

Metro Riders' Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2009

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Zinkl called the July meeting of the Metro Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:42 p.m.

The following members of the Riders' Advisory Council were present:

Diana Zinkl, Chair, District of Columbia
David Alpert, District of Columbia
Kelsi Bracmort, District of Columbia
Sharon Conn, Prince George's County
Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia
Frank DeBernardo, Prince George's County
Kenneth DeGraff, District of Columbia*
Chris Farrell, Montgomery County
Dharm Guruswamy, At-Large/Arlington County
Carl Seip, At-Large/District of Columbia
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee*
Evelyn Tomaszewski, Fairfax County
Carol Carter Walker, District of Columbia*
Lillian White, City of Alexandria

* - arrival times for members who arrived after the start of the meeting are noted in the body of the minutes

The following members were absent from this meeting and provided notification of their absence:

Penny Everline, Arlington County

The following members were not present for any portion of the meeting:

Susan Holland, Prince George's County

II. Public Comment:

Ms. Zinkl asked if there were any members of the public who wished to make comments. There were no comments from members of the public.

Ms. Zinkl reminded members of the Council that the meeting was governed by Robert's Rules of Order and asked that those wishing to speak to wait to be recognized and avoid interrupting whoever has the floor.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Zinkl asked for a motion to approve the agenda. She asked that the "New Business" section of the agenda concerning the Red Line accident be moved to the beginning of the meeting, to precede the approval of the previous meeting's minutes. By unanimous consent, the agenda was approved as amended.

III. Red Line Accident and Metro Incident Communications:

Ms. Zinkl introduced Allison Hall, the Assistant the Assistant Superintendent for Customer Operations in Metro's Rail Operations Control Center (ROCC). She explained that Ms. Hall had come to the meeting to provide the Council with an overview of some of the communications tools that Metro uses to inform riders about delays and changes in service in the event of an incident or other disruption. She noted that this presentation was in response both to the June Red Line accident and other less-serious service disruptions.

Ms. Hall began her presentation by offering her condolences to the families of those injured or killed in the previous week's accident.

Ms. Hall introduced herself and noted that, while she had prepared a Power Point presentation, she would be unable to show it due to technical issues. She provided the Council with a brief overview of the responsibilities of the office and the duties that staff members perform in communicating information to the public. She noted that each person in her office is a customer communication specialist and is responsible for broadcasting public address announcements within the Metrorail system on subjects such as delays, service disruptions, planned events, early openings/late closings, etc. Ms. Hall added that these employees also update the Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) and Metro website with information about delays of ten minutes or more. She explained that these updates then automatically generate an e-Alert, which is sent to subscribers to provide them with information about the status of the Metrorail system.

She noted that the Office of Customer Communications recognizes some of the communication issues and customer concerns following the accident. She said that her office is also working to build stronger relationships with Metro's Office of Media Relations and Bus Central Control office.

Ms. Hall noted that Metro has reviewed its communications approach in light of the June 22nd Red Line accident and is providing very direct information about delays to its customers. She provided examples of some of those changes:

- Incident at the Pentagon, June 26th: Metro communications noted that the station was closed due to “smoke in the station; “
- Person hit by train at Forest Glen, June 29th: Metro announcements, Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) signs and messages on Metro’s website all clearly noted that the disruption on the Red Line was due to a “passenger struck by a train;”
- Metro is announcing to riders that, as a result of the June 22nd accident, all trains are pulling to the end of the platform before stopping. These announcements are being provided on Metro’s website, on PIDS displays and are also being sent out as e-Alerts;
- Passenger on tracks at Southern Avenue, June 30th: Metro communicated that there were Green Line delays “due to a report of an unauthorized person on the trackbed at Southern Avenue.”

Mr. Sheehan arrived at 6:50 p.m.

Ms. Hall also noted that Metro maintains a “Media Hotline” that riders can call to get information about any service alerts, disruptions or delays within the system. She told the Council that the number for this hotline is (202) 962-1212 and that it is updated throughout Metro’s hours of operation with information about service disruptions such as station closures and single-tracking along with elevator outage and shuttle information.

