



Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

Location: via: Zoom

Attendance:

New Jersey: Reggie Haynes, Alan Becker, Steve Benigno, Straso Jovanovski, Ben Saracco, Bruce Schwartz

Pennsylvania: Scott Cohen, Larry Davis, Tyrone Wesley, Pamela Mack-Brooks

Emeritus Member(s): Judy Boldurian, John Boyle, Jeff Kessler, Dan McArdle

Potential Member(s):

DRPA/PATCO: John Hanson, CEO; John Rink, GM; Mike Venuto, Chief Engineer; Barbara Wagner, Executive Assistant

Public Member(s):

Call to Order

A motion was made to approve the November 9, 2022 minutes. The minutes were approved.

CEO, John Hanson

Finance Update:

CEO Hanson reported that bridge traffic is still at 90 percent of pre-Covid and PATCO ridership is about 50 percent of pre-Covid. This is roughly a bridge revenue impairment at approximately \$30-35M and an impairment for PATCO at approximately \$15M annually.

Percentage of employees still working remotely, if any? Future plans?

GM Rink reported that no one is working remotely and, presently, there are no plans to change that policy. CEO Hanson added that we have no plans to have anyone work remotely at this time.

CEO Hanson reported that he is in the process of meeting with all DRPA and PATCO employees at our Outreach Meetings. He finished the Police Department, Bridge Operations and, currently, is halfway through One Port Center.

Reggie Haynes asked what is the purpose of the Outreach Meetings with DRPA and PATCO employees?

CEO Hanson reported that there are several reasons he likes meeting with employees. The first is to expose him to different points of view, different thoughts, different ideas, and to make sure that he is not getting everything only filtered through management. It's an opportunity to give everybody an update on where we stand, what he thinks is the forecast going forward for employees, and, finally, because we are all co-workers, we should know each other and have some sense of each other. These meetings take place approximately every two years; however, this time it's been four years because of Covid. He reported that he finally got to a place since 2020 where he felt it was okay to ask people to come to a meeting that wasn't essential. The meetings continue to be voluntary, so some people are opting not to attend, but mostly everybody is attending. The final meeting with the Ben Franklin Bridge Toll Collectors was last night and that closed out the Police Department and Bridge Operations. That meeting was scheduled from 10:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. last night.

CE, Mike Venuto

Solar Power System:

CE Venuto reported that we have been seeing some savings, particularly through the summer months. During the fall months, we saw savings from the generation at OPC and some of our PATCO stations. We really need a full year to be able to report on the expected savings because we must go through a full cycle from winter to summer and the Woodcrest and Ashland Stations didn't come on-line until the end of April. We expect to produce more than 50 percent of the total energy consumption for both the DRPA and PATCO through the months of May through September, so we really had some good production. Obviously, as we come into the winter months, we'll see some decline in power generation. CE Venuto reported that we monitor the metrics for total energy through a software system. We will have some metrics that we'll be able to report on in the future, but there are good signs from what we have seen so far.

Bruce Schwartz asked if there is any battery storage built into the Solar System or do you just use the power as it's generated?

CE Venuto reported that there is no battery storage. We're just using the power as it is generated.

Ben Saracco asked if the DRPA has any plans to install some electric vehicle charging stations in either public parking lots, for employee parking, or the parking garages that are used at different facilities?

CEO Hanson reported that we do not have any plans to install electric vehicle charging stations at this time. At one time, we did a survey of PATCO users, and it was something the riders weren't interested in; however, that may change in the future. Our Fleet Department is looking at the possibility of using electric vehicles, but we probably will not install charging stations until we make a move in that direction. Currently, there are not that many electric vehicles in our parking lots, so it's not something that makes sense for us right now.

Ben Franklin Bridge and the Decorative Lighting:

CE Venuto reported that a brand-new decorative lighting system was installed on the northside, and we're working on commissioning that and programming the new system. We will not take the southside lights out until the northside is completed. We are approximately 80 percent complete with the miscellaneous steel repairs on the suspended span. We're 100 percent complete on the north walkway steel and concrete repairs. The tower rocker links on the northside have been complete and we are starting to work on the southside. The painting on the north truss and the tower legs are complete. The north walkway widening in Camden is complete, as well. The project is moving along, and we will continue to work through this winter.

Scofflaw update.

CEO Hanson reported that the Police are still looking into what possible approaches we could take.

