



## **Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes**

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Location: via: Zoom

### **Attendance:**

**New Jersey:** Reggie Haynes, Alan Becker, Dan Norfleet, Steve Benigno, Joe Russell, Bruce Schwartz, Straso Jovanovski, Ben Saracco

**Pennsylvania:** Larry Davis, Dan McArdle, Tyrone Wesley, Bob Melikian

**Emeritus Member(s):** Jeff Kessler, John Boyle

**Potential Member(s):** Scott Cohen

**DRPA/PATCO:** John Hanson, CEO; Obra Kernodle, Deputy CEO; John Rink, GM; Adam Jacurak, Engineer; Dawn Whiton, Executive Assistant

### **Public Member(s):**

### **Call to Order**

A motion was made to approve the January 12, 2022 minutes. The minutes were approved.

### **CEO, John Hanson**

CEO Hanson started off the meeting by introducing Adam Jacurak who is a manager in the Engineering Department. Mr. Jacurak started with the DRPA as an Engineer at PATCO as the Director of Track and Facilities. He recently came back to the Engineering Department at OPC.

CEO Hanson also introduced Deputy CEO, Obra Kernodle, as his partner on the 11<sup>th</sup> Floor at OPC. Deputy CEO Kernodle addressed the CAC Committee and looks forward to collaborating with the members for a long period of time. He is available to the members realizing that the DRPA/PATCO works for the public and he wants to make sure there is continued communication. CEO Kernodle requested that the CAC members address him as Obi.

Dan McArdle asked Deputy CEO Kernodle where he's joining the DRPA from. Deputy CEO Kernodle stated that he was the Commissioner for Gaming overseeing all the gaming in the State of Pennsylvania. Before that, he was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Wolfe in Pennsylvania.

Dan McArdle stated that he's looking forward to having a great relationship with Deputy CEO Kernodle as he had with the past Deputy CEO. He stated that the CAC Committee has a great relationship with CEO Hanson and GM Rink. CEO Hanson added that we get a lot accomplished and, presently, we are working on ideas that were suggested by the CAC on the PATCO side. CEO Hanson stated that he's always happy to receive suggestions from the members. He agreed that, collectively, he and the CAC members have a great relationship.

CEO Hanson reported that CFO White will not be joining tonight's meeting because he's working on a bond deal. He reported that bridge traffic during the past six months into the end of the year was consistent at 90% of pre-pandemic numbers. In January into February, numbers dropped due to the Omicron Variant, as well as the bad weather. We're starting to rebound and I'm hopeful that we're going to return to 90% quickly and exceed it as we get closer to the end of the month.

On the PATCO side, similarly, ridership hit 50% and was still rising at year end. It dropped back to 35% at the low and it's now at 40% of the pre-Covid range or at least approaching 40% of pre-Covid.

CEO Hanson further reported that there was some activity on social media and a question from the CAC regarding an accident at the PATCO Westmont Station involving a PATCO employee driving a PATCO van. He reported, according to his understanding of this particular PATCO employee, that he was making a left-hand turn at a light, he lost control of the vehicle, knocked down a traffic light, and hit a parked car. The employee continued from the further end of the PATCO parking lot back to the regular PATCO station, parked the vehicle, walked back to the scene of the accident, and engaged with the police officer who was there. The incident happened in Haddon Township and the Police Department is investigating the accident, as well as PATCO Management.

Bob Melikian asked if there were any injuries. CEO Hanson reported that he does not believe there were any injuries, it was a one car accident with only one car occupied. Our employee was not injured and no one else was hit.

Ben Saracco asked if there was a post-accident drug test. CEO Hanson reported that all PATCO normal protocols were followed but won't get into the specifics of this case. Drug and alcohol tests are a part of our normal protocols that everyone faces in a situation like this.

Daniel Norfleet asked if the accident was chargeable or just that he lost control of the vehicle. CEO Hanson reported that he lost control of the vehicle and, to the best of his knowledge, no one else was involved. In terms of any tickets or charges which may be brought by Haddon Township, those types of things are not public record through the DRPA. They are public record through Haddon Township. Employees have certain rights to confidentiality that we're unable to

breach. If tickets are issued, PATCO does not pay those fines or tickets and does not pay to defend the employee against any of these types of violations. Those are personal violations against their own driver's license.

Daniel Norfleet asked if there was a real reason he left the scene of the accident? CEO Hanson reported that there is an ongoing investigation. He reported that he did not know why the employee didn't stop. CEO Hanson can only assume that he panicked and drove to the PATCO station where he felt safe. He was in the area of the remote parking lot and drove a couple blocks to the station, then walked back to the scene. Other than he just panicked and didn't exercise good judgment, I can't say for sure, and I might not even be right about that.

