

WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

Wednesday, December 3, 2014
6:30 P.M. Regular Meeting

MINUTES

Place: Lower Level Meeting Room, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Headquarters (Jackson Graham Building), 600 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC

Present: *Members*
Carol Carter Walker, Chair, At-Large
Barbara Hermanson, Vice-Chair, VA, City of Alexandria
Candice Walsh, Vice-Chair, District of Columbia
Ben Ball, District of Columbia
Pablo Destefanis, District of Columbia
Bob Fogel, MD, Montgomery County
Francis DeBernardo, MD, Prince George's County
Katherine Kortum, MD, Montgomery County
Debra MacKenzie, At-Large
Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee, Chair
Lorraine Silva, VA, Arlington County
Deborah Titus, VA, Fairfax County
Daniel Turk, District of Columbia
Frederick Walker, VA, Fairfax County
James Wright, Jr., MD, Prince George's County
Mary Ann Zimmerman, MD, Montgomery County

Other Individuals

Dulce Carrillo, Sr. Workforce Diversity & Compliance Officer, Office of Equal Employment
Opportunity, WMATA
John Pasek, Assistant Board Secretary, WMATA
James N. Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator

Absent: *Members*
Caroline Kim, District of Columbia
Karen Lynch, Maryland, Vice-Chair, MD, Prince George's County
Aldea Meary-Miller, VA, Arlington County

Presider: Carol Carter Walker, Chair, At-Large

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Walker called the November 2014 meeting of the Metro Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. Public Comment Period:

Ms. Walker recognized members of the public who were signed up to speak.

Mr. Jeff Larrimore, spoke regarding the Concert for Valor Metrorail service changes and performance issues surrounding the Metrorail Blue Line. Mr. Larrimore provided a written statement of his comments for the record.

As there were no other members of the public who were signed up to speak, Ms. Walker closed the public comment period.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Without objection, the agenda was approved.

IV. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Silva, to approve as submitted the November 5, 2014 minutes of the Riders' Advisory Council.

The motion was approved unanimously.

V. Committee Reports

- Chair's Report to WMATA Board of Directors (November 2014) – Ms. Walker

Ms. Walker stated that the Chair's Report for the month of November 2014 was included in the agenda package for review.

- Committee Chair Reports

Budget and Finance Committee – No report given.

Customer Service Committee – No report given.

Governance Committee – No report given.

Program, Projects and Planning Committee – Mr. Turk stated that the Program, Projects and Planning Committee met on November 10th at 6:30 p.m. He said that Mr. Tom Randall, Manager, New Electronic Payment Project (NEPP), WMATA, was present to receive questions from the Committee regarding the launch of the payment pilot program.

Ms. Walker polled the Council regarding their participation in the NEPP pilot.

RAC Orientation Workgroup – Vice Chair Walsh stated that the RAC Orientation Workgroup met on December 2nd at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference. Ms. Walsh noted those in attendance: herself, Mr. Fogel, Ms. Walker and James Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator. She continued to say that the objective of the workgroup was to assemble a RAC orientation package to be distributed to the RAC between December 18th and early-January 2015. Ms. Walsh encouraged other Council members to provide feedback on the proposed orientation materials.

VI. Concert for Valor Service Changes: Feedback

Ms. Walker invited RAC members to provide feedback regarding the Concert for Valor service changes, with particular emphasis on their personal experiences with the Metrorail service provided on November 11th.

Mr. Walker expressed his dissatisfaction regarding WMATA's communication with customers. He stated that the informational brochure distributed that outlined the services changes was unsatisfactory.

Ms. Walker commented that the situation surrounding the Concert for Valor service changes was deeply disturbing. She suggested that the RAC go on record by requesting that WMATA commit to establishing criteria for the closure of Metrorail lines. Noting the initial ridership estimates for the Concert for Valor, Mr. Walker said that WMATA should show commitment that such closures would occur only under extraordinary circumstances and involve an advisory group such as the RAC or Accessibility Advisory Committee in the planning process.

Mr. Ball commented that he attended the concert and that it was very crowded, although he was unsure of an exact number of attendees. He briefly discussed the concert set up and stated that the RAC should focus on Metrorail performance data during the "concert period." He suggested that the RAC find out how Metrorail performed with the service changes before raising questions and concerns.

Mr. Turk concurred. He said that it was important for WMATA to know how well the service changes performed in order for the RAC to make inquiries as to the level of success attained.

With regard to communication, Mr. Ball noted that WMATA was given short notice by Home Box Office Television (HBO) to prepare for concert travelers. He remarked that WMATA should have declined the request to provide service.

Ms. Hermanson stated that the RAC should look at performance data related to the concert, but that they had an obligation also look at service data prior to the changes made on November 11th.

Ms. Walker commented that information on the National Parks Service website informed organizations that when they request permits for the National Mall, that they should work collaboratively with public transit agencies.

Mr. Ball suggested that the RAC request that WMATA conduct a case study or write an after action report regarding the Metrorail service changes on November 11th. Mr. Sheehan concurred, citing an overestimate of the number of expected customers who attending the concert.

Mr. Destefanis expressed uncertainty in requesting WMATA to conduct a case study. He stated that he was unsure what the RAC was trying to achieve through the proposed request.