Larry Davis asked if there was any update on the new toll taking technology? Did the bid go out for that?

CEO Hanson reported that the request for proposal just went out. It will probably be six to eight weeks before we get the proposals back and then they will be evaluated.

Construction Status.

CE Venuto reported that construction is moving along well. We are approximately 60 percent complete of the total project at the Ben Franklin Bridge. All the north cables have been wrapped and the dehumidification system has been installed. Presently, we are working on commissioning the dehumidification system. We are looking to switch sides from the north to the south in early February 2023. We will be leaving the platform up on the northside because we will continue to work on the commissioning of the dehumidification system.

Ben Saracco asked if there was any tension work done on the cable?

CE Venuto reported that we unwrapped the cable, installed a new wrapping, then tested the seals because air is pumped through, and you don't want any leakage. We re-wrapped the cable and pumped dry air into the injection points and exhaust points. We cleaned the cable, brushed all the wires, and wrapped the encapsulation around it for the injection points and the exhaust points.

Possibility of DRPA working with PSE&G to repair broken streetlights adjacent to the Ben Franklin Bridge on the Camden side (Pearl Street).

CE Venuto reported that they are PSE&G lights. Dr. Nicole Ochroch, who leads the Solar Project, has a contact with PSE&G. She did reach out to that contact to alert them that the lights are out. They said they would look into getting those lights repaired.

GM, John Rink

PATCO update:

Status of Prediction Accuracy:

GM Rink reported that our observations in the month of December show that our clocks have been working 100 percent and I haven't seen any complaints. We have fixed some bugs and, hopefully, it has been working well. GM Rink stated that thanks to the suggestions by the CAC, we did change our sign from eastbound-westbound to 15th/16th at the Lindenwold Station for those who don't know in which direction they are headed. The suggestion has been made more than once by the committee and we implemented it, and everyone seems to like it.

Ben Saracco stated that he has been taking the train a lot in the past few weeks. His son is obsessed with the train, but one thing he has noticed more than once, is that the estimated arrival times are off. For example, it said 20 minutes for arrival but arrived 3 minutes late. He called the customer service number listed on the sign and a human being picked up. I told them where I was, and I was immediately given a live update. I think that is impressive that you can call and speak to a human being, who is probably at the control center in Camden, and give you live information is a great service that is provided to riders.

GM Rink stated that it's great to hear. We have great CSAs, and they are located with the Dispatchers at our Center Tower so they're able to get that information directly.

Status of updating GTFS data for track work.

GM Rink reported that he spoke to Mike Williams today. Our vendor finally got back to us and uploaded our Google schedule. Presently, our website shows our August 15th schedule. It takes 48 hours for it to populate on Google and, hopefully, we'll have the full schedule on-line. Mike Williams indicated that our vendor said we'll have the dashboard by the end of the month; however, we are exploring new vendors to include the possibility that a vendor might have an app that can be tied into our system. GM Rink asked Jeff Kessler if he knows of any vendors to provide a list, as we are not happy with the responses we've been getting from our current vendor and would like to explore new options.

Jeff Kessler stated that being on PATCO and PATH earlier today pales in comparison. The PATH running to New York is running on a 20-minute headway during mid-days and PATCO is running much better, operationally. However, this morning he arrived at the Speedline for the

9:00 a.m. train but it didn't arrive until 9:04 a.m. Consequently, he almost missed the connection to the EL to make it back. He stated that he knows several vendors that do this work and that he also put together a script that was sent to PATCO's IT team a while ago that would allow PATCO to do the work for free in-house.

GM Rink reported that after talking with IT, coming up with the dashboard, and working with Mike Williams on how the dashboard operates was going to be our solution. We have been waiting for the dashboard for some time, and have been recently advised that we will receive it by the end of the month. If we do receive the dashboard, that will allow us to do it in-house, but we also would like to explore the option of a finding a vendor who has an app that can take the data and put it out onto an app. Jeff Kessler highly recommended not getting an app because it's expensive and a lot to maintain unless it's integrated with fare payments.

Changes/updates on the overnight closure of the City Hall Station.

GM Rink reported that the City Hall Station is still closed overnight and will remain closed at this time.

Has there been any changes to the Covid policy due to the new variant?

GM Rink reported that there have been no changes to the Covid policy due to the new variant.

