



Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

May 13, 2020

Location: via: Zoom

Attendance:

New Jersey: Reggie Haynes, Steve Benigno, Ben Saracco, Mike Devlin, Judy Boldurian, Strasso Jovanovski, Dan Norfleet, Alan Becker, Steve Beningo, Bruce Schwartz

Pennsylvania: Dan McArdle, Bob Melikien, Larry Davis, Pamela Mack-Brooks, Tyrone Wesley

Emeritus Member(s) John Boyle, Tom Jordon, Jeff Kessler

Potential Member(s):

DRPA/PATCO: John Hanson, John Rink, Mike Venuto, Mike Howard, Barbara Wagner

Public Member(s):

Call to Order

A motion was made to approve the April 14, 2020 Minutes. The Minutes were approved.

A motion was made to approve the Board of Commissioners Update. The Motion was approved.

Updates from CEO, John Hanson:

John Hanson addressed a question that was raised by Strasso Jovanovski about broken bike pumps located at the base of the Ben Franklin Bridge. Mr. Hanson reported that neither the pumps, nor the property are owned by the DRPA. The bike pumps and property are owned by Rutgers University.

John Hanson reported that on May 11, 2020, at 6:00 a.m. the cash lanes re-opened on all 4 bridges and the toll collectors were sent back to the lanes to accept cash toll payments. Initially, Mr. Hanson was reluctant to take toll collectors out of the lanes because they are essential workers who do provide an important service to the public. He then decided to go along with other tolling agencies whose decision was to go cashless for safety reasons during the peak of the Pandemic.

The DRPA remains in full compliance with CDC regulations. The DRPA went even further to protect the toll collectors by installing plexiglass shields in the cash lanes. Air Handlers are at the top of each toll booth that controls the condition, cleaning, ventilation, and supply of fresh air in each toll

booth. Each booth is sanitized before and after each shift and before and after each break. The toll collectors are also required to wear masks, face shields and gloves while working in the toll lanes. The safety of the toll collectors is the DRPA's first priority.

Revised invoices eliminating violation fees were sent to drivers using cashless lanes, but there was a 9-10 day backlog resulting in many calls to the DRPA expressing concerns about when they will be receiving an invoice, but mostly concerned about a violation cost being added. To date, we do not have a calculation on how much revenue was received from invoiced tolling.

Since the toll collectors were put back in the lanes, cash receipts have increased with a high of 30% on the Walt Whitman and Ben Franklin Bridges. We are expecting to see a gradual increase in toll collections during the summer months as businesses start to re-open, including the re-opening of the beaches at the Jersey Shore.

Q&A with CEO

Q: Has anyone at the DRPA or PATCO test positive for COVID19?

Bob Melikien

A: No one has contracted COVID19 by exposure to customers. We had one maintenance worker who tested positive and is now back to work. A few other employees were tested with negative test results.

Q: Were the Unions satisfied with the protective measures put in place by the DPRA & PATCO?

Bruce Schwartz

A: John Hanson continues to maintain good communication with the Unions. There were 2 toll collectors who expressed concerns returning to the toll booth, but once the safety procedures were explained they did return. If they did not return, they were not at risk of losing their job, but could use leave time until they felt more comfortable in returning. Presently, toll collectors are working 2 ½ days on and 2 ½ days off on standby.

At PATCO, the Safety Department went through all sanitizing and protective measures required on the trains and at the stations.

There have been no layoffs at this time, however, temporary employees were let go. At this time, John Hanson is reluctant to let skilled employees go.

Q: What is the projection in returning to normal bridge use and normal PATCO use?

Bob Melikien

A: There are a lot of facts unknown about this virus to be able to make that decision, but John Hanson suspects bridge use will increase much sooner than PATCO, expecting passengers to be slow to return to the trains. It is hard to project when we do not know exactly how the virus spreads and until there is a vaccine or reliable treatment, we are not sure what to expect at this time. Even though businesses are

starting to re-open and bridge ridership is starting to increase, people are still working from home and not too anxious to get back to the workplace.

Q: Is there a plan in place for DRPA & PATCO employees to return to work?

Ben Saracco

A: John Hanson reported that he appointed an 18 member COVID19 Task Force led by CAO, Toni Brown. The Task Force convenes on a weekly basis to formulate the best possible plan and make those recommendations to John Hanson and Deputy CEO, Maria Wing. Employees returning to the workplace will most likely work in some combination of working at the DRPA/PATCO and working from home.

John Hanson also reported that he has a 10:30 a.m. teleconference each workday with the Executive Staff to go through the daily operations of each department at the Authority and PATCO.

Q: Instead of hand-held phones at the Stations, will PATCO consider some type of communication with less physical contact?

Reggie Haynes

A: It has been talked about, but the subject did not go much further, and is not on the front burner at this time.

