

New Citizens Advisory Board starts

Metra has launched a re-constituted Citizens Advisory Board, a group of Metra riders and area residents whose job will be to provide input to Metra on the commuter railroad's policies, programs and services.

The Metra Board of Directors took steps to reestablish the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) at its December meeting. Each of the 11 board members was asked to appoint a new member to serve on the citizens panel, and the new CAB held its first meeting last month. The original CAB was in place for many years but had become inactive as membership declined.

Metra has long recognized that in order to provide quality service and programs for its passengers, voices along all of its lines need to be heard.

"As part of our review of how Metra is working and should work, the Board of Directors has determined to actively move to engage the public and our riders," said Director Jim LaBelle, who is serving as the board's liaison to the CAB. "I see this as a valuable way to make Metra work better – and not just to make Metra work better but to make the regional transportation system as a whole work better."

The function of the CAB is to meet with the Metra Board of Directors periodically and provide counsel on how Metra policies, programs and services affect the area constituents for each representative. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)



Citizens Advisory Board member C. Robert Wahlen (left), alternate member Forester Du Sell, and members Jeffrey A. Berman and Jamy L. Lyne attended the meeting of the new CAB in January.

Act establishes a formal board comprised of area residents, and the CAB process is designed to ensure that the ethnic, cultural and geographic diversity of residents in the six counties served by Metra is represented.

CAB members are appointed to two-year terms and will serve without compensation.

At its first meeting in January, the board received a presentation by Metra staff that familiarized them with Metra's system, its operating and capital budgets, its ridership and on-time performance and some recent policies and challenges. For instance, Acting Executive Director Bill Tupper described the new Quiet Car policy, which is now being tested on the Rock Island line and is expected to be expanded to other lines after

the test is complete at the end of March.

Members also discussed topics for future meetings, which included reviewing how Metra communicates service issues to its riders and an update on Metra's New Starts expansion projects.

"I think this is a good start," said new CAB member Ernest Sawyer.

The next CAB meeting was set for 9 a.m. on March 18 at Metra headquarters, 547 W. Jackson.

Members so far include Gary McClung, appointed by Director Arlene J. Mulder (suburban Cook County); Patricia Mahon, appointed by Director Edward W. Paesel (suburban Cook County); Jamy L. Lyne, appointed by Director Jack E. Partelow (Will County); Sue Klinkhamer, ap-

pointed by Director Caryl J. Van Overmeiren (Kane County); Jeffrey A. Berman, appointed by Director Jim LaBelle (Lake County); Ernest Sawyer, appointed by Director Larry A. Huggins (Chicago); Timothy Calcagno, appointed by Director James V. Dodge (suburban Cook County); and Robert J. Nunamaker, appointed by Director Jack Schaffer (McHenry County).

In addition to the appointees from Metra's Board of Directors, two original CAB members will serve a new term. They are C. Robert Wahlen, appointed by the South Suburban Mass Transit District, and Pamela Pelizzari, appointed by the West Suburban Mass Transit District.

More information about CAB and its members can be found at www.metrarail.com.