Progress report on Franklin Square Station construction that includes dollars spent v. percentage complete (change orders, outstanding agreements with the City or State that may prevent an on time opening).

CE Venuto reported that we have been moving along at the Franklin Square Station. The water line has been completed. We removed lead paint from the station and we're working on the headhouse as well as the emergency exits. We have electrical work, concrete work, demolition work, and excavation going on. We just removed a part of the concourse ceiling and the west wall for the construction of the new stairwell, escalator, and elevators. We're currently installing some micro piles to support the new head house which was a large part of the excavation. The project is about 30 percent complete.

CE Venuto reported that as of December 1, 2022, we were a month behind on our billings and we haven't billed for January yet. As of December 1, 2022, the contractors billed around \$6.4M of the \$27M project. We are in the 292nd day of the 750-day construction period. We have a \$2M invoice for the structural steel install and \$1.6M for the elevators and escalators that are in processing. We also have another bill for \$2M for glass and the wall systems for the headhouse. We've had one Change Order that was approved for approximately \$78K for the double handling of the waterline pipe. Double testing, some field trailer work, and a step-up transformer for the new escalator were also under that Change Order.

CE Venuto reported that we continue to work with the city of Philadelphia and have no issues regarding any agreements with the city that are affecting any of our contractors' schedules. We are still on schedule to finish the project in the Spring of 2024.

Scott Cohen asked if there has been any communication or good PR with the local community about the progress the station's making?

CE Venuto reported that we continue to work with the community, the city, Historic Philadelphia, and the Chinatown Community. We held multiple Outreach meetings and had extensive discussions with them prior to and throughout the design phase, and before the construction began. The project team also has a liaison/representative in the city that attends our progress meetings. Around the worksite, there are signs placed in a language they understand that also provides pictures of what the project is going to look like.

Scott Cohen added that he saw the signs and thought it was a real classy proactive touch of being a part of their community.

CE Venuto reported that they were involved in the design and their feedback was that they appreciated being involved.

Straso Jovanski asked about any feedback on the implementation of the PATCO weekend pass?

GM Rink reported that in the two months that it's been implemented, 158 passes have been sold with 814 rides taken. We have to let the data run out because it depends on where the Pass was bought, how each Pass was used, and the number of times it has been used.

Alan Becker asked if PATCO plans on continuing the program pass three months?

GM Rink reported that we must review all the data, then sit down with CEO Hanson, CFO White, and the Commissioners involved to discuss continuing the program. Once we have all the data, we will be able to review and make a business decision.

Jeff Kessler asked of the 158 passes sold, how many unique users were there? Were there repeat people who bought?

GM Rink reported that he does not have exact data but there are a couple of people who bought the pass several times. He thinks there were 10 customers who used it multiple times, but we're still going through the data. Our Director of Fare Collections said there has been a few customers that originally bought the pass then bought it again.

Status of the functionality of the Emergency Call Boxes on PATCO Platforms. (There was an issue with 2 Call Boxes on the platform when someone was stuck in an elevator at 9/10th Station)

GM Rink reported that our Homeland Security Department and Public Safety Department oversees the call boxes. Today, they advised me that 51 of the 58 call boxes are in service. The call boxes that are out of service are being repaired by our vendor, and we hope to have them

back soon. Additionally, any call box that is out of service should have an out of service sticker placed on them. The call boxes were repaired on the day there was an issue.

Larry Davis asked if the call box was out of service at the 9th/10th station?

GM Rink reported that the call box was not working at the time, but the intercom and the elevator were working.

Larry Davis asked why it took the Social Media people about two hours to acknowledge that somebody was in distress?

GM Rink reported that the Center Tower found out about the incident because the alarm went off inside the elevator and it dispatched help to get the people out of the elevator. Larry Davis stated that it wasn't acknowledged on social media that someone was stuck in an elevator for two hours. GM Rink stated that he will look into why Social Media did not respond.

GM Rink reported that our people did respond immediately. The elevators have emergency intercoms on the outside and the inside of the cab, and it was verified that the intercom on the inside of that particular cab was working on that day.

Bruce Schwartz asked what the design life of the call boxes are and is there going to be replacements in the future because the communication technology that's become available would allow a replacement of the call boxes with smarter devices that could monitor the platform for sounds of distress?