Larry Davis stated that the information was passed to him through Twitter. The driver could have had a medical emergency or seemed to be under the influence. Mr. Davis asked if there was a medical emergency? CEO Hanson reported that no one appeared to be injured so if there was an emergency in that moment, I am not aware of it.

Larry Davis asked if information becomes known that the driver was under the influence will it be made public? CEO Hanson stated that if you want that information, you can send a written request to the DRPA, and he will send it to the Legal Department. He reported that he's talked to DRPA attorneys, and that information is not public information. It's a personnel matter related to the employee. CEO Hanson reported that the law specifically excludes that information becoming public record from the DRPA. He stated that if the police officer wrote a ticket, you could obtain that information from the Police Department of Haddon Township.

Bob Melikian asked if the roadways were snowy, icy, or slippery on that day? CEO Hanson reported, and GM Rink confirmed, that it was raining on that date. Dan McArdle stated that it was raining, and the roads were a little slick in Conshohocken on that date. CEO Hanson added that looking at the pictures of the van and the damage that was done to the traffic light, it appeared to him that it was a pretty severe impact.

Jeff Kessler asked if the DRPA requires employees who drive a DRPA vehicle take any type of defensive driving course? GM Rink reported that there is a Fleet Manual that applies to all DRPA and PATCO employees that must be followed. Employees could be deemed unacceptable drivers not being allowed to drive our vehicles with offenses on their own driver's license. He reported that our Risk Management Department oversees that and does all motor vehicle checks on employees every two years. Motor vehicle checks are made to verify employees driving records.

Daniel Norfleet asked if the DRPA had a System Safety Team? GM Rink reported that the DRPA/PATCO has a Safety Team. Daniel Norfleet asked if the Safety Team investigated the accident. GM Rink reported that they engage in only a portion of the investigation. CEO Hanson added that the Director of Power and Signals and his Management Team will also be participating in the investigation and the consideration of any disciplinary action if warranted.

## **Update on Finance and Capital Projects**

CEO Hanson reported its wintertime and the amount of capital work performed is slow. He asked Adam Jacurak to discuss what's happening with capital projects at this time.

Adam Jacurak reported that the capital work does slow down during the winter months. At the Skanska Project, the rehabilitation of the suspension cables is continuing. They are still on the northside of the bridge continuing the steel work and structural repairs.

At the Walt Whitman Bridge Corridor Project, the final sign gantry is being installed this week. We have a few punch-list items to close out that project ahead of schedule.

Regarding the Elevator Project, the steel is going up at 12/13<sup>th</sup> Streets. The stairwell at City Hall has been completed and the fabrication of the steel enclosure for City Hall is nearing completion and fabrication.

Bob Melikian stated that he heard on KYW, presuming it's the expressway at Broad Street, is going to be closed tonight in both directions. Is that a part of the construction that's going on? CEO Hanson reported that the expressway at Broad Street is not part of our operation.

## **Update on scheduling a meeting with DRPA CAC and new DRPA Leadership**

CEO Hanson stated that the committee was introduced to Deputy CEO, Obra Kernodle, tonight. Chairwoman, Cherelle Parker, has been involved with matters relative to her position on the Philadelphia Council. He asked Deputy CEO Kernodle to reach out to Chairwoman Parker to see if we can have her scheduled to meet the CAC Committee members. Deputy CEO Kernodle stated that he will get that on the books.

Bob Melikian asked Deputy CEO Kernodle what his role was at the DRPA. Deputy CEO Kernodle reported that he manages all procurement and DRPA Real Estate. He stated that he represents the Pennsylvania side at the DRPA. CEO Hanson added that he and Deputy CEO, Kernodle work collaboratively on personnel matters, strategy matters, Government Relations and Grants Administration, and IS. In our strategic matters, Deputy CEO Kernodle and I collaborate while working at the higher level in supporting CFO White with bond deals. We're working together on personnel matters and policy matters. Frequently, New Jersey and Pennsylvania views are similar, but we never want to make sure that one side is left out of important policy decisions and by us collaborating, we make sure that it doesn't happen.

Bob Melikian asked if any of the Infrastructure Funds that have been approved are earmarked for anything that the Port Authority has requested or is entitled to. CEO Hanson reported that it's being reviewed as the grants come out and that's a part of the Deputy CEO's responsibilities. His Grants Director is watching and continues to update on grants that are available but, presently, we haven't found anything that matches what we are doing.

