

Summary Minutes MARC Advisory Council Meeting
Thursday May 21, 2009, 4:30 P.M.
Hall of the States, Room 238
444 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001-1512

Attendees:

MARC Advisory Council:

Andrea Richardson, Brunswick – Absent
Carol Oberdorfer, Brunswick – Present
Chikwe Njoku, Penn & Camden – Absent
Christopher Field, Penn – Present
David Frederick, Brunswick - Present
Hameed Ahmed, Camden – Absent
Josh Friedman, Camden – Present
Juan Calvo, Penn – Absent
Laurence Gross, Brunswick – Present
Lynda Clarke, Penn – Absent – Excused-Work
Makeda Scott – Penn – Absent
Mark Dysart, Brunswick - Present
Rafael Guroian, Penn & Camden – Present
Scott Minos, Brunswick – Present
Steve Chan, Penn – Present

Staff:

John Hovatter – MTA Director of MARC Train & Commuter Bus Services
Jim Knighton - MTA Director of External Affairs
Heidi Tarleton – Budget Manager htarleton@mtamaryland.com 410-767-3747
Tanya Wojtulewicz – Senior Financial Analyst twojtulewicz@mtamaryland.com 410-767-3734

Guests:

Miraim Schoenbaum

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 4:33 PM by Chairman Rafi Guroian.

Membership and Member Involvement - We discussed council membership and a drive for new council members. Jim Knighton noted that the current member's terms expired on May 1st. Jim reviewed the by-laws, and it was determined that any current members may continue their membership. The current council lacks reverse commuters (those who commute from Washington DC into Baltimore and sites in Maryland), as well as disability advocates. We also need more council members who ride the Camden line.

MRAC Marketing - Discussions were also held regarding how we should market ourselves as a council.

Meetings with other Riders Advisory Councils - Rafi Guroian also reported that the equivalent organizations to MRAC for Virginia Railway Express and the Long Island Railroad/Metro North would like to attend MRAC council meetings.

MTA Budget - Heidi Tarleton and Tanya Wojtulewicz from the MTA Budget Office reported on the budget situation. There are currently no planned changes in service. A modification to the length of the train sets may be considered. The slight increase in the actual dollar allocation - \$14 Million for this year – may be enough to cover the increasing contract costs. As a frame of reference, this is a \$14 Million dollar increase in an MTA budget of roughly \$599 Million, which equates to a 2.3% increase. The MARC train system is allocated about \$100 Million of this \$599 Million budget.

New Passenger Cars - The new passenger cars that will be delivered in the next year should allow 70% to 80% of the current standees on the Penn Line to get seats.

Cash Ticket Sales - It was noted that the conductors are selling quite a few cash fare tickets on the train.

Ticket Vending Machines - The ticket vending machine sales are also good, and are showing a 5% to 10% increase each week.

Diesel Fuel Purchases - For the Camden and Brunswick Lines, the diesel locomotives are being refueled using CSX-purchased fuel. CSX buys this fuel in bulk using long term contracts. This allows the MTA to buy diesel fuel at a lower price than anywhere else in Maryland.

Labor Contracts - The contracts for train conductors are going out for bid. In the event the contract changes to a new company, the employees will be the same, as they will have first claim when filling positions with the new employer.

Camden & Brunswick Lines - John Hovatter reported that the CSX engineers and the mechanical repairs done by CSX have been quite good. The CSX dispatching has not been quite as impressive.

Penn Line - John reported that he is trying to get a seventh train set on the Penn Line. We should also be able to park trains overnight at Martins in the near future. Martins will also be able to service Penn Line trains.

Smoking - Discussions were held regarding smoking on the train platforms.

MARC Riders Advisory Council – 35 Year Vision – Identifying the Right Track - Rafi Guroian gave his presentation, which included descriptions and coverage of the rail systems that service Southern California, Chicago, New England, Philadelphia-New York, and Maryland-DC-Virginia. This presentation graphically displayed the long-term possibilities that sound strategic planning can provide.

Next Meeting - The next meeting of the MARC Riders Advisory Council will be Thursday June 18, 2009.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM Thursday May 21, 2009.