CEO Hanson reported that he met with the Homeland Security Team, and they are responsible for maintaining the cameras and the call boxes. One of the issues that came up during the meeting was to determine the necessity of the call boxes, the places they are located and is there something that is better, technologically, that will meet our needs. A couple of years ago, the cameras and call boxes were under the auspices of our IS Department, and although they still play a role, I felt our IS Department wasn't making it a level of priority that it needed. As a result, the Director of Homeland Security is now in charge of the cameras and call boxes. He has a designee who monitors all the repairs of the cameras and the call boxes. The call boxes are not technologically advanced, so the question is, with the popularization of cell phones and other communication devices, do we need all the call boxes that we have, and do we need them where they are. He added that due to the recent network issues, it's now on the front burner.

Larry Davis added that there was also no cell service in the station. So, unless they have Wi-Fi calling turned on to get cell service in the stations that would be of good help.

CEO Hanson stated that's a good point and it's something that did come up in our discussion. On the platforms in the subways where there isn't cell service, we probably won't consider doing away with the call boxes just upgrading if we can find something better.

GM Rink reported that, presently, Verizon has the coverage; however, T-Mobile has submitted all their designs to be added to the system and they will start working soon. Right behind them

will be AT&T, who did all their site surveys and submitted information and plans for the installation of their system, so there will be two additional carriers that will be coming shortly, but T-Mobile is at the forefront.

Larry Davis asked if it was 51 call boxes out of the 58 that are working which translates to roughly 15 percent of the call boxes are not working. If the call boxes are tested on a regular basis, is it just a coincidence that these call boxes were found not working? Are they really being inspected daily?

GM Rink reported that as of today, 51 out of 58 callboxes are working and he would have to find out from Homeland Security because that falls under their responsibility.

Reggie Haynes asked if T-Mobile and AT&T are coming in for the subway portion of the system?

GM Rink reported that they are coming in, specifically, for the subway system. We have an agreement with BOINGO that installed the infrastructure and T-Mobile is going to use their system. Their design documents have been submitted and they have been out with our staff. We have signed off on all the plans but some upgrades will have to be made to our power panels before they begin installation. AT&T has also been out in the field with their designers, and they submitted preliminary drawings to us for review and that contract has been approved by the Board.

Ben Saracco stated that he saw a post on Twitter by a Transit Enthusiast that said, “did you know that the PATCO trains share similar train gauge or compatible tracks with the existing Atlantic City/Philadelphia line on New Jersey Transit. With Septa running to the airport, theoretically, the transit line could run from Atlantic City to the airport and provide faster service.” Is it technically true?

GM Rink reported that the Atlantic City Line is diesel driven and PATCO is powered by a third rail, so not sure if we could run our trains on their tracks because we don't have the same power source.

Regarding the SEPTA line, there was an original connection between PATCO's line and the SEPTA line back in the day. Originally, they thought that PATCO and SEPTA could technically run on the same tracks, but the connection is no longer there. Technically, we could have our cars go on the Broad Street Line, but that connection at the SEPTA curve is where the switch was removed in the 90's. We have a similar gauge, so we could run on the Broad Street Line. GM Rink reported that if we had to do an emergency scenario plan if we ever lost our facility in Lindenwold, we could make that connection to continue operation, but it would take some time.

Social Media, Larry Davis

What is the status of the broken window at the Lindenwold Station?

GM Rink reported that we have a constructability issue where we are working with the contractor that installed the new windowpanes that was done during the station enhancement

project. The Engineering Department is working with the contractor to install the replacement window. CE Venuto added that we expect to have a resolution over the next two weeks or so.

Why isn't a heavy rail alternative not being chosen for the line to Glassboro?

CEO Hanson reported that the Conrail right of way that we're using to minimize the impact on the community would not allow for heavy rail. CE Venuto added that it was reviewed during the alternative analysis phase. PATCO technology would have to be separated and it would require the use of viaducts, tunnels, and cuts that would be exponentially more expensive.

Larry Davis asked if that is noted on the GCL website?

CE Venuto reported that it is on the GCL website under other resources. There is the alternative analysis study.

Is the DRPA looking to do any improvements on the 12th/13th Locust and 15th/16th Locust stops to deal with the security and cleanliness?