## **PATCO General Manager, John Rink**

### **GTFS Update**

GM Rink reported that he, Mike Williams, and Jeff Kessler have been working with the IS Department where Jeff Kessler was happy to speak about his program. Our IS Department is creating a framework looking for a similar method to the python software that Jeff Kessler uses. We are trying to finalize that and once that's done, we will start to train our employees that have been identified to use that program. GM Rink stated that he appreciates the time that Jeff Kessler spent with our IS Department since our last meeting. We don't have an ETA, but we're still trying to finalize and create the same kind of formula and input that into our system. It would include the static updates where we would be able to add our special schedules, our trackwork schedules, and be able to update. It will not include the real time which is something we're still looking at.

### **Real-time Update – Status of template/messaging changes (Possibility of CAC engagement prior to acceptance of vendor work?)**

GM Rink reported that the work was accepted and completed. We can change the messages on the signs, but it's not a digital display, it's more information driven. We don't have the ability to create a lot of graphics. Jeff Kessler stated that PATCO is using the signs as a four-line variant and PATCO can convert it into a two-line variant or, at least, use the third and fourth lines where the time for next arrival is bigger. Similarly, if you're able to squeeze it in there, PATCO can put the subsequent train so if you're at Collingswood waiting for the train, you can see there's a train in five minutes and then another train in ten minutes. Having that information will help people if a train is really crowded, they'll know another one is right behind it.

GM Rink reported that they have been trying to eliminate the station name and time to make that bigger and every time we've done it, it cut off the bottom line. The signs we're purchased before implementing this system and were running on a different software program. Now, as we moved it off the network to the SCADA, it's a new program, so we've been pursuing those changes with the vendor and the new software. We agree that you should know what station you are at, and thanks to Reggie's idea, the time is on the schedule signs right next to it. We are trying to look at making that bigger. GM Rink reported that he will also see if we can do something with the subsequent train.

Jeff Kessler followed up by asking if a sign can be put up at the gate line or visible from the fare gates as the current infrastructure doesn't have the signs we are currently using for countdowns visible from there. Mr. Kessler asked if it could be considered for future programs or incorporate it into the existing signs? GM Rink stated that it's something PATCO is exploring and once we get our GTFS updated with that information, the signs that run our advertising have a particular tracker on the bottom where they can display the Google GTFS times.

### **New Headhouse entry doorways – Why one-way vs existing two-way?**

GM Rink reported that with the station enhancements, we were able to reconsider the one-way doorways versus two-way doorways. The old two-way doors were a maintenance nightmare. There are closers at the top and the bottom that were a constant maintenance problem. Sometimes the closers would blow, and the door frame would get distorted, and the wind started cracking the floor. Consequently, we decided to go with the standard push/pull door. Leaving the platform is the exit portion so that had to be the push and when you go out it would be the pull. During windy seasons, the doors at the Westmont and Collingswood Stations would constantly blow open so we had to build polls by the doors, or it would blow out the closer. Therefore, we made a design decision to move forward with replacing the doors with one-way doors. Ferry Avenue has the one-way doors and we're in the process of replacing the doors at Lindenwold. Additionally, the headhouses at Ashland and Haddonfield have one-way doors where we did the elevator work.

### **New station design (as apparent at Ferry Ave) can the existing station color coding be maintained?**

GM Rink reported that the existing station color coding is being maintained. The only difference is they added the new column covers with a silver architectural cover, but the original red at the station is still there. The same applies at Lindenwold where we kept the original blue.

### **Collingswood Parking Lot Lights. Lights have been intermittently out in the lots**

GM Rink reported that the lights have been repaired yesterday. He reported that on January 30<sup>th</sup>, we found a blown electrical splice in a maintenance hole that also took out a breaker that affected half the parking lot. We had to order the breaker, fix the splice in the maintenance hole, and get the breaker replaced.

### **Update on Philadelphia's cleaning of underground tunnels and stairwells that connect to PATCO. The stairwell on the northwest corner of 16th & Locust is atrocious with trash and graffiti**

GM Rink reported that we have talked about this issue before. Philadelphia's Department of Public Property tried to clean the graffiti in the stairwell but could not get it clean and turned it over to the City's Graffiti Units called Clip (I believe). GM Rink reported that he looked at the cameras today. The city has two cleaners – one in the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> area and the other in the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> area. They are there every day and sometimes on Sunday. They have struggled to keep up with the young shelter issue that's going on. We have been working with the city and next week they will start to install fencing or put up a barricade to close portions of the concourse area where the unsheltered congregate. We have been actively reporting these issues to the city and these areas are outside of our jurisdiction. CEO Hanson, Deputy CEO Kernodle, and I have been working with our Government Relations Department. There are also members of Council for the City of Philadelphia that we've worked with, and other various departments such as the Department of Homeless Services, etc. who are trying to get the people the assistance and help they need. Unfortunately, they also have people cleaning areas where there is also a lot of trash and

biohazards in those areas, and they have done a great job cleaning those areas thoroughly. Anytime we get complaints with customers, we forward the complaint to the city. The city doesn't move as quick or respond as timely as PATCO would, but the areas are outside of our jurisdiction.

Larry Davis asked about the fencing that's going up and how much of that can be shared. Will there be a press event? GM Rink reported that he can't say what the city is going to do regarding that, but the areas they are closing off are the larger areas at 13<sup>th</sup> and Juniper where a majority of the unsheltered congregate, and at 15<sup>th</sup> Street. We made sure that the areas they are closing off will not affect our customers and they will still have access to stairwells and the elevator to exit the system.

### **Social Media, Larry Davis**

#### **Would it be possible to integrate a single fare, one swipe and done, across PATCO and the GCL?**

CEO Hanson stated that the very short answer is, of course, it's possible. However, that approach would be fraught with complications today. He believes there may be different ownership even if we wind up managing the project. I think it's very likely that New Jersey Transit is going to own it. Under current funding, the DRPA couldn't own it because there's no way we could generate enough in bridge tolls to subsidize the PATCO Line and then the Glassboro Camden Line. CEO Hanson believes it's going to be owned by someone else so that's a complication. It is a possibility, but it's feedback that will be considered as we develop the fare strategies.

#### **There have been a couple of articles in the Philadelphia Inquirer recently about police officers allegedly abusing their benefits regarding long term disability. Are the DRPA Officers offered a similar benefit? Is it audited? Are there issues with DRPA officers being injured on duty and exploiting their benefits?**

CEO Hanson reported that the DRPA officers do have benefits who are injured on duty. One of the advantages that we have is our size and the scale. When you talk about PATCO compared to New Jersey Transit or SEPTA, those lines are so big that they have something going wrong every day. It's just a statistic. The DRPA is small, so GM Rink and I don't have to deal with that every day. Our police force is rather large, comparatively speaking, and is significant to the rest of the region but significantly smaller than the city of Philadelphia. DRPA police are managed very tightly through our claims department, and we do not have any indication that those types of things occur. We do have a contract with investigators, and we do send them out when we receive allegations of abuse, not just for the Police Department, but for any employee.

### **Old Business:**

GM Rink reported that there are no Public Events scheduled.

## **DRPA CAC recruitment ideas**

Bob Melikian stated that he went through the list that Reggie Haynes provided, and most members are active, however, there was a question on Matt Zapson's membership. Bob Melikian stated that he will contact him to see if he wants to remain on the committee. According to the dates listed on the Spreadsheet, Larry Davis, Mike Devlin, Steve Benigno, Dan McArdle, and Marty King are all coming to the end of their six-year term. He stated that he's not sure of Bruce Schwartz' term details. Reggie Haynes stated that there are some members where he couldn't get clear start dates, so he'll continue to research to see if he can bridge the gap on that information. Reggie Haynes also stated that he would like to keep the month each member started to know exactly when they would go Emeritus.

Bob Melikian asked how many prior members are still on the cacgooglelist email still receiving emails. Reggie Haynes stated that is another task that must be tackled. Dan McArdle stated that when he stepped down as Chair, he tried to clean up the number of inactive members from the google list. Reggie Haynes stated that he and Dan McArdle need to get together because he is having difficulty updating the google group because when he tries, there's no group that shows up and that is why he can't edit the group. Dan McArdle stated that he is still able to pull up the group, as well as Larry Davis. Reggie Haynes stated that he will set-up a separate session with Dan McArdle.

Bob Melikian stated that it would be great if we could recruit or stimulate new membership, especially from Pennsylvania. He stated that most of the conversation seems to be focused more on PATCO and, if people in Pennsylvania are not using PATCO, they're not interested. He added that the CAC should consider forming a subcommittee meeting for PATCO issues, so they don't have to participate if they don't want to.

