

**REGIONAL TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
January 19, 2004**

PRESENT:                   Councillor Stephen Adams, Chair  
                              Councillor Ron Cooper  
                              Mr. Don Shannon  
                              Mr. Dave Withrow  
                              Mr. Donald Hatcher  
                              Mr. Cal Demont  
                              Mr. Derek Mathers  
                              Mr. Bob Richards  
                              Mr. Jeffrey Rozee  
                              Mr. Donald Swinimer  
                              Mr. Len Wilson

STAFF:                     Mr. Dave Steele, Taxi Inspector  
                              Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor  
                              Ms. Sherryll Murphy, Legislative Assistant

ALSO PRESENT:           14 members of the industry

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER .....	4
2.	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS .....	4
3.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NOVEMBER 17, 2003 .....	4
3A	PRESENTATIONS .....	4
	Presentation re Hotel Standards - Darlene Grant Fiander, TIANS .....	4
	Presentation re Transferability of Rooflights - Richard Dupres .....	6
4.	BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES .....	6
	4.1 Update - Taxi Driver Incident Form .....	6
	4.2 Airport Rates - Charging of Different Rates by Differing Companies .....	7
	4.3 Petition from Halifax Drivers re: Dartmouth Taxi Picking up and Dropping Off Customers in Halifax Zone .....	8
	6.2 Industry Enforcement of Zone Offences (Dartmouth/County Taxis picking up and dropping off in Halifax) - Councillor Adams .....	8
	Information Item: Charge Account Drives in Dartmouth Zones .....	9
	4.4 Mechanism for Rate Increase .....	9
	4.5 Review of Amendment re Dartmouth Waiting List .....	9
	4.6 Approval of Amendment re Geography Testing .....	10
5.	GOOD NEWS STORIES .....	10
6.	NEW BUSINESS .....	10
	6.1 Concerns re Accessible Taxis (Referred from Regional Council) .....	10
	6.2 Industry Enforcement of Zone Offences (Dartmouth/County Taxis picking up and dropping off in Halifax) - Councillor Adams .....	10
	6.3 Hotel Standards Certification - Communication with Hotels - (Referred from Hotel Standards Committee .....	11
	6.4 Articles for TIANS Newsletter (from the Taxi and Limousine Industry) .....	11
7.	MOTIONS .....	11
	7.1 Motion - Bob Richards - Cease Testing For New Drivers .....	11
	7.2 Notice of Motion - Dave Withrow - Limousine Licensing .....	12
8.	ADDED ITEMS .....	12
	8.1 Illegal Parking on Common Stands - Councillor Cooper .....	12
	8.2 New Transit Plans - Dave Withrow .....	12

9.	NOTICES OF MOTION .....	12
10.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING .....	12
11.	ADJOURNMENT .....	12

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Councillor Adams introduced Mr. Donald Swinimer, Taxi Broker representative for the County Zone and Mr. Len Wilson, Citizen representative. Roundtable introductions ensued.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

Additions:

- 8.1 Illegal parking on Common Stands (Councillor Cooper)
- 8.2 New Transit Plans - Dave Withrow

**MOVED by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Dave Withrow that the agenda, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NOVEMBER 17, 2003**

**MOVED by Don Hatcher, seconded by Derek Mathers that the minutes of the November 17, 2003 meeting of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee, as distributed, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3A PRESENTATIONS**

**Presentation re Hotel Standards - Darlene Grant Fiander, TIANS**

- A document entitled "Hotel Standards Update" containing Ms. Grant Fiander's presentation was distributed to members of the Committee. Also distributed was Volume 2, Issue 1, Taxi Edition, March 2003, of Professionally Speaking.

Ms. Grant Fiander reviewed with the Committee her presentation and responded to questions from members. Ms. Fiander's responses included the following key information:

- there are a number of existing drivers that the Hotel Standards Committee would like to have involved in the program.
- there is a need to promote the program and to educate drivers about the program
- hotels would like to have more hotel standard drivers
- hotel management is concerned about both the numbers and the consistency in quality of hotel standard vehicles

- there is recognition that the drivers have concerns regarding the lack of support from hotel management re preferential treatment (i.e. cookies)
- Hotel Standards Committee also has concerns regarding the English language and geography testing (understand that these are being addressed)

Ms. Grant Fiander agreed that a more regular information update from the Hotel Standards Committee would be appropriate and suggested that this come to the Committee in their agenda package on a monthly basis.