Ms. Hall added that Metro is communicating information about its “zero-fare policy” when it puts this policy into effect during major delays. She explained that the “zero-fare policy” allows riders to leave the rail system without being charged any fare, so long as they leave from the same station at which they entered the system.

Ms. Hall then described Metro’s e-Alert system, which provides messages about delays of ten minutes or more. She noted that the information that Metro sends out as e-Alerts, either via email or text message, is also posted to Metro’s internet page. She explained that if an alert is in effect all day, Metro will send out alerts at the following times:

- 5:30 a.m. (Beginning of morning rush-hour period)
- 9:30 a.m. (End of morning rush-hour period)
- 3:00 p.m. (Beginning of evening rush-hour period)
- 7:00 p.m. (End of evening rush-hour period)

Ms. Hall also explained that Metro will send out a new e-Alert any time information about a delay is updated. She provided the following example of the series of e-Alerts that would be generated for an incident:

- Alert 1: Notice of the disruption
- Alert 2: Notice that the disruption has been resolved but that delays continue
- Alert 3: Notice that the delays have been cleared

Ms. Hall also told members of the Council that, due to the current delays caused by manual operations and speed restrictions in place on the Red Line, the next train arrival information displayed on platform PIDS signs may not be completely accurate. She said that the manual operations and the speed restrictions are due to the ongoing National Transportation Safety Board investigation.

Ms. Hall said that her office is interested in getting the Riders' Advisory Council's feedback on how it can improve communications. She added that Metro's Customer Operations Personnel (COPS) are drafting announcements that can be passed to train operators via Metro Train Control Supervisors, in order to ensure that on-train announcements provide a consistent message. Ms. Hall added that COPS staff are undergoing additional training to help them respond to customer concerns in a timely manner. She concluded by saying that she was interested in getting the group's feedback, particularly feedback from the customer's perspective.

Ms. Zinkl noted that Metro's information does not distinguish between incidents in which service is suspended, requiring riders to find alternate routes to complete their trip, and incidents in which service is delayed, meaning that extra time is required, but not a change in route. She said that this makes it difficult for riders to make decisions about how to complete their trip. She added that Metro's in-station announcements also do not make this distinction. She added that she thinks that it's important for Metro to work on making this distinction in its communications.

Ms. Zinkl said that she understood that some of the responsibility for communications was outside of Rail Operations' control, and added that other aspects of incident response, such as having sufficient personnel on hand to direct riders, may also be outside of her responsibility.

Ms. Zinkl then opened the floor for members of the Council to ask questions or make comments.

Ms. White said that she was on the rail system earlier that evening and didn't hear any announcements at Metro Center regarding delays. She explained that she approached a Metro employee who told her that a passenger had a seizure on a train, which was causing delays. She added that the PIDS displays are not always in sync with actual train arrival times, especially when Metro is conducting trackwork. She said that this has occurred at the Braddock Road and Rosslyn stations during recent trackwork and asked if Metro had ever considered turning off the PIDS in such instances. Ms. Hall responded that Metro does sometimes shut down the "next train arrival" displays on these signs for just that reason.

Mr. Seip thanked Ms. Hall for his presentation and noted that Metro had previously reported that it was providing wireless microphones to station managers to help them better communicate with riders in stations and asked if this program has been expanded to all of Metro's stations. Ms. Hall responded that all of Metro's underground stations have at least one wireless microphone and that, because of its size, Metro Center has at least two. She said that station managers should be making announcements based on the messages shown on the PIDS or based on conversations between the ROCC and train operators that they are able to hear over their handheld radios. She explained that station managers should make these announcements in between the system-wide announcements that are generated by the Rail Operations Control Center staff. Ms. Seip said that he would strongly encourage Metro to utilize these microphones during incidents.

Mr. Alpert asked about the kind of service disruption information that Metro posts on its website and how far back the information goes. Ms. Hall said that there is a section that describes "Yesterday's Service" on the Metro website, though she did not know how far back the information went or the level of detail provided in the reports, but that they were available for review on the website. Mr. Alpert noted that the second most common PARP (Public Access to Records Policy) request Metro receives is for information about delays and asked if Metro had ever considered making that information available, as is done by some other transit systems.

