

METRO NORTH NEW HAVEN RAIL COMMUTER COUNCIL
(Established in 1985 under Connecticut Public Act 85-239, now Sections 13b-212b and
13b -212c of the Connecticut General Statutes)

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2012
CITY HALL
STAMFORD, CT

Present were: Jim Cameron, Chairman, Bob Jelley, Rodney Chabot, John Hartwell, Roger Cirella, and Jeff Maron, members of the Council; Gene Colonese, DOT; Sue Doering, Metro North Railroad; Martin Cassidy, Stamford Advocate; John Austin, Nils-Gunnar Bagelius and Richard Stowe, Members of the Public.

The meeting began at 7:00 pm. The Chairman noted the absence of a quorum.

STAMFORD GARAGE

Gene Colonese reported that the DOT was reviewing the proposals that had been received for a new garage.

“SANDY”

Mr. Colonese reported that there had not been much flooding on the New Haven main line. He said that the New Canaan line had lots of problems with more than 60 trees down. Rodney Chabot raised the question of cutting trees further from the track on the New Canaan line in order to have a more treeless right-of-way. Mr. Colonese said that the DOT was working on partnering with CL&P and UI to try to achieve a more treeless right-of-way.

M-8s

Jeff Maron said that the seats were getting squishy on some of the new trains. He also said that there were complaints about the temperature on the M-8s. Sue Doering reported that the summer temperature setting is 78 degrees. She said she would find out the winter temperature setting. Mr. Colonese reported that 168 M-8s had been delivered. He said that there were still 198 M-2s in operation and 102 M-4s and M-6s. He said that on weekdays about 45% of the trains were M-8s and on weekends about 60% were M-8s.

In answer to a question about the knocking couplers, Mr. Colonese said that corrective modifications would start being made in December or January. He also reported that the DOT is still not testing M-8s on Shore Line East, because the necessary agreement with Amtrak has not yet been signed.

MAIN LINE ISSUES

In answer to a question, Mr. Colonese said that the distance between repairs reported for M-8s was low, because they are still fixing problems. Mr. Chabot and Nils-Gunnar Bagelius spoke of

the use of electronic tickets in Sweden and how easy they made the obtaining of tickets. Ms. Doering said that Metro North was still working on electronic tickets, but that there were major fraud issues that had to be solved.

It was announced that beginning the first of the year there will be a 9% fare increase in New York fares and a 5% increase in Connecticut fares.

BICYCLES

Richard Stowe asked if there was a final design for bike hooks on the M-8s. Ms. Doering reported that it is being tested on one train. No bungee cords are required with the hooks. Jim Cameron stated that Metro North needs to establish priorities for the use of the bike hook space. Ms. Doering reported that it is clear that the handicapped get priority for use of that space. She also reported that conductors have the authority to keep bikes off trains if there is overcrowding. Mr. Stowe complained that there were still too many “no bike” trains during the shoulder period at the beginning and end of the peak period.

Mr. Stowe also said that there should be earlier week day service from New Haven to New York. He also said that he thought some weekend trains ought to go to State Street.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Cameron asked about weekend ridership with the additional trains that have been added.

Because there were so few members present, Mr. Cameron suggested that the issue of amending the Council’s statute to include the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield branch should be discussed at the December meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm. The next meeting will be held on December 19, 2012, at 7:00 pm at SWRPA in Stamford.

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