeting Minutes for December 19, 2012

The meeting minutes were approved with one abstention.

Chairman's Report

IC White stated the following:

On March 6 he attended a meeting with Ms. Dullea, Phil Balcom, and Rick Morin. He requested the meeting to

discuss a lack of communication and misinterpretation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MBTA and AACT.

He addressed the issue of the Board of Directors not being invited to the December 2012 opening of THE RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC); however, they were given a tour in late January.

He discussed the need for a representative from Innovative Paradigm, Inc. (IP) to attend AACT meetings and address issues.

He was informed of complaints of unhappy consumers concerning their TREC visit by the Director of the Massachusetts Office on Disability.

He asked that OTA look into vendors' excessive use of trip add-ons and trips that go beyond 90 minutes as they may possibly violate the Americans with Disability Act. He asked that there be an analysis to see if more accidents happen when drivers are given add-ons that increase trips over 90 minutes. He also asked that this information become part of THE RIDE monthly report.

He stated that the outcome of the meeting was good and that he was heard. It was also agreed that a representative from TREC would attend the AACT meetings.

K. MacDonald of Veterans Transportation (VT) stated that his staff is busy working on the very issue being disputed. He commented that they are constantly monitoring production and that they research the trip possibility before doing add-ons.

IC White asked if the drivers' union contract would prevent supervisors from helping when drivers fall behind while transporting an add-on.

K. MacDonald stated the MBTA contract overrules the drivers' union contract.

M. Hulak stated that he had spoken with Ms. Dullea about IC White's concerns and she would like to meet with him.

K. Piccard stated that the IC makes decisions without consulting the membership (we are an advisory group) and makes requests of OTA and the vendors; she sees this as inappropriate.

IC White stated that he consults with the AACT Board of Directors on issues and if he sees a violation of the Memorandum of Understanding that he has a right to be proactive without discussing anything with the membership. He also informed the membership that he would be attending the MassDOT Finance Committee meeting with a position statement on last year's fare increase to the

disability community. He noted that the letter was supported by the AACT Board of Directors; he read the letter.

K. Piccard made a motion that the membership should endorse the letter addressed to Dr. Beverly Scott and Jonathan Davis. The motion was seconded. A spirited discussion followed and the following points were made:

M. MacNab commented that the House Bill does not address paratransit issues; she believes the letter is in agreement with the bill as it stands. She also commented that a rally supporting more funding will take place tomorrow here at 10 Park Plaza, in this conference room.

R. Morin disagreed with her comments and noted the House Bill specifically addresses THE RIDE.

IC White presented the motion and took the vote. The motion passed. The vote was as follows: 12-in favor, 3-opposed, 0-abstentions

He also informed members that Dr. Beverly Scott, MBTA General Manager, was unable to join us today due to another commitment. He stated that she will be with AACT for the June 26 meeting.

He introduced the new AACT Brochure and distributed it at the meeting.

He gave a recognized Ms. Carol-Joyce Harrington, Assistant Manager for Administration for the Office for Transportation Access, for coordinating the efforts to give AACT a link to THE RIDE's Accessibility page at www.MBTA.com. Thank you!

Innovative Paradigm, Inc.

Marilyn Cole, Manager of THE RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC)

gave an update on the progress of the Center and answered questions that were brought to her attention about the common area, elevator, signage, and parking facility. She shared photos of the areas in question. (Copies of color photos are available on request) She then took questions.

A. Manerson asked if customers could make their own arrangements for THE RIDE to get to their appointments.

M. Cole stated that you could if you wished to; her staff will inform the vendor that the trip is a no fare.

M. MacNab asked if there is signage in the parking lot that references THE RIDE and if there was a waiting area for you to wait after you have completed your appointment.

M. Cole stated that the building management will not allow signage and the building has a huge waiting area and café in the building.

K. Piccard commented that a customer waited in the cold after her appointment and wasn't aware that she could remain inside. She asked Ms. Cole to remind the customers where they should wait for THE RIDE.

M. Cole stated no one should wait outside; her office is in constant contact with the vendor should a problem arise. She stated that her staff does a very good job directing the customers.

IC White asked how they addressed consumers who have gone beyond the twenty-one day waiting period for response for THE RIDE eligibility.

M. Cole stated that her office gives an extension when someone is close to losing their eligibility. She also said that no one goes past twenty-one days any more.

N. Miller asked how many people have been denied THE RIDE service and how many have been attributed to the new eligibility program.

M. Cole stated that currently about one to two percent of the people who apply are not eligible. She said that they look at people as not being eligible as opposed to denied; these people have been able to demonstrate that they have the physical and cognitive ability to board, disembark vehicles and get to and from transit stops. She noted that it is a thorough process that ends with their healthcare provider who agrees with their assessment.

R. Morin asked if the TREC staff were now taking photos of people.

M. Cole stated yes, but it's an issue that should be addressed by the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access.

IC White thanked Ms. Cole for answering questions and taking the time to participate in the meeting.

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 Teresa, and for Vice Chairman, Rick Morin and Chairman, James White.

He then asked for nominations for the Executive Board of Directors, Vice-Chairman or Chairman. No nominees were presented.

The nominations were then closed until April 24, 2013.

MBTA Transit Police

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.

He reported that he has spoken with the Lieutenant regarding 10 Park Plaza; it has often been a problem spot with illegally parked vehicles. The area continues to be monitored.