Dr. Conn said that she had two concerns about Metro's communications. She said that her first concern is that the audio on trains is often very poor, and noted that the announcements on the New York City subway are always very clear and understandable. Dr. Conn recommended that Metro look at other systems and how they provide information on their trains. She added that her second concern was that on the night of the accident, Metro's communications provided no specific mention that there had been an accident, just that there were "delays" throughout the system.

Ms. Walker arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Dr. Conn suggested that Metro provide information about alternative routes to help customers get around service disruptions and that Metro should encourage riders to plan alternate routes. Ms. Hall noted that Metro has printed “Emergency Evacuation” maps for each station entrance that provide information about alternate service and that these maps are supposed to be available for customers in station “Take One” racks. She said that she would check on these maps’ availability in stations.

Dr. Conn also noted that more specific information about delays should be provided on Metro’s homepage. Ms. Hall noted that Metro has recently changed how it displays service disruption information on its website and would pass that comment on to Metro’s Information Technology staff.

Ms. Zinkl said that this discussion underscored her earlier comment that Metro needs to more clearly articulate the difference between “delayed” and “suspended” service in its announcements and other communications. She added that Metro also needs to provide additional information about alternate routes or make announcements about the emergency evacuation maps during such incidents.

Mr. Farrell said that he has noticed that train announcements vary in quality, meaning that the quality of announcements isn’t a systemic problem, but rather depends on the quality of the enunciation of the train operator. He added that, in the aftermath of the accident, he has found the PIDS display on the mezzanine at Fort Totten useful in helping him make decisions about whether or not to transfer between the Red and Green lines. Mr. Farrell added that while the June 22nd accident was “catastrophic,” Metro does have the ability to plan for similar disruptions to service.

Ms. Tomaszewski provided an overview of her experience on Metro on the night of the accident and added that she also thought that describing service as “suspended” would have been much more helpful to riders than Metro’s description of “delayed” service. She also noted that because of the coordination between trains and buses, when there are delays on Metrorail there is a “domino effect” on customers needing to transfer between Metrorail and buses. Ms. Hall said that whenever there is a delay on Metrorail greater than ten minutes, the Rail Operations Control Center informs Customer Service, the Metro Transit Police and the Bus Operations Control Center (BOCC). She said that the BOCC can make the decision to hold buses or to send out additional buses to transport passengers.

Mr. DeGraff arrived at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Sheehan noted that as a visually-impaired customer, he is unable to use the PIDS. He said that Metro needs to think about making auditory announcements from the messages on the PIDS more often for customers that cannot receive information visually. He also noted that in one of Metro's recent incident communications, it reported that a customer fell on the "wayside" and that he was unfamiliar with the meaning of that term. Ms. Hall said that the customer fell on the track and that Metro changed the wording of subsequent announcements to report that he had fallen on the "trackbed." Mr. Sheehan said that Metro needs to concentrate on using less "jargon" in its announcements.

In response to Mr. Sheehan's comment about his difficulty in determining the destination of trains pulling in, Ms. Hall added that operators are supposed to make announcements when trains are in the station with their doors open. Mr. Sheehan said that these announcements are often made while the train is still pulling into the station, which makes them difficult to hear.

Ms. White said that announcements have improved but they are not always consistent. She also said that Metro needs to prioritize its announcements and added that there are still issues with the public address systems in stations and in railcars. Ms. Hall noted that Metro is upgrading the public address systems in many Metrorail stations.

Ms. Daniels said that the visual on-train station announcements were very helpful, especially for people unfamiliar with the system. She also noted that Metro has recently been making announcements about priority seating. Ms. Hall said that Metro has scheduled the priority seating announcement to occur two times per hour. Ms. White said that she hears announcements about various subjects, such as spreading out along the platform. Ms. Zinkl said that Metro has a schedule that it uses in playing various passenger announcements.