Ms. Grant Fiander and Mr. Steele responding to questions from members of the Committee provided the following:

- The difference between a vehicle in the Hotel Standards Program those that are not is in essence a second inspection. All vehicles are required to meet the same standard, however, the second inspection generally ensures that hotel standards vehicles are in better shape throughout the year
- The additional fee for Hotel Standards vehicle designation is \$35.00
- Licenses are stamped to indicate Hotel Standards
- The Hotel Standards Committee does not believe it is a matter of the cost of the program, but more a matter of communication around the program
- Difficulties previously experienced relative to drivers getting evaluated are for the most part resolved. Problems may occur as a result of drivers waiting too long to complete the program
- The Hotel Standards Committee is aware of the concern drivers have with 'cookies' and have included a representative of the concierge group on the Committee and have dealt directly with the General Managers in this regard. There is a commitment to correct the problem

A further discussion ensued with note being made that there is no penalty to the driver for offering 'cookies' set out in the By-law

In response to a suggestion by **Mr. Leo Greenwood** relative to the reporting of complaints, Ms. Grant Fiander indicated that including a comment card in the car was a very good idea.

Mr. Steele clarified for a member of the industry that the Hotel Standards Program was effective only the Halifax Zone and only open to those drivers licensed in the Halifax Zone.

**Mr. Darrell Downey**, expressed concern regarding the lack of support exhibited by the Westin Hotel relative to the program. Councillor Adams indicated that he would speak with the General Manager in this regard.

Following a further short discussion Councillor Adams commented that other municipalities are impressed with HRM's national certification program and the resulting quality of drivers in this municipality. The Councillor noted that today is all about Customer Service and this program is certainly working in that regard.

### **Presentation re Transferability of Rooflights - Richard Dupres**

**Mr. Richard Dupres, taxi owner/driver** addressed Council indicating that he had driven taxi for many years and recently became quite sick. As a consequence he has retired from the business, however he would like to be able to transfer his owner's license to a member of his family. Mr. Dupres indicated that he had served the municipality as a taxi driver and felt that his case, and other like it, should be looked on with compassion. He noted that there were men and women who had been driving taxi for many years and, upon their death, families are unable to benefit in any way. Mr. Dupres commented that it seems unfair that upon his death his owner's license will be turned back to HRM and given out to someone who will probably lease the light for \$300-400 per month.

**Mr. Leo Greenwood** expressed concern that owner's licenses are not being turned back in immediately upon the death of the holder, but only at the time of expiry of the license. Mr. Greenwood noted that the license was returned immediately upon the death of the holder in the past. Mr. Anstey advised that there is no provision for a license to be returned until it has expired.

A brief discussion ensued following which Mr. Douglas Pettipas made a presentation to the Taxi and Limousine Committee supporting the ability to transfer an owner's license to the next of kin for those who pass away while licensed.

**MOVED by Mr. Shannon, seconded by Mr. Richards that the presentations of both Mr. Dupres and Mr. Pettipas be acknowledged in writing and that staff be requested to report regarding transferability including all the background material discussed at the Committee level.**

**Mr. Doug Briand, a taxi driver**, noted that he has been driver 30+ years. He went on to suggest that those leasing vehicles and collecting \$300 or more a month are already, in essence, selling the owner's license.

Mr. Dennis Scofield, Halifax, indicating that he supported universal transferability. He went on to note that he believed that transferability would be positive for the industry and commented that he would be willing to pay for the right to own the light.

## **4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

### **4.1 Update - Taxi Driver Incident Form (Deferred from November 17, 2003)**

Mr. Mathers reported that the incident form has been distributed to the major brokers. Mr. Mathers indicated that he would check on dissemination.

#### **4.2 Airport Rates - Charging of Different Rates by Differing Companies**

Mr. Mathers addressed the Committee noting that some drivers were charging a flat rate while others were using the meter. Mr. Mathers indicated that this was confusing for the customer and suggested that one or the other should be used.

Note was made that flat rates for airport trips were recently included in the by-law.

Mr. Mathers commented that the Airport rates had been included in the By-law prior to the meter increase.

A brief discussion ensued with Mr. Richards noting that the rates included in the By-law mirror those included in the contract the Airport has with each of the drivers operating from the Airport. He went on to note that he did not recall that using the meter rate was given as an option at Regional Council in terms of fares to the Airport.

Mr. Shannon commented that many drivers are non airport drivers and are not bound by the contract signed with the Airport. They are within their rights to use their meters for airport trips and to increase the cost of that trip in line with the recent increase in rates.