He then answered questions.

MA Murray asked if the Bus Stop Blocked report was getting longer or were people parking in the exact same spots.

Deputy Chief Green stated that he would do research.

N. Miller asked why the attacked bus operator on the Route 16 did not have a camera-equipped bus.

Deputy Chief Green stated that many buses do not have cameras. The MBTA is working on installing cameras in all buses.

R. Clark stated that more needs to be done to protect the bus operators from criminal assaults.

Deputy Chief Green explained that officers are now riding buses especially buses where there have been problems.

K. Piccard commented that camera-equipped buses should be used for late night service. She asked who would be responsible for making that decision.

Deputy Chief Green stated that he would pass on her concern.

IC White commented that the assault bill pending is not detailed enough. He would like to see more language added to the bill that would be more inclusive of both the public and MBTA workers that are victims of an assault on the bus.

IC White thanked Deputy Chief Green for his report.

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

Larry Haile, SWA Coordinator, presented his report and added the following information about filing complaints regarding the lack of professional courtesy with the MBTA Customer Support Services Center at 617-222-3200. He asked that members report that they have an accessibility-related complaint: state where boarded, the date, the time, the destination, the route number, the operator description, and a brief description of what took place. He stated that a reference number will be given for use in following up on the complaint.

He then took questions.

IC White asked if a complaint that is labeled as an accessibility issue is raised to a higher level of urgency.

L. Haile stated that a copy of an accessibility-related complaint is forwarded to SWA; and that issues that are not accessibility related go through the regular channels.

A Consumer asked why the operators don't do more to help passengers with priority seating.

L. Haile stated that operators will help when a passengers requests their assistance.

IC White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

MBTA Office for Transportation Access -THE RIDE Program

Mike Hulak, Manager, in for Frank Oglesby, Deputy Director, presented THE RIDE report.

He stated the following :

He thanked all THE RIDE vendors for their spectacular work getting everyone home safely throughout this winter season; he stated that it has been a very challenging time for everyone.

He stated that THE RIDE Eligibility stats can be found on the back of the monthly activity report

He asked that consumers be respectful of others on the vehicle by making sure they travel with a reasonable amount of grocery bags or up to three pieces of luggage; the driver will assist. He stated the drivers can no longer assist with items like microwaves; TV's, tables, and chairs. He explained that these types of objects are a very serious safety hazard to other consumers and to the driver.

He then took questions.

K. Piccard asked that the language on the weight of the luggage be more detailed. She asked if using a collapsible cart is permissible.

M. Hulak stated that they are working on new language for luggage and that each piece should weigh no more than forty pounds. He stated collapsible carts may be a safety hazard; it may not be easy to

safely secure them. He also explained that is an issue that has to be discussed further with AACT.

IC White thanked Mr. Hulak for his report.

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

Victor Herrera, General Manager, distributed his report and made no further updates.

D. Payne said that when she calls to locate THE RIDE the person on the line becomes rude and abrasive.

V. Herrera suggested that she file a complaint with his office. He also asked that she call the reservationist for assistance with locating THE RIDE due to the dispatchers being very busy.

M. Hulak explained that the reservationists and dispatchers are crossed-trained; they have the same information on their computer screens. He also recommended that consumers use the automated telephone system to avoid going through the dispatch or the reservationist.

IC White thanked Mr. Herrera for his report.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager, distributed his report and announced the dates of Passenger Assistance Training (PAT) classes for the next several weeks.

B. Garlington asked if the PAT classes are open to anyone.

K. MacDonald stated that classes are open and that transportation is free.

IC White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his report.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Jacquelyn Reynolds, MBTA Contract Relationship Manager, distributed her report and announced that the PAT classes were listed on her report.

She then asked for questions.

N. Miller asked if it is true that there are no more direct trips to the Lahey Clinic into Burlington. She was told that there would be a transfer at Oak Grove.

J. Reynolds stated that Burlington is not a boarding town and that they can only do direct trips into boarding towns.

M. Dullea stated in the new contract they are looking at ways to make Burlington a direct route. Not having direct service to the Lahey Clinic has been an issue with many.

MA Murray commented that the reservationists are still not informing callers about their account balance.

IC White thanked Ms. Reynolds for her report.

Open Discussion

A. Manerson asked about being charged an extra dollar for same-day service.

M. Hulak stated that it is a premium fare which took effect in October of 2012.

B. Garlington commented that when she gets on the bus there is no respect for senior or elderly persons who are boarding; operators don't help with seating and your life is put in danger when the driver takes off before you are seated.

IC White commented that operators are trained not to move the bus until the elderly, disabled, or anyone who may need extra time to find a seat does so. He also suggested that the bus operator be reported to the Customer Communication Center at 617-222-3200 with the following information: the time of day, bus route, badge # displayed on electronic board, and also the direction of the bus.

A. Manerson stated that the staff in the Customer Communication Center speaks much too fast; she would like for them to be more patient and show some courtesy.

R. Morin stated that there will be a rally located in this same room tomorrow from 1PM to 3 PM sponsored by Massachusetts Senior Action Council and Boston Center Independent Living concerning THE RIDE.

R. Clark announced that he was featured in an exhibit earlier this year at 10 Park Plaza sponsored by the Massachusetts Association for the Blind Community Services. He asked that members contact them for copies at 617-738-5110.

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

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.