Dr. Conn asked whether holding buses to accommodate riders on delayed trains was a union issue and why holding buses isn't just a standard procedure during incidents. Ms. Hall responded that she cannot comment on the Bus Operations Control Center's operating procedures but noted that Metrobus provided a great deal of assistance in getting passengers around the closed portion of the rail system, both as shuttles and by providing extra service on regular routes. She said that she will talk to BOCC staff to see if anything can be done, especially regarding coordination with the last buses of the evening. Ms. Hall also noted her experience as a rail supervisor at Greenbelt and described how she used to hold the last train of the evening to ensure that passengers could transfer from a connecting bus.

Ms. Zinkl thanked Ms. Hall for her presentation and for answering questions.

Resolution Offering Condolences:

Ms. Zinkl then introduced the following resolution for the Council's consideration:

"WHEREAS eight passengers and one employee died and at least 80 passengers were injured on June 22, 2009; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Riders' Advisory Council offers its condolences to the families and communities of the deceased and injured."

Mr. Sheehan seconded the motion.

Dr. Conn asked whether this resolution would be sent to the families of accident victims. Mr. DeBernardo suggested that if something were sent to the families of the victims, that it should be in the form of a letter. Ms. Tomaszewski said that since this is a formal resolution, it should be sent through formal channels, specifically, through the Metro Board of Directors or General Manager.

Mr. Sheehan said that he would expect that the Accessibility Advisory Committee would concur with the resolution and asked to include the AAC in offering its condolences.

Dr. Conn asked why the resolution was put forward. Ms. Zinkl said that she wanted the Council to provide an official recognition of the accident. She added that she had some concerns about sending anything to the families of the victims, as they might consider that intrusive.

Mr. Sheehan said that he viewed this action as consistent with the spirit of the Council's mission to represent Metro's riders and said that he feels that it is important to acknowledge the tragedy.

Ms. White said that she objected "Whereas" and "Therefore be it resolved" were included in the resolution.

Dr. Bracmort asked that before voting on the resolution, the Council decide whether or not it will be send to the victims' families.

Mr. DeBernardo suggested adding language to the resolution to express the Council's support for a thorough investigation of the accident. Ms. Zinkl said that she preferred that this resolution simply acknowledge the accident and avoid discussing the ongoing investigation and added that if other wanted to draft resolutions relating to the investigation or to WMATA's response, she would be open to that.

Ms. Walker suggested that the Council send a letter to the Metro Board chair and General Manager asking them to convey the Council's condolences.

Dr. Conn said that she wanted to convey the sentiment to the victims' families noting that the Council's role is to represent Metro riders. Ms. Zinkl said that she wasn't sure if the Council was in a position to reach out directly to victims' relatives and that there would also be difficulties in contacting those individuals injured in the crash, as their information had not been made public.

Mr. Alpert left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Ms. Tomaszewski suggested adding in a statement to the resolution stating that the Council represents riders to explain why it passed such a resolution.

Mr. Seip said that he would be happy to draft a letter and called for a vote on the motion. The Council voted first on Ms. White's motion to remove the "Whereas" and "Resolved" language in the Council's resolution.

In favor: Ms. Tomaszewski, Ms. White

Opposed: Ms. Zinkl, Dr. Bracmort, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeBernardo, Mr. DeGraff, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Guruswamy, Mr. Seip, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Walker

Abstentions: Dr. Conn

This motion failed. (2-10-1)

The Council then voted to add in a statement to the beginning of the resolution noting that it represents Metro riders throughout the region. Without objection, this change was made to the resolution.

Mr. Seip then moved the motion, as amended. This was seconded by Ms. Daniels.

Dr. Conn asked if the AAC could be included as supporting this resolution without their express consent. Mr. Sheehan said that as the AAC's chair, he has the authority to speak for the Committee and he is expressing the Committee's support for the resolution on its behalf.

The Council then voted on the resolution, as amended.

In favor: Ms. Zinkl, Dr. Bracmort, Dr. Conn, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeBernardo, Mr. DeGraff, Mr. Guruswamy, Mr. Seip, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Tomaszewski, Ms. Walker, Ms. White

Opposed: None

Abstentions: Mr. Farrell

This resolution passed (12-0-1).

Ms. White noted that when she was chair of the Council's Rail Subcommittee, she put forward the recommendation that, while doing their inspections prior to releasing trains from the yard, Metro mechanics should have a checklist requiring them to "check off" each item as they inspect it. She said that it was important to note that the Council was on record with this recommendation.

