

WMATA RIDERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2006

Introduction

Dennis Jaffe, Chairman of the Riders' Advisory Council (RAC), called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

Chairman Jaffe welcomed everyone to the meeting and proceeded to address items listed on the agenda.

Public Comment

Chairman Jaffe opened the floor to receive public comment.

Bill Orleans from Greenbelt, MD recommended that the SmarTrip card have the capability to be used as a credit card. He suggested that the card extend a line of credit to customers based on the frequency of use.

Nancy Iacomini stated that she was not in favor of having an "open-ended" SmarTrip card that gives customers an advance. She stated that she would be in favor of Metro adopting the Dulles Toll Road "Smart Tag" technology.

Sheila Willard, Chair of the National Capitol Chapter of the Older Women's League, informed the RAC that her organization was having a symposium on April 6, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at Sumner's Grove entitled "Maintaining Independence: The Role of Public Transportation As We Age". She invited RAC members and members of the public to attend.

Review of Minutes

Chairman Jaffe asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 1, 2006 RAC meeting. Denise Brown pointed out that the minutes were incorrectly dated for February 1, 2006. Chairman Jaffe stated that the minutes would be corrected to reflect the date of March 1, 2006. Charles Metcalf moved to accept the minutes as amended. Don Padou seconded the motion. Chairman Jaffe took a vote on the motion. The majority of members voted to approve the minutes as amended with two abstentions.

Dialogue with WMATA Staff

Chairman Jaffe introduced P. Takis Salpeas, WMATA's Deputy General Manager for Planning, Development, Engineering and Construction to entertain questions from the RAC.

Don Padou asked Mr. Salpeas if WMATA had any projects underway to improve lighting in Metrorail stations. Mr. Salpeas stated that WMATA's Interim General Manager Dan Tangherlini had established a task force team to address the issue of lighting in stations. Stephen Cerny added that the topic of increased lighting in stations was addressed at the RAC Metrorail Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Cerny noted that at the aforementioned meeting, Mr. Salpeas stated that an average of six Metrorail stations are overhauled each year. This renovation included making provisions for better lighting.

Susan Holland stated that she had received complaints about lighting at the Fort Totten station and asked if it was one of the six stations scheduled for renovation in 2006. Mr. Salpeas stated that he did not believe that Fort Totten was slated for renovation, but would investigate further.

Patrick "Pat" Sheehan asked if truncated domes would be installed in all Metrorail stations with center platforms. Mr. Salpeas stated that his department would conduct a survey to determine how many stations with center platforms did not have truncated domes and would take action to install truncated domes at those stations when they were due for rehabilitation. Mr. Sheehan also stated that WMATA's E&D Committee was advocating for WMATA to install redundant elevators at all new and key stations. He asked if it was necessary for this issue to be implemented in WMATA's Standard Operating Procedures. Mr. Salpeas informed Mr. Sheehan that WMATA's design criteria had been updated to include the requirement to have redundant elevators installed at all new and rehabilitated stations. Mr. Salpeas stated that he would provide copies of the design criteria to the RAC.

Charles Metcalf asked why the sales kiosk at the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail station was not being used. Mr. Salpeas stated that the kiosk was built for Virginia Rail Express (VRE) scheduled to be in operation on July 1, 2006. Mr. Metcalf then asked how difficult it was to re-engineer space at Metrorail stations to create public access to restrooms. Chairman Jaffe interjected, stating that WMATA policy indicates that restrooms at Metrorail stations are open to the public, but must be opened by the station manager. He stated that it seemed as if station managers were not aware of the policy. Mr. Metcalf asked what improvements would be made in anticipation of the new Washington Nationals baseball stadium. Mr. Salpeas stated that \$20 million had been budgeted to make improvements to the Navy Yard Metrorail station in anticipation of the new station. He stated that these improvements would include the addition of fare gates and the extension of the mezzanine.

Michael Snyder stated that there had been previous discussion about WMATA installing portable restrooms in Metrorail stations. He asked if this project was still underway and if so, suggested that WMATA use the portable restrooms to provide additional advertising. Mr. Salpeas stated that so far, the Huntington Metrorail station was the only station where the portable restroom was installed.

RAC Members' Absences

Chairman Jaffe informed the RAC that At-Large member Manel Lacorte, citing constant scheduling conflicts, had submitted his resignation from the RAC. Chairman Jaffe stated that he had contacted Mr. Lacorte on several occasions to inquire whether or not he would be able to attend the RAC's meetings. Chairman Jaffe stated that Mr. Lacorte was very responsive and expressed his regret for not being able to attend the meetings due to other obligations and ultimately decided to resign from the RAC because of these obligations.