A brief discussion ensued and it was **MOVED by Mr. Mathers that a new airport rate of \$45 for taxis (replacing the present \$41 rate) and a \$55 limousine rate be established, and further that use of meters be deleted.**

**Mr. Darrell Downey** addressed the Committee indicating that drivers should be issued a new tariff card for their cars. Mr. Downey made the following further points:

- Meter has been installed in taxis for use
- The airport drivers have a contract, however, his livelihood is not the airport
- If not charging the metered rate, drivers are not charging what the drive is worth and he does not know of any other business who would do that
- Enforcement of the By-law is missing

**Mr. Frank Horwill** providing some background to the introduction of flat rates at the airport, noted that this was due to the fact that prior to amalgamation there had been three different rates in place (Halifax, Dartmouth and the County). Mr. Horwill noted that this was not the case any longer and that using other than the meter did not serve the drivers.

There being no seconder to the **MOTION IT WAS LOST.**

**4.3 Petition from Halifax Drivers re: Dartmouth Taxi Picking up and Dropping Off Customers in Halifax Zone**

**6.2 Industry Enforcement of Zone Offences (Dartmouth/County Taxis picking up and dropping off in Halifax) - Councillor Adams**

- A revised staff report relating to item 4.3 dated January 14, 2004 submitted by Andrea Macdonald, Manager, Community Projects, was before the Committee for consideration.

The Committee agreed to deal with the above items as one item.

A discussion of the necessity of increased enforcement ensued with note being made that the root problem is a lack of enforcement. There is a need for increased enforcement in all three zones whether the cost is borne by the drivers or by HRM. Increased enforcement in all three zones. Note was made that the Province governs the amount HRM can charge for licensing

Referring to enforcement, Mr. Anstey indicated that enforcement is done on a response to complaints basis for most By-laws. He further indicated that HRM does not have funds to cover increased enforcement.

**MOVED by Mr. Mathers, seconded by Mr. Shannon that staff is to prepare a report outlining the cost of increased enforcement on Friday and Saturday between 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. with respect to zone infractions and further that funding sources be detailed in the report.**

In response to concerns expressed by **Dennis Scofield, taxi driver**, Mr. Steele outlined the complaint process which includes contact with the Licensing Office and a signed and written statement. Mr. Steele indicated that the complaint should include the date, time, identity of the driver committing the infraction and the rooflight number.

**Ed Flewwelling, Dartmouth**, addressed the Committee indicating that he had been required to confirm that money had changed hands.

Mr. Steele confirmed that it was necessary to confirm that there was a paying customer.

**Darrell Downey** expressed concern that he had provided all the details outlined by Mr. Downey and staff of the Licensing Division had not followed through. He indicated that this was very discouraging.



**Wayne Doiron, taxi driver**, noted that drivers can deal with the loss of a fare under Provincial law.

A further short discussion ensued and that **MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

#### **Information Item: Charge Account Drives in Dartmouth Zones**

Mr. Steele indicated that it was his understanding that Casino has a working relationship with Bob's and Satellite with regard to this contract.

Mr. Demont indicated that he certainly had been approached by Casino in this regard, however, the only fares only fares that Bob's is receiving is when there is no Casino cab available. Halifax taxis are picking up and dropping off in Dartmouth contrary to the By-law.

After a further brief discussion it was agreed that Mr. Demont would speak with Mr. Steele regarding the situation and then contact Mr. Murphy, Director, Transportation and Public Works and report back to the Committee in this regard.

7:30 p.m. Councillor Adams leaves the meeting and Councillor Cooper assumes the Chair.

#### **4.4 Mechanism for Rate Increase**

Mr. Steele advised that the report in regard to this matter is being prepared. **It was agreed that** this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **4.5 Review of Amendment re Dartmouth Waiting List**

- A proposed amendment to By-law 108, the Taxi and Limousine By-law, was before the Committee for consideration.

In response to a question regarding why there would be a draw relative to the Dartmouth list, Mr. Anstey indicated that there may be existing drivers who are not on the owners' list and would seem only fair put those drivers on the list before new drivers are added to the list.

Mr. Mathers noted that this amendment would serve to not only make the lists between the zones consistent, but also to show commitment to the licensed driver and providing an opportunity for the driver to show a commitment to the industry. He went on to note that nothing was being taken from those presently on the list - they would be grandfathered.