IV. Approval of June 3, 2009 Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Zinkl asked for a motion to approve the June 3, 2009 meeting minutes. Mr. Seip moved to approve the June 3rd meeting minutes.

Ms. White noted that she had made a motion to table discussion on governance issues until after the presentation that was not reflected in the minutes.

Without objection, the June 3, 2009 meeting minutes were approved, incorporating Ms. White's suggested changes.

V. Reports:

A. Board Discussion on Red Line Accident:

Ms. Zinkl provided the Council with an overview of the Board's discussion about the accident at its June 23rd emergency meeting as well as an overview of its discussion about the accident at the Customer Service, Operations and Safety Committee meeting that was held on June 25th. She provided the Council with information on the \$250,000 emergency fund that Metro had set up to aid victims and also noted that Chairman Graham had made a statement on the steps Metro has taken to replace *and to improve the crashworthiness of* the 1000-series railcars. She noted that the recordings of both these meetings were available on the internet if anyone wanted to listen.

Ms. Zinkl also noted that she spoke with someone from the union who estimated that the investigation would take at least three months, and possibly up to a year, and that the NTSB's investigation would be a public process, including public hearings at certain points in the process. Ms. Zinkl also noted that Metro's General Manager had hosted press conferences since the accident to provide additional information.

B. Report by Accessibility Advisory Committee:

Mr. Sheehan delivered the report of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. He noted that MetroAccess was celebrating its 15th anniversary this month, and told members of the Council that the service had started with 138 vehicles and now has approximately 500 vehicles in service, and now provides almost two million trips per year. He said that he thinks that it's good to see that MetroAccess is being integrated into the larger Metro system along with Metrobus and Metrorail.

Mr. Sheehan said that the AAC had also received a demonstration of a new wheelchair restraint system for Metrobuses at its last meeting. He noted that staff has also done demonstrations for disability organizations in the various jurisdictions to get their feedback.

Mr. Sheehan also discussed the report of the AAC's "Metro is Accessible" subcommittee. He said that their report provided information on how to get MetroAccess riders to use the fixed-route system for some of their trips. Mr. Sheehan explained that Metro has doubled its staff for this program and has received an \$850,000 grant to provide travel training.

Mr. Sheehan also told the Council that Glen Millis from Metro's Office of ADA Programs was working with the Committee on developing a 2010 work plan for the AAC and would like to coordinate with the Riders' Advisory Council.

C. Report by Customer Delivery Standards Working Group:

Ms. Daniels delivered the report by the Customer Delivery Standards Working Group. She gave an overview of the meeting and noted that the group reached several conclusions in terms of how it wanted to comment on the Customer Delivery Standards document:

- Certain issues can be included in two different sets of standards. As an example, the need to deploy a wheelchair lift could appropriately be included in both Metrobus operating standards and in accessibility standards.
- Some standards are very general while others are very specific – the group agreed that specific quantitative standards or benchmarks are desirable.
- Metro should produce two documents related to customer delivery standards – one for employees and one for the general public.
- The twelve customer-facing standards can be grouped into four broad categories – operating standards, accessibility standards, facilities and aesthetic standards and customer service and staff standards.

Ms. Daniels said that Ms. Everline invited members to contact her with any questions.

D. Report by Governance Working Group:

Ms. Walker provided the report by the Governance Working Group. She explained that the group started by reviewing the items that it felt had been decided by consensus at earlier meetings. These included the confidentiality of emails, keeping the Council's meeting location at Metro headquarters, and having working groups rather than subcommittees to address specific issues. Ms. Walker also noted the group's discussion that any proposed changes to the Council's by-laws would need to be approved by Metro's Board of Directors and also approved by Metro's Office of Counsel.

Ms. Walker said that following its discussions, the group reached three main conclusions. The first was that amending the Council's by-laws would occur towards the end of any process, and that changes to the by-laws would be minimal, with many proposed changes instead being included in a proposed operating and policy manual.