Q: Will there be temperature checks at the Stations?

Larry Davis

A: John Hanson reported that he is not a fan of temperature checks because people who are asymptomatic will not show signs of a fever and this creates a false sense of safety. It would also have to be performed by a nurse or highly skilled technician as thermometer readings are notoriously wrong. Upon further research, if it makes sense, we will consider it.

Contact tracing is outside the scope of what we do, but the DRPA/PATCO will take advantage of what is offered.

The DRPA is a bi-state organization. We are not receiving different mandates from NJ and PA. The DRPA has adopted all codified procedures put in place by both states.

Q: What has been the financial impact, economic impact on the Authority because of the Pandemic?

Bob Melikien

A: John Hanson reported that his biggest concern is the Bond Indentures or the ratio of revenue income to debt services. The DRPA has 1.3 billion in publicly traded bonds on Wall Street and would like to see revenue return to 75% of where it was in 2019. The DRPA is expected to receive 41 million from the Federal Transportation Agency, which will help offset the revenue deficiency. Our Government Relations Department is also working closely with Congress, the Senate and Senior Leadership to further investigate the criteria for additional government funding for bridge authorities.

John Hanson's priority is the safety and concern of all Authority employees while continuing our Stewardship for the bridges and PATCO line. Our priority is to keep everyone safe as we play an especially important role in our region's economic rebound.

Updates from Mike Venuto/Engineering:

Mike Venuto and Mike Howard spoke to the CAC members about DRPA and PATCO owned real estate. A Real Estate Log prepared by Mike Howard was circulated to each member by e-mail prior to the meeting. Mike Venuto reported that the Log is a living document that consists of property owned by the DRPA and PATCO. The information is stored on the DRPA's Geographic Information System (GIS). It is a breakdown of individual parcels and parcels associated with facilities or bridges. The GIS is updated as parcels come to our attention, either found or divested. It has been some time since new property has been brought to the Authority's attention. Ancillary parcels are lots not assigned to or related to a facility or bridge.

The GIS system is also helpful in identifying property if a liability claim is filed against the DRPA or PATCO. It helps to determine whether the property is owned by the Authority.

Q: Why isn't the value of the property reflected on the balance sheet?
Bob Melikien

A: John Hanson reported that real property is recorded on financial records as historical costs and improvements not fair market value.

- **Ben Franklin Bridge**

Mike Howard reports that construction of the Ben Franklin Bridge did not necessarily begin on January 6, 1922, even though the Centennial is scheduled on January 6, 2022. It may have been in or around January 22, 1922. Mike Howard and his wife, Maureen Howard wrote a book on the history of the Ben Franklin Bridge. It is entitled the "Ben Franklin Bridge" and is available on Amazon.

Updates from John Rink/PATCO:

Q: What is the safety plan in place for people taking the trains, especially when the Stay-at-Home Order is lifted?
Judy Boldurian

A: John Rink reported that the cars are monitored carefully on a daily basis to make sure the space is adequate for social distancing. Because ridership has increased, the first and last car have been opened to riders. Presently, we are at 9% of normal ridership, mostly health care and essential employees. We have had a few trains where some of the cars had approximately 30 riders. PATCO has 120 trains. When everyone returns, it will be impossible to maintain social distancing on the trains. PATCO is working with Transit Agencies in PA, NJ and NY actively trying to come up with the best possible solutions for safety and best practices. Most of the riders do wear masks. As ridership increases,

PATCO will adjust the headways. If PATCO sees an increase of ridership on any particular day, changes to the schedule will be made on that day to provide more trains.

Q: Have hand sanitizers been placed in stations?
Larry Davis

A: Yes, hand sanitizers have been installed at all stations.

Q: Is there any update on the GTFS Data system?

A: No, nothing to report at this time. John Rink will follow-up with Mike Williams

CAC Old Business:

At this time, there are no Public Events scheduled pertaining to the DRPA and PATCO.

The CAC website has been updated recently by Mike Williams.

The CAC continues to look for candidates to become members of the Citizen Advisory Committee. Notice has been placed on Facebook and Twitter by Mike Williams.

CAC New Business:

John Hanson reported that it was his decision to demolish the concrete arch in Philadelphia that was supposed to be a part of the tram from Camden to Philadelphia. The arch was offered to the City of Philadelphia but was declined by the City. Presently, there are no plans to remove the “concrete lily pad” at water level on the New Jersey side. John Hanson is trying to get Cooper Ferry to remove it.

The CAC nominated Daniel McArdle as Chairman, Reggie Haynes as Vice Chairman and Judy Bouldurian as Secretary.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next CAC Meeting: Will be held via Zoom on June 10, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.

Next DRPA Board Meeting: Will be held virtually on June 17, 2020 @ 9:00 a.m.