



Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

August 14, 2024

Location: via Zoom

Attendance:

New Jersey: Reggie Haynes, Judy Boldurian, Alan Becker, Straso Jovanovski, Grace Kimbaris,

Pennsylvania: Scott Cohen, Tyrone Wesley, Robert Melikian

Emeritus Member(s): Jeff Kessler, Larry Davis, Stephen Benigno, Daniel McArdle, Benjamin Saracco, Bruce Schwartz

DRPA/PATCO: John Rink, GM; Michael Venuto, CE; John Hanson, CEO; Cheryl Ansert, Administrative Coordinator

Potential Members: Scott Pileckas

Call to Order

A motion was made to approve the June 26, 2024 minutes. The Minutes were approved.

Finance

CEO Hanson

- PATCO Ridership is relatively unchanged and bridge traffic is relatively unchanged.

GM Rink

- PATCO ridership is about 3.8% higher compared to this time in 2023.

General DRPA

NJ Comptrollers investigation against DRPA and countersuit against the NJ Comptroller

CEO Hanson

- We received subpoenas from the comptroller for the HOLT property in Gloucester City.
- Everything they asked for is a public record and has already been sent to the New Jersey Governor's office, so the subpoena was unnecessary.
- We have all the information they have asked for and are ready to turn it over to them if they withdraw their subpoenas, as we do not believe they are lawful.

Steve Beningo

Are you tracking the cost for this?

CEO Hanson

- Yes, the cost is being tracked.



Warehouse being built along Admiral Wilson Blvd-did the DRPA own these properties (land) recently?

CEO Hanson

- We did own it, it was one last piece remaining from our economic development days.
- The Camden Redevelopment Authority bought it at the appraised value.
- They sold it to whoever is developing the warehouses there.

DRPA CAC recruitment assistance for new members, especially PA members?

CEO Hanson

- Mike Williams has been working on this.
- Cheryl will follow up with Mike Williams for details on his plan and what his plan is going forward.

Will the DRPA be participating in Philadelphia 250?

CEO Hanson

- I am unsure, we have been in contact with the Philadelphia director, but no plans have been made on that yet.

Bridge and Highway

Toll Increase schedule effective date September 14th update

CEO Hanson

- It will be effective September 1st.
- \$1.00 for cars and 20% increase across the board rounded to the nearest \$.
- It has been 13 years since we had an increase.
- No PATCO fare increase at this time, just the bridge crossing increase.

EZ Pass toll discounts, which discounts does DRPA offer, and if not why?

CEO Hanson

- We have a frequent commuter discount and a senior citizens discount.

Construction Updates

CE Venuto

Ben Franklin Bridge

- Rehabilitation of the Suspension span project is closing in on four years and is our biggest project ever. We are about 93% complete at this point and on target to finish by the end of December 2024. We dehumidified the main cables and it will take a while to get the humidity of the cables down below 40%.
- The decorative lighting is energized on both the North and South sides. We had a light show on the Fourth of July weekend which received some good press and compliments.
- Masonry on the two anchorages shows signs of rusting so we are doing rehabilitation on that performing masonry cleaning, repointing and repairs. We will start that project in 2025 and have it complete prior to the 100th Anniversary.

Betsy Ross Bridge

- Painting project is ongoing. We are doing the PA side and the through truss. We are about 37% complete on that \$85M project.
- They can only put so much containment around the bridge as they abrasively blast off the lead paint. It gets blasted down to bare metal and then they apply a three coat protective coating on the steel.
- They are also working on concrete repairs and repainting of the toll plaza.

Bruce Schwartz

The Main cables protected by the dry air system, how long are they expected to last?

CE Venuto

- There is no calculation on the amount of years, except my previous explanation of that we intend for these to last forever and that's how we treat them. We expect to leave them in better condition than we found them for the next generation of engineers and future customers.