Ms. Walker added that the group suggested two changes:

- For there to be a period during the meeting for members to discuss items they had heard from riders, or to have further discussion or take actions on items they had heard in staff presentations; and
- For the chair to maintain a "pipeline agenda" which shows possible topics for future Council meetings.

Ms. Walker said that the group also came to the conclusion that that the Council needed to consider having a second monthly meeting and to schedule these meetings to more closely align with the Board of Directors' meetings. She said that she understood that there might be some scheduling issues for current members should the Council change the date of its meetings.

Ms. Walker said that the group's next meeting would be July 15th and asked that members send any proposed agenda items to the staff coordinator by Thursday, July 9th.

Mr. Sheehan moved to accept the group's report. This motion was seconded by Ms. Tomaszewski.

Ms. Zinkl said that she didn't recall the discussion of the creation of an "operating manual" for the Council at this meeting and asked whether that portion of the discussion occurred after she left.

Mr. Sheehan suggested that the Council vote to accept the report and then address any individual recommendations at a later point. Without objection, the report was accepted.

VI. Old Business:

Mr. Seip then moved to amend the meeting agenda to reverse items VI-A (Discussion of Goals, Interests and Contributions) and VI-B (Governance Discussion) on the agenda.

Ms. Tomaszewski seconded this motion.

In favor: Dr. Bracmort, Dr. Conn, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeBernardo, Mr. DeGraff, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Guruswamy, Mr. Seip, Ms. Tomaszewski, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Walker, Ms. White

Opposed: none

Abstentions: Ms. Zinkl

This motion passed. (12-0-1)

A. *Governance Issues:*

Ms. Zinkl opened the discussion of governance issues by noting that this item was put on the agenda at the last Council meeting. She also noted that the Council's By-Laws provide an outline for much of the Council's actions on a month-to-month basis.

Ms. Tomaszewski said that she wanted more information concerning the creation of an operating procedures manual for the Council. She also noted that it would be difficult for many members to attend two meetings per month, and that she specifically would be unable to make two meetings per month.

Mr. Seip noted that any by-laws are inevitably constrained and that the Council may want to look into having a manual of operating procedures to allow for greater flexibility.

Mr. Guruswamy asked whether intent should be to simplify the by-laws and then to have daily operational issues covered by a policies and procedures manual that could be changed directly by the Council. Ms. Walker said responded that this

was the intent and that the Working Group also discussed compiling a comprehensive list of proposed by-laws changes so that they could be reviewed by Metro's Office of Counsel.

Ms. Zinkl noted that while the Council's by-laws have to be reviewed every five years, there is no requirement that they be changed. She also said any changes to the By-Laws are ultimately the responsibility of the Board.

Ms. White said that she didn't understand why the Council would need operating procedures and added that the Council should just keep its existing by-laws and Robert's Rules of Order. She said that she thought that creating operating procedures would be a waste of time.

Ms. Zinkl asked Ms. White, as a founding member of the Council for her perspective on the by-laws. Ms. White noted that Steve Cerny and Dennis Jaffe, both former members of the Council, had played a large role in the creation of the Council's by-laws and suggested asking Mr. Cerny for his advice.

Mr. Sheehan noted that the Governance Working Group has said that the by-laws are too proscriptive and asked what specific aspects of the by-laws that the Working Group thought should be changed.

Ms. Walker responded that the group hasn't yet suggested specific changes to the by-laws, but that there has been some discussion among Council members about issues such as the role of the vice-chairs and how agendas are set. She noted that these are not specifically spelled out in the existing by-laws.

Mr. Sheehan said that there can be opportunities for members to discuss agenda items. He noted that he liked the idea of the Council having a "pipeline" agenda showing proposed agenda items for several upcoming meetings. He also noted that creating such an agenda wouldn't require any changes to the by-laws.

Ms. Zinkl said that, to the extent that members have come to her with items that could be put on the agenda, those items have been put on the agenda. She urged members to contact her or the staff coordinator if they have suggestions for future agenda items. Ms. Zinkl also suggested that the Council devote half of its planned August meeting to the discussion of potential agenda items.

Ms. White said that a discussion of new agenda items is already included in Council agendas as "New Business."