**MOVED by Mr. Mathers, seconded by Mr. Hatcher that the amendment as circulated be forwarded to Council for adoption.**

Referring to those company names now appearing on the Dartmouth list, Mr. Anstey noted that HRM would be required to issue those licenses if they are grandfathered as is proposed under this amendment.

Mr. Withrow called for a recorded vote.

The **MOTION WAS PUT AND LOST**, as follows:

Members of the Committee voting **in favour** of the motion: Donald Hatcher, Derek Mathers, Len Wilson and Councillor Ron Cooper.

Members of the Committee voting **against** the motion: Donald Swinimer, Cal Demont, Dave Withrow and Don Shannon.

#### **4.6 Approval of Amendment re Geography Testing**

- A proposed amendment to By-law T-108, the Taxi and Limousine By-law, was before the Committee for consideration.

**MOVED by Mr. Withrow, seconded by Mr. Wilson that the proposed amendment to By-law T-108, the Taxi and Limousine By-law, regarding Geography Testing be forwarded to Council for adoption. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **5. GOOD NEWS STORIES**

There were no good news stories offered.

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **6.1 Concerns re Accessible Taxis (Referred from Regional Council)**

Councillor Cooper indicated that he and Councillor Adams had attended a meeting with representatives of the Advisory Committee on Persons with Disabilities. Councillor Cooper reviewed with the Committee a list of action items falling out of that meeting, as follows:

- Confirm whether accessible drivers can pick up able bodied fares
- Confirm availability of current accessible taxis (only Monday to Friday until 6:00 p.m.)
- Confirm Federal funding for accessible taxis. Can it be applied to a commercial enterprise
- Confirm with Yellow Cab they intend to continue with accessible taxis

- Confirm whether there is a limit to the number of seeing-eye dogs permitted in a cab (If three individuals what to share a cab home and each have a seeing-eye dog, the driver will only take two)
- Confirmation of who can refuse to take dogs in their cab (registered with the Taxi Licensing Office as not able to take dogs)
- Concern that drivers are not picking up fares if they know in advance there is a guide dog accompanying the fare
- Possibility of a joint sub-committee to be considered with PWD and Taxi (to be discussed after the preceding issues have been addressed)

Councillor Cooper provided the list to Mr. Steele with a request that staff provide an update with regard to the items for the next meeting of the Committee. Mr. Hatcher requested that the update include the number of accessible taxis and if accessible taxis are not available at the Halifax Airport, why are they not available.

#### **6.2 Industry Enforcement of Zone Offences (Dartmouth/County Taxis picking up and dropping off in Halifax) - Councillor Adams**

This matter was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

#### **6.3 Hotel Standards Certification - Communication with Hotels - (Referred from Hotel Standards Committee)**

Given the lateness of the hour, consideration of this matter was **deferred** to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **6.4 Articles for TIANS Newsletter (from the Taxi and Limousine Industry)**

This item was provided for the information of the Committee.

### **7. MOTIONS**

#### **7.1 Motion - Bob Richards - Cease Testing For New Drivers**

- Notice of Motion regarding this matter was given at the November 17, 2003 meeting of the Taxi and Limousine Committee.

Given that Mr. Richards is not present, it was agreed that consideration of this matter be **deferred** to next meeting of the Committee.

#### **7.2 Notice of Motion - Dave Withrow - Limousine Licensing**

- Notice of Motion regarding this matter was given at the November 17, 2003 meeting of the Taxi and Limousine Committee.

Given the lateness of the hour, it was agreed that consideration of this matter be **deferred** to next meeting of the Committee.

## **8. ADDED ITEMS**

### **8.1 Illegal Parking on Common Stands - Councillor Cooper**

- This matter was added to the agenda during the setting of the agenda.

Councillor Cooper noted that illegal parking in taxi stands is not being enforced and suggested that this lack of enforcement should be referred to staff.

**MOVED by Mr. Hatcher, seconded by Mr. Withrow that a letter be forwarded to parking enforcement staff to ask that they enforce no parking on Common Stands. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **8.2 New Transit Plans - Dave Withrow**

- This matter was added to the agenda during the setting of the agenda.

At the request of Mr. Withrow, the Committee agreed that Metro Transit staff be requested to present to the Taxi Committee the plan for transit in the future particularly with regard to the impact this plan will have on taxi service (i.e. location of stands in the area of super bus stations).

## **9. NOTICES OF MOTION**

Dave Withrow gave Notice of Motion of his intention to introduce a motion to limit the number of cars in the County Zone to 190.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Taxi and Limousine Committee is scheduled for Monday, February 16, 2004

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.