

**TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

June 10, 2010

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

STAFF: Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. at the Captain William Spry Centre.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - April 8, 2010

Amendment:

Page 5 - Ms. Coffey advised that her comment *Ms. Coffey reported that Mr. Kevin Hindle had requested Mr. Randolph Kinghorne, solicitor, to draft a document that was tabled for wording approval at the March 11, 2010 Taxi and Limousine Committee meeting* should be omitted as she did not report that at the meeting

MOVED BY Ms. Coffey, seconded by Ms. Dahr, that the minutes of April 8, 2010 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

Addition:

8.1 Rate Increase - Mr. Mathers

The Committee agreed to move item 6.3.1 Fuel Efficient Taxi Project Application - Mr. John Sutherland, Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers to the top of the agenda.

The agenda was accepted as amended.

6.3.1 Fuel Efficient Taxi Project Application - Mr. John Sutherland, Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers Association

- The application form for the Fuel Efficient Taxi Pilot Project was before the Committee.

Mr. John Sutherland, Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers Association, provided the presentation on the Fuel Efficient Taxi Project Application. Highlights were as follows:

- This was a provincially funded project launched at the end of March 2010
- The project was also made possible through the efforts of HRM by adjusting size requirements and allowing smaller vehicles into the fleet
- The purpose of the project is to collect test data via six cars across HRM, three of which will be hybrid, in order to better identify the benefits of fuel efficient vehicles

- The Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers Association will be administering the project in HRM
- A purchase incentive of \$2500 towards the leasing or purchase of a vehicle will be provided to participants
- Data payment of \$1200 over the year will be provided to participants
- The vehicle must be registered, plated and insured in same name as the taxi licence
- The Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers Association would like to ensure that all operators have the opportunity to receive project information and that all eligible parties receive the application

In closing, Mr. Sutherland advised that the Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers Association was seeking input from the Committee on how to get the information to all eligible parties as well as assistance in reviewing applications.

A discussion on the presentation ensued.

Mr. Sutherland indicated that all of the test vehicles would be clearly marked and that the Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers Association was interested in collecting data from a taxi serving the airport in order to receive highway driving information. He also advised that it was important to fairly represent drivers operating in different areas of HRM.

The Chair suggested that Mr. Sutherland contact local taxi brokers in order to have his application circulated as well as Mr. Kevin Hindle and Mr. Dave Steel in the HRM Taxi Office.

Mr. Mathers entered the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

The Chair thanked Mr. Sutherland for his presentation.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Limousine Licences

- A memo dated April 19, 2010 from Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator Taxi & Limousine Services, was before the Committee.

The Chair indicated that the memo stated that there were currently 94 limousines operating in HRM.

This item was tabled and deferred to the July 8, 2010 meeting for Mr. Richards who had made the request.

4.2 Publication of Taxi Driver Waiting List

- A memo dated April 27, 2010 from Mr. Randolph Kinghorne, Legal Services was before the Committee.

The Chair noted that the submitted memo dated April 27, 2010 was straight forward and that drivers on the waiting list were required to go to the Taxi Office in person to find out their number on the list as the information was private.

4.3 Zoning Issues - Superintendent Don Spicer, Halifax Regional Police

- A document dated June 4, 2010 was submitted.

Superintendent Don Spicer, Halifax Regional Police, provided the presentation on Zoning Issues. He stated that it had come to HRP's attention via Dr. Don Clairmont and the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence that a lack of transportation in the downtown was contributing to a lack of public safety. He noted that it was his understanding that the zones were currently open until 3:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday and advised that HRP were seeing the same issues in the downtown on Thursday as well.

Superintendent Spicer outlined the amount of calls for service broken down per hour; noting that downtown Halifax still receives the most calls in all of HRM. He stated that he was not suggesting that having taxis downtown would do away with calls for service, however, when people are forced to stick around downtown there are more chances for them to get into trouble.

A discussion ensued with Superintendent Spicer responding to questions.

Superintendent Spicer indicated that there were currently six beat officers in the downtown, however, the Public Safety Office would like to find more activities to keep people safe without actually needing the police.

Mr. McNeil requested to know whether there had been a decrease in the amount of calls since the zones were opened.

Mr. Richards entered the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Superintendent Spicer noted that he did not have that information, however, he would obtain it for the Committee. He stated that the biggest concern was between 3:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. when HRP receive many calls.

Mr. Brown expressed concern that city taxis could go everywhere, however, county taxis were often accosted for being out of their zone.

Ms. Towers expressed concern that the airport often ran out of taxis on Saturday night as it depended on county cars being there and that service could be further impacted if the zones were open. She stated that the airport received licenced vehicles from all three zones as it was federally regulated like the cruise ship port, however, problems would arise if enforcement was going to be strict on a Halifax car going to a hotel since the taxi could be stopped by a By-law officer as soon as it leaves the federally regulated property. Ms. Towers indicated that this was not good from a tourism perspective. She advised that the airport wanted service from all three zones.

Mr. Brown stated that it was obvious that the zones cause animosity.

Superintendent Spicer advised that the Public Safety Office would also like information from the Committee on where to place taxi stands in the downtown area; noting that they were planning to do a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audit as well.

Superintendent Spicer stated that the Public Safety Office was partnered with the Alcohol and Gaming Commissions as well as downtown business to do proactive work in bars. He indicated that bouncer regulations were going to be put in place and that local bars were being encouraged to join the Safe Bars Association. He advised that he was also working to create a marketing campaign to try to change the mind set that Halifax is a party city. In closing, Superintendent Spicer stated that his recommendation would be to have the zones open from 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.

MOVED BY Mr. McNeil, seconded by Mr. Russell, that the taxi zones be open from 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Mr. McNeil stated that the deregulation of zones could not be done all at once and had to be done one piece at a time as need requires. He stated that the evidence was telling him to now include Thursday night in his motion.

Mr. Richards stated that the zones were in place for the protection of the industry as the residents in those areas had the same rights as residents in the downtown.

Ms. Dahr stated that she wished to ensure that if the Committee did suggest a change that there would be a reasonable amount of time to collect data to ensure the current open zones were working.

Ms. Coffey and Mr. Russell left the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

MOVED BY Mr. Mathers, seconded by Mr. Richards that the motion be deferred pending the collection of further data. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

Ms. Dahr stated that a letter was submitted to the Chair from the Tourism Industry of Nova Scotia (TIANS) in February 2010 as well as a letter regarding accessibility.

These letters will be included on the July 8, 2010 agenda.

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3. Presentations

6.3.1 Fuel Efficient Taxi Project Application - Mr. John Sutherland, Halifax Dartmouth Auto Dealers

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

7. REPORTS

7.1 Removal of Taxi Stand - Commission Street - Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Acting Manager, Traffic and Right of Way

- A memo dated May 7, 2010 from Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Acting Manager, Traffic and Right of Way was before the Committee.

The memo dated May 7, 2010 was tabled as presented.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Rate Increase - Mr. Mathers

Mr. Mathers stated that he would like drivers to provide a presentation on meter increases as a result of the raise in provincial tax. He indicated that it may be beneficial for brokers to do a poll in the interim.

It was noted that meters were not dropped down when the tax was lowered and, therefore, were still dealing with 15% tax. Mr. Hindle will be able to better explain this at the July 8, 2010 meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for July 8, 2010

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Shawnee Gregory
Legislative Assistant

The following items were added as information:

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