



Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

September 11, 2024

Location: via TEAMS

Attendance:

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

Pennsylvania: Scott Cohen, Tyrone Wesley, Robert Melikian

Emeritus Member(s): Stephen Benigno, Daniel McArdle, Benjamin Saracco

DRPA/PATCO: John Rink, GM; Jerry Sahi, CFO; Elisabeth Klawunn, SE; John Hanson, CEO; Robert Finnegan, CSSO; Cheryl Ansert, Administrative Coordinator

Potential Members: Scott Pileckas

Call to Order

A motion was made to approve the August 14, 2024 minutes. The Minutes were approved.

Finance

CFO Sahi

- Traffic for the month of August was around 4.4M vehicles. That was 1.7% better than last year. 8.5% unfavorable to 2019.
- YTD August traffic was 32.3M vehicles, that was 1.3% better than last year and 6.9% unfavorable to 2019.
- June YTD Toll revenue was \$158.5M. Which was 3.6% better than budget, 1.5% better than last year and 1.9% less than June 2019.
- July YTD PATCO Ridership revenue was \$7.7M. Which was 0.5% less than budget and 3.5% better than last year and 51.5% less than July 2019. YTD ridership was 3.2M.
- The unaudited operating expenses is around \$80.9M, which is 11.5 favorable to budget, 6.8M of the favorable variance is coming from employee related costs.

Has the 20% bridge toll increase affected bridge crossing numbers?

CFO Sahi

- Traffic is pretty steady, a little bit better than last year's for this month so far. We haven't seen a decline in the traffic if you compare it to the 1st 10 days of the year.
- Traffic is slightly better than last year for trucks and buses.

Scott Cohen: Has there been any pushback through customer service or other means, but the toll increase?

CFO Sahi

- Not the best of my knowledge. We had media coverage last month so most of the people knew.

General DRPA

Updates on declining CAC members? Especially from PA

CEO Hanson

- We continue to advertise on the PATCO message signs and on social media to try to get people.
- We are going to include information about joining CAC when we go to career fairs.

Bridge and Highway

The BFB will be closed eastbound Tuesday presumably for safety before and during the debate.

What economic impact does this have? Is there any compensation offered?

CEO Hanson

- No impact on eastbound traffic to the extent that people didn't cross the bridge.
- No compensation was offered, there is no toll eastbound.

Bridge repair timing and updates? Almost daily traffic snafus are reported.

SE Klawunn

- It's a \$195M five-year capital construction project where we are rehabilitating the suspension spans and anchorages. Work includes main cable wrapping, dehumidification, decorative lighting upgrades, complex steel repairs, maintenance, painting, and rehabilitation work.
- Lane closures are needed with the work, but we planned the work with an attempt to minimize lane closures and provide all lanes of traffic open in the peak direction during rush hour.
- We have upcoming work to upgrade and maintain this 98 year-old structure that will include lane closures, including work rehabilitating the masonry on the anchorages and resurfacing of the bridge.

PATCO

Update on Franklin Square

SE Klawunn

- Work is continuing through the station. Landscaping and path construction has been completed outside and now we are working on getting the company to do the faregate system inside the station.

GM Rink

- We have to tie the fire alarm systems into our whole network system and install tags in the track area for the signal system that will tell the train to stop at the platform.

Bruce Schwartz: Does John have any insight as to why the secret service only wanted one side of the bridge to be closed? Why not the whole thing?

CEO Hanson

- The secret service doesn't usually tell us anything.

Bruce Schwartz: Did they impose any restrictions on PATCO?

GM Rink

- No



Steve Benigno: In preparation for the 5th St station, has the Philadelphia Fire department toured the station yet for emergency evacuation preparation or other emergencies?

CEO Hanson

- That is still to be scheduled. Rob Finnegan will be working on that.

GM Rink

- We have an evacuation plan that's being developed, we will go over that with the public safety in Philadelphia.

Bob Melikian: My question is about the \$198M project on the BFB. Has anything this major been done in the 98 years of history?

SE Klawunn

- This is the DRPA's single largest capital construction project to date.
- We replaced steel pieces that were 100 years old, we dehumidified them in cables, which is helping to achieve our goal of preserving these perpetual assets that need to last us in their entirety.

CEO Hanson

- It's a tremendous project on the iconic Ben Franklin Bridge and it's the largest project in our history.

Septa has announced increased train schedules. Is PATCO increasing?

GM Rink

- With the train schedules, we are currently staying the same. It's matching our ridership demand right now.
- Septa's train schedules have no impact on us.

Septa has announced increased fares. Will this influence PATCO fares?

CEO Hanson

- Not at this time.
- The commissioners made the decision when the tolls increased not to increase the fares.

Chat Questions:

CEO Hanson

- I guess that Franklin Square is going to open somewhere near the end of the year.

Have we been involved in preparing a pitch to locate the Sixers in Camden?

CEO Hanson

- No we have not. We have been asked some questions and PATCO capacity, but none of our stations are close to the proposed site.



Bob Melikian: Has things calmed down with the request for records and contract information that we were talking about last month?

CEO Hanson

- We had offered to give them information if they had withdrawn their subpoenas and they refused to withdraw them.
- We filed in Federal court to have the contract interpreted by a federal judge.

Judy Boldurian: When does the leaf schedule start?

GM Rink

- Leaf season typically starts in mid-October. Our current schedule incorporates the special braking needed during leaf season, so we do not need to modify and run a new schedule.
- We have been out this week installing our gel applicators to put a gel down on the rail which helps.

Scott Cohen: Is the DRPA participating in America 250's opening weekend? Or have you been involved in Philly 250 yet? If you need a liaison I am appointed to the advisory committee from America 250 PA for the state.

CEO Hanson

- I will let Jalila Parker know, because she is handling that.

GM Rink

- Mobile is active and online at our 3 Locust Street stations, City Hall should be done this week. Broadway next week. Two weeks should be 8th and Market.
- In the next two to three weeks if you have T-Mobile you will have cell service down on the platforms and in the concourses.

Members transitioning to Emeritus:

Alan Becker & Pamela Mack-Brooks are now Emeritus status
Active members (7) New Jersey (4) Pennsylvania (3)

OPEN Forum

Next CAC Meeting: October 9, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.

Next DRPA Meeting: DRPA Board Meeting on September 18, 2024 @ 9:00 a.m.