Larry Davis stated that he answered by saying that PATCO is only responsible for inside the fare gates. He asked what the partnership is between the agencies as they can communicate with each other at levels higher than Twitter. Is the customer base enough pressure knowing that you're in contact with the city and SEPTA? Everyone refers to it as the PATCO Concourse because it leads to your fare gates, so perception is reality for a lot of people. I know it's out of your hands, but the situation is also out of hand.

CEO Hanson reported that it depends on your perspective as to whether the situation is out of hand. If you are the city of Philadelphia dealing with the homeless, they may feel like the problem is well in hand; however, it's certainly not good for the DRPA and PATCO. He has a meeting scheduled this week to meet with Vice Chairman Nash, one of our PA Commissioners, someone from the Center City Business District, and someone from the Volunteers of America to talk about possible things that the DRPA can do in conjunction with other partners to advocate for the city to do more. The meeting was prompted by a conversation with Vice Chairman Nash where CEO Hanson said that maybe PATCO should only run to the 9th/10th station because we own it and have staff to control and police that station until changes are made. Vice Chairman Nash did not like that suggestion and that's what prompted this meeting. CEO Hanson stated there are several issues to be considered. The first being it's not our jurisdiction, and how our By-Laws impact or enable legislation limit our purview. We are not a full-service government organization like a municipality who has responsibility, staffing, and funding for social service type issues. These issues are appropriately handled by the Municipalities along the PATCO line. Certainly, we will support those efforts, but we are not able to be the lead for several reasons. We are working to maintain our police staffing at adequate levels and we are successful in doing that but, presently, it's hard for us to deploy our police for anything that is not our responsibility.

GM Rink reported that while our Social Media team will relay that through the appropriate Philly 311, he personally provides all details directly to the contacts he has at the city's Department of Public Property. He received an update today that the city thought they repaired the problem because they went to the stairwell at 15th and said everything was working;

however, it was a misinterpretation on their part. They revisited the area and got back to me today stating that it's bigger than just lights being out, and they have their electricians scheduled to do the repair. GM Rink reported that he will personally reach out to the Department of Public Property and advise them of things that our Social Media team relays to Philly 311.

Larry Davis asked GM Rink if he could have our Social Media team put something out advising that it's more than a light bulb and the city's getting electricians out there. GM Rink reported that his office receives complaints and his assistant forward all complaints to the city. He reported that the city has been responsive.

John Boyle asked about cleaning crews.

GM Rink reported that he can attest that the city does have a cleaning crew that goes out to those areas 5 days per week. I have personally seen them working on video. They have a huge task at hand, but they are out there cleaning and as soon as they clean up its dirty again.

CEO Hanson stated that he feels they are not approaching the problem appropriately. If they can't keep up with the work because the problem keeps happening and it's their responsibility, they should make it a priority.

Larry Davis asked about the homeless at the Lindenwold Station.

CEO Hanson reported that there are issues at the Lindenwold Station from time to time. The homeless are people who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and I'm very proud of the way our Officers treat them. When we find them riding the trains without going to a destination, the officers remove them. This is something that has come up during my recent meetings with the Police Department. We've stepped up some of the enforcement and do remove them from the stations and the trains. We are also looking at, particularly in the New Jersey Stations, to move the fare collection closer to the doors to minimize the unpaid areas. If we move the fare gates closer to the doors, then there's less area for people to congregate.

Judy Boldurian asked if the Franklin Square Station is going to be solely owned by PATCO like 9th and 10th.

CEO Hanson reported that yes, the Franklin Square Station is solely owned by PATCO.

Alan Becker asked if the fare gates at Franklin Square are right where you come in?

CEO Hanson reported that we are looking at that closely at Franklin Square because that station is being designed right now. We are trying to position the fare gates in a way that minimizes the unpaid area so that we minimize problems with people congregating.

Old Business:

Upcoming Advance Notice on Public Events:

Mike Venuto reported that there will be a notice going out shortly about the switching the walkway at the Ben Franklin Bridge from the north side to the south side.

Emeritus Status:

Reggie Haynes reported that Steve Benigno is now Emeritus status.

Bruce Schwartz and Daniel Norfleet will be going Emeritus status in June 2023.

DRPA CAC 2023 & 2024 Proposed Meeting Dates

A motion was made to approve the CAC Meeting Schedule for 2023 and 2024. The motion was approved.

New Business:

Next CAC Meeting: Will be held via Zoom on February 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Next DRPA Board Meeting: Will be held virtually on January 18, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.