

TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

December 11, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen Adams, Chair
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Earl Brown
Mr. Robert Richards
Mr. Gary Russell
Ms. Lisa Dahr
Ms. Joanne Coffey
Mr. Richard McNeil

REGRETS: Mr. Jamie Bolduc
Mr. Tim Hosford
Ms. Cathy Towers

STAFF: Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant, HRM

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. in the Community Meeting Room, 2nd floor, Captain William Spry Centre, 10 Kidston Road, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - November 13, 2008

MOVED By Mr. Robert Richards, seconded by Mr. Derek Mathers, that the minutes of November 13, 2008, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions: 11.1 Pineapple Award Recipients - Ms. Lisa Dahr
 11.2 Status of Taxi Driver Rate Increases - Mr. Richard McNeil

MOVED By Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Ms. Lisa Dahr, that the the Order of Business, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

4. APPROVAL OF 2009 MEETING DATES

MOVED BY Mr. Gary Russell, seconded by Mr. Robert Richards that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee approve, as presented, the 2009 meeting dates. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Richards, seconded by Mr. Richard McNeil that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee hold their meetings at a more central location on the Peninsula.

The Committee requested that the Legislative Assistant provide a list of options in regard to meeting locations for consideration at the January 8, 2009 meeting. Ample parking and accessibility issues were to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Richards explained that the current location was too far from town and that taxi drivers did not want to travel to the current location.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. PRESENTATION

5.1 **“Greening of HRM Taxi Fleet”**

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was circulated to the Committee at this time.

Ms. Colleen Paton, Transportation Program Officer, Conserve Nova Scotia presented information on *Greening the HRM Taxi Fleet*. Highlights of Ms. Paton’s report were as follows:

- the introduction of hybrid vehicles or smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles into the taxi fleet would address concerns with the volatility in fuel prices, air quality in regard to green house gas emissions, improve economics for the taxi industry, improve service with the use of newer vehicles and would also be a positive signal to the public on HRM’s commitment to environmental action.
- amendments to the current By-Law T-108 would be required in regard the size requirements for taxis. Specific amendments would include the reduction of door post to post from 54 inches to 51 inches and the reduction of the wheelbase from 105 inches to 101 inches.
- Conserve Nova Scotia would establish a one year pilot program to make the business case for highly fuel efficient vehicles. The pilot program would contain four components:
 - six highly efficient taxis that would meet the performance standard of 7.8 litres per 100 km to be distributed throughout Halifax, Dartmouth, Sackville and the airport.
 - \$3,700 incentive for the first six vehicles, at least three to be hybrids. (\$2,500 to assist in the purchase of a hybrid vehicle and \$1,200 in exchange for the compilation of data on mileage, fuel consumption, repairs and maintenance. The \$1,200 would be distributed via quarterly payments of \$300 in exchange for the data.)
 - comparison between the test fleet against a “control group”. A \$1,200 incentive would also be offered for the control group vehicles with \$300 paid quarterly in exchange for the data on mileage, fuel consumption, repairs and maintenance to the vehicles.
 - opportunity for HRM to launch a promotional campaign to highlight the industry’s action and raise public awareness.

Ms. Paton thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present to them and requested their support for the proposal.

Councillor Adams, Chair, thanked Ms. Paton for her presentation.

During the ensuing discussion, members of the Committee raised the following concerns/comments:

- the lack of audible sound from the hybrid vehicles was a concern for those persons

- who may be hearing impaired.
- would the smaller vehicles be able to sufficiently absorb the road shock to enable a driver to work a ten to twelve hour shift.
 - would the trunk capacity of the smaller vehicles accommodate a wheelchair/luggage.

Councillor Adams clarified that the recommendation before the Committee was whether or not to approve moving forward with a recommendation to amend By-Law T-108 in regard to the introduction of hybrid vehicles into the HRM taxi fleet ,and; that the size requirements for taxis be amended in relation to the door post to post and the wheelbase to accommodate the smaller hybrid vehicles.