Ben Franklin Bridge Eastbound lanes are bumpy and are a hazard when wet/tightening connector plates

CE Venuto

- The deck underneath the asphalt is called an orthotropic deck, it's a steel plate. Many years ago, the deck went from a concrete deck to steel plating (orthotropic deck) then there is an asphalt overlay on top of that. We have seen over the years as we replace the asphalt that the underlying layer where the asphalt adheres to the orthotropic deck has broken down in some areas and that is what is causing some of the ruts that you see on the bridge. We have a long range plan to replace all of the paving on the bridge as well as the joints, but that's a large project. We have some federal funding through PennDOT, but that can't be done until after we finish the BFB suspension span project. We will have a contractor out there in the near future to address a lot of those areas that you are talking about that are bumpy and rutted.
- We have different types of products; there's an epoxy product, a rospphalt product and a couple of other different types of mixes that we've put in different areas that we are currently testing to see the long term effects and see how they hold up in the summer and winter.
- We're not aware of any loose connector plates on the bridge or the walkway. The finger joints are scheduled to be replaced as a capital project in the future. Bridge operations and engineering did a review and did not find anything that was loose.

Has DRPA considered speed cameras on all of the bridges?

CEO Hanson

- Yes, we have and we have not put them there. We do not believe they are effective.
- We do not have the ability to issue tickets with speed cameras.

Safety issue with PATCO in Philly during the evenings

CEO Hanson

- Outside the paid areas belongs to Philadelphia, there is only so much we can do to control the homeless.
- Recommended to download the PATCO look up, speak up app. Which gives direct access to our public safety group.

PATCO

Timeline on Collingswood Station Upgrades

CE Venuto

- We are doing work at Collingswood and Woodcrest. Barriers have been installed in Collingswood to prevent the public from accessing any of the work zones.
- We are redoing the headhouse at Woodcrest as well as some platform renovations/replacement.

GM Rink

- Similar project to what we did at Westmont last year, where we completely redid the headhouse.
- After 50 years there are structural repairs required to replace the entire structural support walls for the headhouse. All the glass blocks are being removed and replaced with glass panels. That work will take six months to be completed, then they will start on the other headhouse and that could take approximately six or seven months.

Franklin Square Update/Timeline

CE Venuto

- We are working on finalizing the head house and it is nearing completion.
- They recently installed trees and landscaping.
- Working on the elevator and escalator, communications, cameras, fire safety, and electrical systems.
- After the contractors are complete, we have some in house work that needs to be done.
- We will leave the construction fence around it until the station is officially open.

Chat Question

Grand Opening Date or another tour?

CE Venuto

- No Grand Opening date as of right now. We have some internal meetings setup to discuss our communication plan and a rollout of an opening date.
- We can arrange a tour, but I ask that we wait until the contractors are complete.

Gloucester Camden Line Update

CE Venuto

- We are approaching our completion for the preliminary engineering 30% submission. Our task was to get the project through the preliminary engineering phase and get it to a 30% design set of plans to be ready for the next phase which would be the design build, operate and maintain type of contract.



- We have been acting as project manager on behalf of New Jersey Transit and in July we received acknowledgement from New Jersey Transit that they will be the owner of record.

Chat Question

Who's in charge of planning for the grand opening? Taking Suggestions?

CEO Hanson

- We are not planning anything yest, because we don't have a clear timeline.
- We are happy to receive suggestions, you can send them to Cheryl and she will see that we get them.

Questions from Social Media

From an article in the Inquirer, Is there any update with PennDOT and the ramps and the ball fields? Is DRPA still saying that's their turf?

CEO Hanson

- Yes, it's still the DRPA's property.

Larry Davis

In addition to the ramps and the ball fields, does DRPA control anything that would prevent I-95 from being widened instead of just repaved?

CE Venuto

- I-95 underneath the Walt Whitman Bridge, we own some property on the other side underneath the structure itself. There are foundations there and some piers that support the bridge, so I don't know if there's much room to be widened.
- The real issue is that they are looking to make the access to I-95 off the Walt Whitman Bridge, so you don't have to go around that big loop.
- They are looking to remove our gantries and operating structures. One PennDOT concept is a ramp off the Walt Whitman Bridge to loop over the top of the bridge going southbound and then come down to I-95 closer to the stadium.

Judy Boldurian approved as new secretary

Members transitioning to Emeritus:

Alan Becker & Pamela Mack-Brooks are now Emeritus status

Active members (8) New Jersey (5) Pennsylvania (3)

OPEN Forum

Next CAC Meeting: September 11, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.

Next DRPA Meeting: DRPA Board Meeting on August 21, 2024 @ 9:00 a.m.