

**TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

January 14, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen Adams, Chair
Ms. Joanne Coffey
Ms. Cathy Towers
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Gary Russell
Mr. Richard McNeil
Mr. Earl Brown

REGRETS: Mr. Jamie Bolduc
Mr. Robert Richards
Ms. Lisa Dahr

STAFF: Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Barb Allen, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mathers called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., without quorum present, at the Captain William Spry Centre.

6.3.1 Taxi Broker Access to New Street Names and Street Renamings

C Explore HRM placards were submitted.

Ms. Gayle MacLean, HRM Civic Addressing Coordinator, provided background on Explore HRM, an on-line mapping tool that covers the Municipality; noting that information was prioritized based on public safety. She indicated that input from Taxi and Limousine drivers was encouraged as unposted or unclear house numbers and street names needed to be reported. Ms. MacLean stated that Civic Addressing By-laws were in place. She stated that HRM provides blue and white number signs where renumbering has occurred.

Mr. Brown entered the meeting at 10:12 a.m. and quorum was achieved.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - July 9, 2009

MOVED BY Ms Coffey, seconded by Mr. Russell, that the minutes of July 9, 2009 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Additions:

6.3.3 Presentation - Mr. Eddie Hanna

6.3.4 Presentation - Mr. Ralph Doyle

8.1 Invitation from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities - Mr. Russell

8.2 Airport Update - Ms. Towers

8.3 Change in Size of Taxis - Mr. Brown

MOVED BY Ms. Coffey, seconded by Mr. Russell, that the Order of Business be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.3. Presentations

6.3.1 Taxi Broker Access to New Street Names and Street Renamings

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting. Please see page 3.

6.3.2 Transit Service to the Airport - Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager of Regional Transportation

Mr. Dave McCusker, Manager of Regional Transportation, presented the expansion plan for rural transit and MetroX service on 100 series highways. He indicated that it would take at least one more year for service to the Halifax Stanfield International Airport to be initiated. He noted that the push for this service came from the Airport Authority, in large part for employee transportation. Mr. McClusker stated that Provincial regulations prohibited luggage on public transit buses, although small bags and back packs would be acceptable.

Regarding accessibility and frequency of service, Mr. McClusker stated that the service would use a similar vehicle to MetroX, therefore, it would be wheelchair accessible and that at peak demand the service could run every 15 to 30 minutes.

6.3.3 Presentation - Mr. Eddie Hanna

Mr. Hanna questioned the status of a suggestion he had made to the Committee over a year ago to look at the cost of providing service in rural areas.

Mr. McNeil responded that Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator of Taxi and Limousine Services, had quoted the By-Laws at the time which protected a driver by stating that they could negotiate fees in advance or refuse service.

Ms. Towers read the wording from the April 9, 2009 minutes. Mr. Hindle will be asked to follow up on this matter.

Councillor Adams entered the meeting at 10:40 a.m. and assumed the Chair.

Mr. Hanna asked why drivers had to re-new photos and abstracts on a yearly basis.

MOVED BY Mr. Mathers, seconded by Mr. Brown, that the Taxi and Limousine

Advisory Committee request that the requirement for the annual renewal of documents, including photos and abstracts, for taxi and limousine drivers as well as related costs be investigated by staff. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.3.4 Presentation - Mr. Ralph Doyle

- C Correspondence dated January 10, 2010 from Mr. Ralph Doyle, Chairman of the Halifax Taxi Driver's Owner's Association, was submitted.

Mr. Doyle submitted a letter on behalf of the Halifax Taxi Driver's Owner's Association regarding proposed zoning changes that may be going to Regional Council.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Committee Members

7.1.1 HRM Taxi Zones - Mr. Derek Mathers

Mr Mathers stated he was in favour of retaining the zones and that this issue should have come to the Committee prior to going to Council.

MOVED BY Mr. Mathers, seconded by Mr. McNeil, that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council retain the existing HRM Taxi Zones.

Ms. Coffey left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Councillor Adams provided background on the initial intent on opening the zones; noting that it was a response to violence in the downtown area. He noted that a request was brought forward to look at the deadheading issue in HRM as well. Councillor Adams advised that he did not support opening the zones and that he would do what he can to stop this.

Regarding drivers who remove their roof lights to act as a limousine service to the airport, Ms. Towers stated that this was a violation of HRM and industry regulations and that charges were being laid.

Mr. Mathers spoke about the need to open zones on very busy nights. He indicated that this seems to have worked as there has been very few complaints since the zones were opened. He added that the Airport was exempt from zoning as it was federally regulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A recommendation was proposed that roof lights be turned off when a taxi was occupied, as it was a safety issue. Alternatively, an addition of a second light to show vehicle was occupied was suggested.

7.1.2 Educating the public, Police and Council regarding the role that Taxi and Limousine Services Plays in the Daily Life of People in HRM - Mr. McNeil

Mr. McNeil reported that the Hospitality Industry was hosting a forum in March and that it would be beneficial to have representation from the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee.

The Legislative Assistant will follow up with Mr. Bolduc regarding this matter.

7.1.3 Potential Program or Curriculum for New Drivers and New Police Officers Regarding Etiquette for Taxi Drivers and the Relationship Between Taxi Drivers and Police - Mr. McNeil

Mr. McNeil stated that there used to be a week long training course for new drivers, which was no longer available, however, should be reinstated. He noted that customer service, safety and accountability could be included in curriculum, along with simple math and language skills.

Councillor Adams stated that this could be investigated and could also include simple book keeping.

MOVED BY Mr. McNeil, seconded by Mr. Mathers, that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee request that staff investigate the possibility of having a school for new taxi and limousine drivers. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee also requested a copy of the English proficiency test.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Invitation from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities - Mr. Russell

Mr. Russell invited a representative from the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee to attend a meeting of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Mathers will attend the April 19, 2010 meeting.

8.2 Airport Updates - Ms. Towers

Ms. Towers stated that MacPass carriers were able to pick up passengers in the gated area. She reported that testing was ongoing to ensure that the system was operational.

8.3 Change in Size of Taxis - Mr. Brown

Mr. Brown asked if there was a move to change the types of vehicles used as taxis and limousines. Councillor Adams replied that there was no change for limousines, however, hybrids and SUVs would be implemented as taxis.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for February 11, 2010

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Barb Allen
Legislative Support

The following items were added as information:

1. Parking and Nighttime Taxi Stands - Argyle and Grafton Streets
2. Proposed 2010 Meeting Schedule