Mr. Mathers requested that the recommendation also include the introduction of smaller, fuel efficient vehicles that meet the performance standard rather than be limited to only hybrid vehicles.

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Ms. Lisa Dahr, that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve in principle the request for staff to initiate the process to amend By-Law T-108 in order to:

- 1. permit the introduction of hybrid and smaller, fuel efficient vehicles that would fit into the performance standard of 7.8 litres per 100 km;**
- 2. reduce the door post to post size requirement to 51 inches from 54 inches;**
- 3. reduce the wheelbase to 101 inches from 105 inches.**

Mr. Robert Richards advised that he was not in support of the motion to amend the By-Law to accommodate these standards as the smaller vehicles would not fit wheelchairs or luggage and would essentially be reducing the fleet to one passenger vehicles.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

6.1 Transferability of Roof Lights

- An extract of the June 17, 2008 Regional Council minutes was before the Committee.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Richards, seconded by Mr. Gary Russell that the

Transferability of Roof Lights matter be deferred to a future meeting pending additional information to be brought forward by Mr. Richards. MOTION TO DEFER PUT AND PASSED.

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

7.1 Minimum Hourly Rate for Limousines

- A copy of an e-mail dated November 6, 2008 from Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi and Limousine Licensing, was before the Committee.

The e-mail dated November 6, 2008 included a response from Mr. Randolph Kinghorne, Municipal Solicitor, referencing Administrative Order 39 Respecting the Setting of Taxi Fares and Taxi Roof Light Signs in regard to the minimum hourly rate limousines must charge.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Richards, seconded by Mr. Earl Brown that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee request that Regional Council increase the hourly limousine rates from \$53.00 to \$57.50 per hour.

Mr. Richards explained that his intent was to have Regional Council implement a differential between taxi and limousine rates so that the minimum limousine rate to the airport would be not less than their hourly rate of \$57.50.

Mr. Brown added that the airport has posted taxi and limousine rates to the city at \$53.00 which is misleading. He noted that if you took a limousine anywhere else in the city the rate would be higher (than a taxi).

Mr. Richards noted a further concern that limousine drivers at the airport were charging \$53 to Dartmouth when the fare should only be \$49.

Mr. Mathers requested information on the rationale between limousines charging the same rate from the airport to the city centre as taxis when the limousine rates to other areas were different. He also requested that the issue be forwarded to the Airport Authority for comment prior to moving forward to Regional Council.

In response to Mr. Mathers' suggestion, the Committee agreed to forward the issue to the Airport Authority for comment prior to moving it forward to Regional Council.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

8.1 Correspondence - None

8.2 Petitions - None

8.3 Delegations

**8.3.1 Greening HRM's Taxi Fleet - Ms. Collen Paton, Program Administration
Officer Transportation, Conserve Nova Scotia.**

See Item 5 Presentation, page 3.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Sensitivity Training for HRM Police and Ambulance Services re: function and value of the Taxi Industry as a No-Cost Compliment to Emergency Services

See Item 9.2 below.

9.2 Driver Etiquette - Professionalism in Public Situations

Mr. Richard McNeil requested that items 9.1 and 9.2 be deleted from the agenda at this time explaining that taxi and limousine drivers could not be asked to put more effort into making their service more accessible to the public when their paycheques were being cut.

10. REPORTS - NONE

11. ADDED ITEMS

11.1 Pineapple Award Recipients

Ms. Lisa Dahr advised that two HRM taxi drivers, Mr. Radafy Ranaibo and Mr. Craig Doucette, were awarded Pineapple Awards for outstanding customer service during the 2008 Tourism Summit. The Committee requested that a letter of congratulations be sent to the recipients of the Pineapple Award.

11.2 Status of Taxi Driver Rate Increases

Mr. McNeil requested an update from staff in regard to the taxi driver rate increases.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - January 8, 2009

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant