

MINUTES

Public Transit Advisory Special Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 19th, 2017, 9am

Monument Hall, Princeton, NJ

Present: : Chris Ieva, Vice Chair, Pradeep Vachani, Citizen Member, Dosier Hammond, Citizen Member, Jenny Crumiller, Council Liaison, Don Mayer-Brown, Engineering, Jack West, Engineering. There were approximately 11 members of the public attending as well. Most were there to discuss Copperwood, which will be covered in a subsequent addition to these minutes.

Kip Cherry, and 11 other -Members of the Public

Chris Ieva, the Vice-Chair, chaired this meeting as Chair Fay Reiter was unable to attend. He explained that the meeting was called specifically to decide on the new Free B schedule, and whether it would include a mid-morning Dinky stop. Additionally, if the committee votes to include a mid-morning run, which one of 2 possible schedules that would be.

Chris raised the question of a quorum, as only 3 of 6 voting member were attending. The committee considered and whether or not to go ahead with the meeting and whether they could take a vote. Members decided to go ahead with the meeting and have a discussion, but would probably not have a formal vote on the question, and instead would pass along our discussion to the Council.

The committee discussed the pros and cons of the different proposed Dinky schedules.

Dosier Hammond provided an overview of some of these to the Committee and members of the public. He discussed the need for the overall schedule changes due to increasing Neighborhood ridership which is frequently already at capacity and decreasing Commuter ridership, since most runs serve 1-4 passengers.

A mid-morning run would serve residents who wanted to travel to New York City and other locations during the day for meetings, business, entertainment, dining, etc. He also shared that there were differing views on this. Dosier believes that it was worth promoting the Dinky and Dinky stops more in the future now that the Arts Center is completed and service on the NJ Transit Northeast Corridor is expected to improve.

For the mid-day Dinky stop, Dosier outlined the pros:

1. The ability for residents to use it to get into New York, Newark, Philadelphia and other Northeast corridor stops for the reasons mentioned above.
2. The importance of keeping the Dinky connection vibrant and available.
3. The growth of the Dinky Station area as an entertainment and dining hub, with the Arts Center and two new restaurants, WAWA and as well as McCarter Theater productions.
4. A number of residents of Elm Court have said they would use this mid-morning stop

The cons:

1. Adding a mid-morning run would require disrupting of the Neighborhood route by adding 10 minutes to the schedule in the middle of the day.
2. Doing it only once during the mid-day would not be an optimum way to promote the stop.
3. Uncertainty of how much potential ridership there is beyond the Elm Court residents.
4. General tightness of the schedule.

Chris Ieva and Pradeep Vachani commented that this was a fairly good overview.

Pradeep said that changing the consistency of the daytime service was not a good idea.

Chris commented that the Dinky is one of the 3 transit hubs in town. He also said we need more data.

And we need to integrate all options.

Tiger Transit was mentioned as an option for people to transfer at Palmer Square and get to the Dinky.

However, the transfer times from the Free B to Tiger Transit are not known. Additionally, having to transfer can discourage ridership.

Chris said that Go Princeton was not up online yet, but should happen soon.

It was agreed that the Survey that was recently conducted was helpful, but that we could use more information for future schedule changes. The Go Princeton campaign will help spread information in the fall when it is initially launched, and more so in the spring.

Some tweaks to the schedule were proposed by Kip Cherry and Jack Wes. Don Mayer-Brown said he would try to finalize two schedules to present to the Council by Friday. One would have a mid-day run that would arrive at the Dinky Station at 9:49 am, and the other would not have a mid-day Dinky stop. Comments by committee members will be passed along as well.

Comments from the Public

About 10 members of the public announced that they were at the meeting to advocate for the reinstating of the Free B stop at Copperwood.

They said that when the original trial run for the Copperwood Free B stop happened a few years ago, Copperwood was not close to being filled with tenants which was why there were so few riders. Now Copperwood is fully occupied and they feel strongly that the stop should be reinstated.

They stated that Seniors at Copperwood especially need the service.

They discussed the walk up the hill or down to the other stops as an obstacle, as well as crossing a street that has relatively fast traffic.

They said that the driver would not stop for them in front of Copperwood, and would gesture for them to go down the street to be picked up. Additionally, he would then lecture and sometimes chastise them about going there when they entered the bus. They acknowledged that it was a difficult turn for the driver to pull over and pick them up at Copperwood because his turn out of Princeton Community Village was not easy.

They asked that a sign be added and that the driver be told to stop at Copperwood.

Engineering acknowledged that there were difficulties with that stop, and that they would look into it. This might include moving the Copperwood stop, and changing the route of the driver to facilitate the stop.

They also said they would talk to the driver about not stopping there.

The Copperwood residents said that they paid substantial taxes and deserved to be served too.

They delivered a petition with approximately 35 signatures from Copperwood residents asking for the reinstatement of the Copperwood Free B stop.