Additionally, Chairman Jaffe stated that he tried unsuccessfully several times to contact RAC member Lataya Young to inquire if she would be attending the RAC's meetings and to encourage her to submit her financial disclosure form. Chairman Jaffe stated that Ms. Young had missed three consecutive RAC monthly meetings in addition to the RAC's initial orientation meeting. Chairman Jaffe stated that he called Ms. Young four times, sent six emails and a letter via standard mail in an attempt to determine if Ms. Young was still interested in serving on the RAC. Chairman Jaffe stated that WMATA staff contacted Ms. Young after the RAC's orientation meeting and she informed staff that she was not able to attend due to a broken leg. Chairman Jaffe indicated that he too had only spoken once to Ms. Young. Referencing Article IV of the RAC By-laws, Chairman Jaffe stated that Ms. Young could be terminated from the RAC for having three consecutive unexcused absences from RAC meetings and for failure to submit her financial disclosure form.

Chairman Jaffe asked for a motion to accept Manel Lacorte's resignation from the RAC. Pedro Erviti moved to accept Mr. Lacorte's resignation. Michael Snyder seconded the motion. Chairman Jaffe then asked for a discussion on the motion. Denise Brown suggested that the RAC select two new members from the list of candidates that applied for the RAC. Chairman Jaffe stated that he informed Gladys Mack, Chairman of WMATA's Board of Directors, that one RAC member had resigned and that another might get voted off the RAC. Ms. Mack informed Chairman Jaffe that WMATA's Board of Directors had sole authority to select new members from the list of previous applicants. Pat Sheehan asked if the RAC had the authority to accept Mr. Lacorte's resignation. Debra Johnson, WMATA's Director of Project Communications, stated that per the RAC By-laws, the RAC could accept a written resignation from a member, but had to apprise the Board of Directors in writing of the resignation. Chairman Jaffe then took a vote on the motion to approve Manel Lacorte's resignation from the RAC. The majority of the RAC voted to accept Mr. Lacorte's letter of resignation with one abstention.

Chairman Jaffe then asked for a motion to terminate Lataya Young's membership on the RAC. Sharon Conn asked Chairman Jaffe which of the By-laws he was basing Ms. Young's termination on. Chairman Jaffe responded that he was basing the termination on two categories of the By-laws: three consecutive unexcused absences and refusal to submit the financial disclosure form. Nancy Iacomini asked if Ms. Young called prior to the February 1, 2006 RAC meeting to inform the Chairman Jaffe that she would not be attending the meeting. Debra Johnson and Chairman Jaffe stated that Ms. Young did not contact either of them to inform them that she wasn't attending the meeting. Lillian White asked Chairman Jaffe if he informed Ms. Young that she could possibly be voted off of the RAC. Chairman Jaffe stated that he did advise Ms. Young of the repercussions of missing RAC meetings and not submitting the Financial Disclosure form. Nancy Iacomini moved to terminate Ms. Young's RAC membership. Charlie Metcalf seconded the motion. Chairman Jaffe asked for a discussion on the motion. Rodney Elin suggested that the RAC take proactive steps to communicate with Ms. Young in ways other than e-mail and telephone before terminating her membership. Sharon Conn and Sharon Holland stated that they felt as though Chairman Jaffe did as much as possible to communicate with Ms. Young and solicit for her involvement in RAC meetings. Mary Williams agreed. Rodney Elin offered a friendly amendment to remove Ms. Young from the RAC because she had not submitted her financial disclosure form and because she missed three consecutive RAC meetings unexcused.

Nancy Iacomini and Charlie Metcalf accepted the amendment. Chairman Jaffe then took a vote on the motion to terminate Ms. Young's membership on the RAC. All members of the RAC voted to remove Ms. Young from the RAC.

Selection of New RAC Member

Noting that former RAC member Manel Lacorte was knowledgeable and familiar with the Spanish speaking community, Susan Holland suggested that WMATA's Board of Directors consider selecting a new RAC member from the Spanish community. Charlie Metcalf moved that the RAC recommend to the Board of Directors selecting a new RAC member from the Spanish community. Susan Holland seconded the motion. Chairman Jaffe took a vote on the motion. The majority of the RAC voted in favor of the motion.

