

**TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 13, 2006**

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen D. Adams, Chair
Mr. Hari Boggs, Interim Vice-Chair
Mr. Wayne Black
Mr. Bill Harrison
Mr. Tim Hosford
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Denis St. Laurent
Mr. Robert Richards

ABSENT WITH
REGRETS: Ms. Darlene Grant-Fiander
Mr. Paul Matthews

STAFF: Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi and Limousine
Services
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Councillor Stephen D. Adams, called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm in Meeting Room "C, Keshen Goodman Library.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

- Additions:**
- 7.2.1 Correspondence: Response from Mayor Kelly to Mr. Burnell dated March 30, 2006 re: Accessible Taxi Service in HRM.
(i) Letter dated March 12 to Mayor Kelly from Mr. Burnell re: Accessible Taxi Service in HRM.
 - 7.2.2 Request for a Presentation - Advertising on Taxi Cabs
 - 7.2.3 Correspondence: Letter dated April 1, 2006 from Mr. Vince Garnier, Provincial Manager, Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, Occupational Health and Safety to Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi and Limousine Services.
 - 7.2.4 Election of Vice-Chair
 - 7.2.5 Impact of Leasing Roof lights on the Taxi Industry - Mr. Denis St. Laurent

Agenda approved as amended.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - February 9, 2006 And March 10, 2006

MOVED by Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Derek Mathers that the minutes of February 9, 2006 and March 10, 2006 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 Safety of Taxi Drivers - Update

Mr. Kevin Hindle advised he has received more information from suppliers regarding safety devices. There is one local company in New Brunswick. Documents have been received from Verify Eye as well. *Information will be circulated in the next agenda package to the Taxi Committee members.*

Mr. Hindle asked for direction from the Committee regarding the request from Councillor Younger.

Mr. Boggs requested this matter be deferred until May as the Halifax Taxi Drivers Association and the Halifax Association of County Zone Cabs and the Airport Drivers have circulated a survey to all drivers and it will take approximately two weeks to receive the responses and compile the information. It will be available for the May meeting.

Mr. Hindle advised that an e-mail update had been forwarded to Mayor Kelly and Councillor Younger in March.

The Committee agreed to forward an Information Report to Mayor Kelly and all members of Regional Council with an update on the taxi driver safety matter.

Mr. Boggs responded to Mr. Mathers that they have contacted Dartmouth but there is no representative for the taxi drivers in the Dartmouth Zone.

The Committee agreed that there will be sufficient information from the surveys to move forward.

A member of the public requested copies of the survey be left at Bob's/Blue Bell Taxi in Dartmouth.

A blank copy of the survey is to be attached to the Information Report to Regional Council.

4.2 Clarification re: In Camera Sessions (Discussion of Taxi Licenses)

The Legislative Assistant advised that an e-mail response was received from Legal Services (Mr. Randolph Kinghorne) indicating that if a specific driver (taxi license) is being discussed then the Committee would go In Camera.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

5.1 Update From the Recent Training / Facilitated Session Regarding the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee's Workplan.

- A copy of the report (summary of the workshop held on March 6, 2006) was previously circulated to the Committee.

Mr. Kevin Hindle responded to Mr. St. Laurent regarding enforcement in the evenings and on weekends advising him that on March 29th at a joint traffic task force meeting of the Halifax Regional Police, RCMP and Nova Scotia Vehicle Compliance Officers from the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation, the issue of 24/7 enforcement was

discussed. The traffic division is now in operation and in communication with Halifax Regional Police. Discussions are ongoing as enforcement is an area of concern. He added that the issue has also been discussed in the Mayor's office with the association and it has been noted as a budgetary item.

Mr. Hindle further responded to Mr. St. Laurent that there is an after hours number (490-5020) that drivers can call to report activities. He clarified that a By-Law Enforcement Officer does not have the authority to pull a vehicle over, only a police officer can do that. Mr. St. Laurent expressed concern that individuals may take matters into their own hands.

He further commented that the safety of the taxi driver is not specifically mentioned in the mandate of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee. Mr. Hindle responded that this matter was previously addressed and it was determined that taxi drivers interests are inherent within the mandate and make up of the committee. The Committee agreed that it is common sense that taxi driver safety is first and foremost.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Richards, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that further discussion on this matter, including the short-term recommendations, be deferred until the results of the surveys circulated to members of the taxi industry have been compiled and are before the Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Response from the Mayor to Mr. Burnell & Mr. Weston dated February 10, 2006 regarding Accessible Taxis.

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Derek Mathers that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee forward a correspondence to the Minister of Transportation and Public Works stating the concerns expressed regarding the accessible taxi service in HRM and request what options are available to address these concerns.

The concerns include:

- No zone restrictions result in deadhead miles at a cost to the driver.
- No zone restrictions result in clients having a longer wait for pick-up as the accessible driver may have to travel a number of deadhead miles to reach the fare.
- Changes to the MVA would be required to address the zone concern.