Mr. DeBernardo said that he wanted to emphasize that the Working Group was not yet looking at changing any By-Laws and was instead looking at putting policies and procedures in place to help the Council work more effectively. He said that once these policies and procedures are in place, the by-laws would be examined to see whether they aligned with those policies and procedures.

Ms. Tomaszewski said that she wasn't sure that it was necessary to create operating procedures for the Council to improve its effectiveness, and that some issues could be addressed by limiting the amount of cross-conversations at meetings, by members allowing the chair to run the meeting and by the chair allowing members to participate in the dialogue. She added that she is of two minds about the idea of creating operating procedures. She said that she did like the idea of examining the Council's by-laws and for allowing additional meeting time for dialogue.

Mr. DeBernardo said that the idea of having a second monthly meeting was to allow for additional time for discussion. He noted that the initial proposal was to extend Council meetings to allow for additional time for discussion and participation but that was deemed not feasible.

Ms. Zinkl said that, while the monthly Council meeting has many purposes, its main purpose of such a formal meeting is to get information out to the public, and noted that the purpose of the subcommittees and working groups was to allow a time for greater discussion. She added that there could be an option to have one formal meeting per month and one meeting that allowed for more discussion.

Mr. Sheehan noted that, previously, the Council hasn't held a meeting in August and asked whether that would also be the case this year. Ms. Zinkl said that the Council would meet in August. She noted that this meeting would allow for members to discuss agenda items and short- and long-term goals.

Ms. Daniels proposed starting meetings earlier to allow for more discussion time. Ms. Zinkl responded that it would be difficult for many people to get to a meeting after work that started any earlier than the present starting time of 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Walker provided a recap of what she had heard as part of the discussion: that there is a difference between the Council's by-laws and the practiced customs and that the Working Group needs to rethink its proposal with regards to how the

Council could best achieve its goals, whether through changes to its by-laws or by establishing operating procedures.

Dr. Conn left the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Mr. Seip moved to table the discussion of governance issues and reserve one hour at the beginning of the Council's August meeting to discuss the issue further. Ms. Zinkl noted that she was concerned that because of other standing items on the Council's agenda, this would not leave sufficient time to discuss potential future agenda items. In response to a suggestion from Ms. Walker, he changed his motion to call for 45 minutes of discussion at the beginning of the August Council meeting.

This motion was seconded by Mr. Guruswamy.

Mr. Sheehan said that he felt that this discussion was circular and wasn't offering any specific proposals, but rather discussing generalities. He said that he didn't see the point in continuing it until he could review specific proposals for changes. Mr. Seip said that the Working Group's goal is to have specific proposals to put forward at the next Council meeting.

Mr. Sheehan asked Ms. Zinkl whether the Board had ultimate authority over the Council's by-laws. In response to his question, Ms. Zinkl responded that Metro's Board of Directors has final say in approving any changes to the by-laws and that the Council's recommendations would be suggestions for the Board.

Ms. Zinkl noted that the Council had spent a great deal of time at its last few meetings and said that she had concerns about giving additional time to this discussion, especially without concrete proposals and due to the fact that the Council does not have ultimate authority over its by-laws.

Ms. Tomaszewski suggested that the governance discussion at the August meeting be limited to 30 minutes. Mr. Seip accepted Ms. Tomaszewski's suggestion as a friendly amendment. Mr. Guruswamy seconded this amendment to change the length of the governance discussion at the Council's next meeting.

The Council then voted on the revised motion.

In favor: Dr. Bracmort, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeBernardo, Mr. DeGraff, Mr. Guruswamy, Mr. Seip, Ms. Tomszewski, Ms. Walker, Ms. White

Opposed: Mr. Sheehan

Abstentions: Ms. Zinkl

This motion passed (9-1-1).

Ms. Zinkl noted that the second half of the next meeting would be to discuss potential agenda items and asked members to send around any ideas they may have for future agenda topics to add to the dialogue.

In response to a question from Ms. Walker, Ms. Zinkl said that the amount of advance notice required to put an item on the Council's agenda is dependent on the specific nature of the topic to be discussed.

VII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Ms. Zinkl adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

These minutes were approved by the Council on August 5, 2009.