RAC MetroAccess Public Forum

Mary Williams provided a recap of the RAC MetroAccess Public Forum held on March 13, 2006 and an update of the MetroAccess Ad Hoc Committee. Ms. Williams stated that the forum was a huge success with over 60 people speaking and 100 people in attendance. Ms. Williams also informed the RAC that the MetroAccess Ad Hoc Committee was working with the MetroAccess Best Practices Group and the National

Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to make definitive changes to the MetroAccess service. These changes are to include the revision of MetroAccess policies and procedures in addition to the provision of sensitivity training to MetroAccess employees. Ms. Williams also stated that another committee had been created and that she and Pat Sheehan were the Co-Chairs. This committee will survey MetroAccess customers to determine if they are receiving adequate MetroAccess service. Additionally, Ms. Williams invited the RAC and the general public to attend the RAC's MetroAccess subcommittee meeting, which will include a tour of the MetroAccess call center on Wednesday, April 19, 2006 at 6:00 p.m.

Pat Sheehan asked if it would be useful for the RAC to get a briefing from the Critical Management Team. Chairman Jaffe stated that he would follow up on this issue.

Rail to Dulles Accessibility

Chairman Jaffe stated that Pat Sheehan and Stephen Cerny had been working jointly on the issue of rail accessibility to the Dulles Rail. He stated that Mr. Cerny had drafted a letter regarding the topic to WMATA's Board of Directors and Interim General Manager Dan Tangherlini.

Mr. Sheehan stated that WMATA's E&D Committee had been lobbying for years for WMATA to install redundant elevators in all new and key transfer stations. He stated that proposed plans for the Dulles Rail Project however, did not include having redundant elevators.

Stephen Cerny gave a brief overview of the Dulles Rail project. He stated that the project would expand the Metrorail system by 20 percent or 23 miles. He stated that the project will be very costly and as a result, engineers are eliminating several features (i.e. redundant elevators, pedestrian bridges) that would be essential for the elderly and disabled population.

Chairman Jaffe asked for a motion to approve Mr. Cerny's letter to WMATA's Board of Directors regarding the Dulles Rail Project. Mr. Cerny moved to approve the letter. Don Padou seconded the motion. Chairman Jaffe then asked for a discussion regarding the motion. Don Padou suggested that in future letters regarding the Dulles Rail Project, that the dimensions of the pedestrian bridges be directly tied to ADA standards. Lillian White recommended that the letter be sent to the Governor of Virginia. Chairman Jaffe stated that the letter would be distributed liberally. Susan Holland suggested that WMATA's design criteria be included in the letter. Chairman Jaffe then took a vote to approve the letter. All members of the RAC voted to approve the letter.

SmartBenefits

Chairman Jaffe introduced Murray Bond, WMATA's Director of Marketing, to discuss the SmartBenefits program and the SmarTrip card technology. Mr. Bond stated that there were two options for the SmartBenefits program. One option allows employers to subsidize the amount of money an employee receives each month (up to \$105) for transportation. The other option allows the employee to have a pre-tax deduction taken out for transportation. Mr. Bond also discussed WMATA's SmarTrip card. He stated that WMATA was in the process of allowing the SmarTrip card to function similarly to the Smart Tags for the Dulles Toll Road. Mr. Bond also stated WMATA was exploring having express fare gates that only accept SmarTrip cards.

Chairman Jaffe stated that he drafted a letter to D.C. Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Clifford Janey urging him to enroll D.C. public school teachers in WMATA's SmartBenefits program. Chairman Jaffe asked for a motion to approve the SmartBenefits letter. Susan Holland moved to approve the letter.

Michael Snyder seconded the motion. Chairman Jaffe took a vote on the motion. All members voted to approve the letter.

Denise Brown volunteered to draft a similar letter addressed to the County Executive of Prince George's County. Chairman Jaffe encouraged Ms. Brown to draft the letter and stated that the RAC would discuss the letter at the monthly meeting in May.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Present

William Justin Chittams
Katy Chang
Dennis Jaffe
Michael Snyder
Mary Williams
Denise Brown
Sharon Conn
Rodney Elin
Susan Holland
Mary Blyther
Stephen Cerny
Pedro Erviti
Nancy Iacomini
Lillian White
Charles Metcalf
Patrick Sheehan

Not Present

Lataya Young
Manel Lacorte
Kevin Moore
Hitoshi Sakamoto