CEO Hanson stated that, prior to 2014, members of the DRPA and PATCO staff never attended CAC meetings and if they did, it was very rare. As CEO, John Matheussen, and as CFO at the time, we didn't attend. CEO Hanson stated that it's always been your meeting and we're happy to participate and receive feedback, advice, questions, and ideas; however, what occurs to me is that you have a community that gets together because community happens when people get together face to face. It's hard, even through Zoom, because you're only meeting for a specific purpose. There's not really a community around the people who use our bridges. They're isolated, they're in their cars, they don't see one another, and they don't connect. However, at PATCO, people come together at the stations, in the parking lots, on the trains, so there tends to be more of a community. People have more of a common experience and express more common interests, therefore, the issues become surfaced. If people have a problem with the bridges, it's usually traffic or a pothole and they call our customer service line, it's an individual experience. Therefore, the CAC's focuses more on PATCO issues because it's rooted in the idea that it's a common experience and a community comes out of it. I'm not sure you're going to get people interested in the bridges except for the Ben Franklin Bridge walkway. There, people connect on the walkway and on their bikes or walking.

Scott Cohen added that putting signage up about joining the CAC may work. That is how he became involved, and we could reach out to the walkers on the bridge. It would be DRPA

signage placed in certain areas, obviously, for good public view and keeping it simple about joining the organization with reference to the website. CEO Hanson stated that he will talk to Mike Williams to see what we can come up with.

Bob Melikian added that CEO Hanson is right as he vaguely recalls a meeting with his predecessor, maybe once or twice. Mr. Melikian stated that what's interesting is that you brought a whole new different attitude, not only to the CAC, but to the whole organization and it's just blossomed because of your can-do attitude.

Bob Melikian further stated that he's not being negative about the interest in becoming a member of the CAC, but feels we almost need a controversy to get people interested to come on board. It used to be the economic funds that were wasted, the tolls going up, and things being out of control, and nobody seemed to be in charge. He stated that CEO Hanson changed the atmosphere of the organization so much better that it's incredible. CEO Hanson responded by saying that includes members of the CAC but agreed with Mr. Melikian. The CAC had some people who were attracted to the controversy, and most have dropped off. He stated that we're not getting them anymore and the people who are left on the committee are the ones who have ideas on how to fix things. From those of you who are here now, that's what we get. Sometimes we don't agree, but we're always talking about how to make things better. It's similar to the Executive Staff and the Senior Staff. We don't always agree, either. CEO Hanson stated that he tells the story of someone he works with and told her here's what we are going to do. She responded with I've been telling you that for the past two months. He responded with "Congratulations, because today's the day you finally got through to me." I think carefully about what I want to do or what I think is right and it's why I am slow to let go of my ideas. But when I'm proven wrong, and it happens more often than not, I change course. It's the whole team coming together and it's not for everyone. Some of you were around during that controversial time but you weathered the controversies to make a difference. And you have and I appreciate it.

Alan Becker stated that at one of the Finance Committee meetings the CAC and Title VI was brought up. GM Rink stated it was the Title VI presentation regarding the update of our plan and as part of our plan, we want to try to track Latino and Asian members to the CAC for those who use public transportation around the PATCO areas. Alan Becker asked how critical it was because the CAC doesn't deny anyone who wants to participate. Larry Davis added that the Asian Community around Franklin Square may want to become involved. Scott Cohen suggested that the signage on the walkway should be printed in Chinese communicating the language of your audience as maybe it would be more warming and make them feel more comfortable. CEO Hanson stated that is an idea worth considering and we'll talk about it.

### **Update on in person DRPA CAC meetings**

CEO Hanson reported that the meetings belong to the CAC and if the members want in-person meetings they can have them wherever they like. However, at this time, meetings cannot be held at OPC because our Board isn't meeting in-person and we don't allow visitors at the DRPA and PATCO. I'm hoping it happens soon with the cases dropping as we are reaching some level of immunity. He added that when he needs to take an in-person meeting, he does it outside of the

office because we have a prohibition against allowing visitors in. It's going to be dictated by the Board's timetable for resuming in-person meetings.

Bruce Schwartz asked if there is any State or Federal Health Authority who is laying down guidance for when it's safe to have a dozen or more people together in a room. CEO Hanson reported that the DRPA and PATCO is following CDC Guidelines in the workplace. Right now, we require masks, but we also look at what the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey does. We borrowed heavily, at least the first two/thirds of the pandemic, from the policies of the State of New Jersey because they were sharing what they were doing, and it made sense to us. We didn't get a lot of policies from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Daniel Norfleet asked when masks will be dropped when riding PATCO because most of the Governors are saying people won't have to wear masks. GM Rink reported that Federal Law extends mask wearing until March 18, 2022. We haven't seen any update to the policy or any push on the extension of that date. Steve Benigno stated that there will be an announcement in the beginning of March.

**New Business:**

**Next CAC Meeting:** Will be held via Zoom on March 9, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

**Next DRPA Board Meeting:** Will be held virtually on February 16, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.