

# Princeton

400 Witherspoon Street □ 1 Monument Drive  
Princeton, NJ 08540

## Public Transit Advisory Committee

MINUTES –March 19, 2015

The Public Transit Advisory Committee met in the East Conference Room of the Monument Municipal Building of Princeton, NJ at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2015.

### Attendance

Present were: Marvin Reed, chair; Anton Lahnston; Councilwoman Jenny Crumiller; Edward Truscelli, executive director, Princeton Community Housing; Fay Reiter, director of social services, Princeton Community Housing; Joan Lockwood-Reck of the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association; and Don Mayer-Brown of the Engineering staff.

Also present was local resident Kip Cherry.

### Ridership

Joan reported on February “FreeB” ridership and on-time service:

- -- Ridership on the Commuter Route in February dropped to 827 passengers, an average of 42.4 riders per day, compared to 915 the previous month, a daily average of 45.8. The 2014 February daily average was 40.3 riders.
- -- Ridership for the Mid-Day Neighborhood Route in February also dropped to 1,716 passengers, an average of 71.5 daily riders, compared to 1,862 the previous month, a daily average of 74.5 riders. The 2014 February daily average was 69.1.
- -- Mechanical issues on both the FreeB and the back-up vehicles were reported on February 17 and 27 requiring deployment of a Stout substitute vehicle. Dinky service was suspended, with substitute buses, on two days. The used TRADE back-up bus from Mercer County was used as substitute service for the FreeB but cut off twice on February 27, requiring substitute service by Stout.

### Holiday and Weather Service Reductions

Heavy snowfall conditions on several days resulted in suspension of FreeB Commuter Route service. It was noted that regular passengers should be alerted to this possibility, particularly through the Greater Mercer TMA phone information service. Generally Commuter Route service will not run if NJ Transit suspends Dinky or Northwest Corridor Service.

Joan reported a reduction in FreeB ridership on February 16, Presidents Day, because on holidays and weekends, NJ Transit does not begin Dinky service to the Junction before 9:30 a.m. On motion, the committee agreed that the early morning and late afternoon FreeB Commuter Route should be consistent with Dinky service. The Free B Commuter Route schedule should be

adjusted – and posted – to show no Commuter Route service on the following holidays when service is reduced on the Northeast Corridor Rail Line:

New Year's Day  
\*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
\*Presidents' Day  
\*Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
\*Columbus Day  
\*Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
\*Friday after Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas

\*Note: Minor holidays on which service is not provided on the Commuter Route but is provided on the Mid-Day Neighborhood Route.

### **Up-Grading the System**

The Committee reviewed the process for vehicle replacement and debated at length whether to specify purchase of a new FreeB vehicle or solicit alternate bids for a vendor-provided vehicle (in effect a long-term lease).

It was agreed that Don should complete specifications for a new jitney vehicle, solicit bids (including the alternate for leasing), compare actual bids with the Committee, and then, based on solic financial comparisons, recommend purchase or lease.

Urgency to acquire a new vehicle was urged.

### **PickUp and Drop Off at Copperwood**

Marvin noted that, as of March 2, “front-door” service of the new senior apartment on Bunn Drive was underway. He distributed a letter to Mayor Lember from J. Robert Hillier, a principal at Copperwood. He said: “. . . in response to your request, Copperwood is happy to offer a contribution of \$500 per month . . . in return for . . . coming up the driveway and making pick-ups at our front door . . .”

He added: “Would it be possible to have a small (2’ x 14”) banner mounted on each side and the rear of the vehicle? The banner, which would be paid for by Copperwood, would be clear vinyl and would simply have the words “Sponsored in part by Copperwood of Princeton.

Committee members asked for further study before implementing the proposal, noting that the arrangement is undergoing a four-month trial.

### **Housing Board Inquiry Re: Griggs Farm and Karin Court**

Councilwoman Crumiller brought to the Committee a letter from the Affordable Housing Board . It inquired whether there are plans to extend FreeB service to affordable housing at Griggs Farm on Cherry Valley Road and to Karin Court on West Drive.

It was noted that priority at the moment is centered on replacement of overworked equipment, not adding the expense of additional routes.

It was also noted that Griggs Farm, when it was constructed, explicitly was able to implement service on the "605" into Princeton, to jobs along Route One, and to shopping at MarketFair, Nassau Park, and Quakerbridge Mall.

It was also noted that Karin Court is next to University's Lawrence Apartments, from which the University's Tiger Transit goes out to MarketFair, to Downtown, to the Harrison St. Shopping Center, and on to points beyond. The public is welcomed to use this free service.

A reply to the Housing Board will consider these factors.

### **Next Meeting**

The Committee's next regular meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. in the East Conference Room of the Monument Municipal Building on Thursday, April 16.