Mr. Walker stated that he was not in favor of the request and would rather that staff provide a report regarding the Metrorail Blue Line. He said that the RAC should be focused on daily service issues and the “everyday rider.”

Ms. Silva commented that HBO provided the customer estimate through the permitting process, not WMATA. She also noted that HBO ultimately paid for the direct and in-direct transportation costs.

Mr. Wright discussed the inaccuracy of event attendance estimation during the Million Man March in October of 1995. He said that he was interested in received a case study to find how WMATA would respond to similar event requests in the future.

Ms. Walsh stated that WMATA struggled with special events and holidays, citing service issues during the Fourth of July and Inauguration Day. She said that if the RAC requested information regarding data and protocol for special events, that the focus should be on “the larger picture” and not only on service changes related to the concert.

Mr. DeBernardo questioned the end result of the RAC requesting additional information from WMATA. He remarked that there would be no further action taken by staff if the RAC was dissatisfied with the analysis.

Ms. Kortum inquired if WMATA consulted other similar transit organizations that also worked to accommodate large-scale events. She said that WMATA should have looked at best practices from these organizations.

Ms. Zimmerman concluded that WMATA had several things that were unique related to the opening of the Silver Line. The first being what service changes are made during big events and secondly what changes are made day-to-day. She questioned how the RAC could help WMATA staff to work through all the changes given the dissatisfaction of customers.

Mr. Ball moved, seconded by Mr. Turk, to request that WMATA provide a publically releasable after action report regarding Metrorail service changes on November 11, 2014 (planning period, event day until 5:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. until the close of the Metrorail system) within the first quarter of 2015.

Ayes: Mr. Ball, Mr. DeBernardo, Mr. Fogel, Ms. Hermanson, Ms. Kortum, Ms. MacKenzie, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Silva, Mr. Turk, Ms. Walker, Mr. Wright, Ms. Walsh, Ms. Zimmerman

Nays: Mr. Walker

Abstentions: Mr. Destefanis and Ms. Titus

The motion carried by a vote of 14-1.

VII. Approval of RAC Committee Descriptions

Ms. Walker stated that the Governance Committee drafted brief descriptions of the RAC committees. She asked that Council members review the descriptions included in the agenda package and submit revisions to the RAC Staff Coordinator by Friday, December 5th.

Mr. DeBernardo suggested that the following text be moved from the section on *Special Committees* to the section on *Standing Committees*:

“Membership in Standing Committees shall be open to all members of the RAC.”

Mr. Fogel questioned the appropriateness of allowing the RAC Chair to nominate committee chairs subject to approval of the full Council. Ms. Walker replied in the negative stating that per the RAC Bylaws, the RAC Chair has the ability to name an individual to convene the first committee meeting and the committee members would name a chairperson. That person would then be voted on by the full Council.

Mr. Fogel then commented on the procedure that RAC members would select committee chairs no later than the second RAC meeting of the calendar year. Ms. Walker responded by discussing the process at-length in conjunction with the revised RAC Orientation proposal.

Mr. Ball moved, seconded by Mr. Fogel, to approve the RAC Committee Descriptions as amended.

The motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. WMATA Vital Signs Report Discussion: Silver Line Data

Referencing page 21 of the Q3 2014 WMATA Vital Signs Report, Mr. Ball noted a drop in on-time performance on the Metrorail Blue Line between July and September. He stated that the Orange Line also dropped by a similar amount. Mr. Ball also referenced page 16, commenting that the customer satisfaction measure was faulty as it was based on the numbers of telephone calls received by the customer service center and via the public comment form on the website. He said that the measure failed to account for complaint expressed via social media.

The RAC engaged in a discussion of the key performance indicators in the report: Bus On-Time Performance, Rail On-Time Performance, Escalator System Availability, Elevator System Availability, Customer Satisfaction and Passenger Loading by Line.

Mr. Wright noted improvement within the District of Columbia of Metrobus service for the X2 and 70 route buses. He stated that the frequency of busses off-peak has improved significantly. Mr. Wright expressed a desire for an improvement in the S route buses, particularly during the

evening hours. He questioned the appropriateness of a dedicated bus lane in the 16th Street corridor.

IX. RAC Annual Report

Ms. Walker reviewed the RAC Annual Report document included in the agenda package. She stated that she used monthly meeting minutes to accurately reflect RAC activities and deliverables, but invited Council members to contribute any comments or revisions.

Ms. Zimmerman said that it would be useful to have a section highlighting accomplishments and/or reports. She also suggested discussing fluctuations in RAC membership, which affected the workload.

X. Announcements

Mr. Walker discussed the changes in jurisdictional representation following the 2014 elections. He suggested that the RAC develop strategies for addressing the representational bodies and assisting the Board of Directors to lobby for increased funding.

Mr. Walker announced a recent WMATA press release that weekend track work on Metrorail would be greatly reduced during the holiday season.

Ms. Walker recognized Council members whose terms were expiring and did not seek reappointment to the RAC.

XI. Adjournment

Without objection, Ms. Walker adjourned the regular session meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James N. Jackson
Riders' Advisory Council Coordinator