- A one-time \$10,000 grant was awarded to the first four accessible taxi drivers. The grant is no longer available, therefore, if there is a person interested in providing accessible taxi service, there is no financial assistance available to outfit the vehicle with the required equipment.

The Committee further requested that:

- HRM and Members of Council be copied on the letter.
- Dispatchers be contacted regarding statistics on the demand for accessible taxis and that the information be included in the correspondence to the Province.
- The letter from Mr. Charles Burnell, Accessible Taxi Driver, submitted on April 13, 2006 to Councillor Adams, be attached to the correspondence to the province.
- That comment be received from the three other accessible taxi drivers and their comments included in the correspondence.
- The letter is to include the number of accessible taxis on the road and the number of accessible calls made on a weekly/monthly basis.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6.1.2 Letter from Mr. Burnell dated March 10, 2006 regarding Accessible Taxis.

This item was dealt with under 6.1.1.

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Delegations - None

7. NEW BUSINESS/ADDED ITEMS

7.1 New Business

7.1.1 Waiting List for Taxi Roof Lights

Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi Services, responded to Mr. Derek Mathers indicating that no names, only ID numbers, appear on the waiting list for taxi roof lights. He added that any person on the list may view the list, in person, at the Taxi Inspector's Office to verify their standing. The list is not available to the public.

Councillor Adams requested that previous minutes (March or May) be reviewed regarding this issue.

Mr. Mathers commented that he is not sure why members of the public/other drivers could not see the names and where they stand on the list as it may alleviate some accusations of wrong-doing and mis-trust. The Committee responded asking why others would want to know who is on the list and where they stand?

Councillor Adams responded to comments regarding a person "jumping the list" and receiving a roof light before another person by requesting that a specific situation of this occurring be brought before the Committee.

Mr. St. Laurent raised a concern on behalf of those drivers leasing roof-lights explaining that they (the Leasee) have no control over their livelihood as the owner of the roof-light could inform them at any time that the roof light is no longer available or, the owner could take on more drivers which would limit the availability of the roof-light.

Councillor Adams requested a report from Legal Services regarding why the waiting list cannot be released to the public. Mr. Hindle advised that there was a provincial FOIPOP ruling that was circulated to the previous Committee. Councillor Adams requested a copy of that ruling be circulated to the Committee.

7.1.2 Certification of Limousine Drivers

MOVED BY Mr. Bobbie Richards, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend to Regional Council that it be made mandatory for all new limousine drivers to complete the National Certification Program similar to that required for Taxi Drivers.

Mr. Wayne Black responded to Mr. Hindle that the Halifax International Airport will require mandatory National Certification for the operator of the taxi cab vehicle. He clarified for the Committee that if the owner of the vehicle does not operate the vehicle, that owner would not be required to take the National Certification Program. If the owner of the vehicle also operates the vehicle, the owner would be required to complete the National Certification Program.

Mr. Hindle advised that the National Certification Program will include specific notation in related documentation on the recent adoption of the requirement for mandatory National Certification for limousine drivers.

Mr. Black responded to Mr. Boggs that any current taxi/limousine driver at the airport must either have completed the National Certification Program or be enrolled in the program by the license renewal time at the end of September. He added that if the requirement

is not met, the license would be revoked and whether or not a second chance is offered would be up to TIANS (Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia).

Mr. Hindle advised that there is good communication between TIANS and the Taxi Inspector's Office regarding notification of when a person has completed the National Certification Program. He explained that the taxi driver's license will be stamped *NATIONALLY CERTIFIED* (below the photograph) at the time of license renewal at the Taxi Inspector's Office.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.1.3 Request for a Presentation - Roof Light Advertising/Taxi Driver Safety - Mr. Harold McKay / Mr. Ken Hollingum

The Committee agreed to hear the presentations on roof light advertising by Mr. McKay and Mr. Hollingum at the May meeting. It was requested that any information available regarding these presentations be circulated to the Committee in their agenda packages.

7.1.4 Taxi Stand Locations

Mr. Hindle advised that Mr. Kevin McEachern, Traffic Division, has requested information as to the location of common stands, the frequency of their use and the requirement for common stands. He added that due to ongoing development / construction, the stands may be affected. Mr. MacEachern has asked if there is a means to review with the industry the issue of removing, relocating common stands and the requirement of common stands. This results from a request for the expansion of a loading zone area in the downtown core that would encroach on a common stand. Is that stand required or could it be removed or moved to another area.

The Committee responded that consideration is given on a case by case basis.

7.2 Added Items

7.2.1 Correspondence: Response from Mayor Kelly to Mr. Burnell dated March 30, 2006 re: Accessible Taxi Service in HRM.

- (i) **Letter dated March 12 to Mayor Kelly from Mr. Burnell re: Accessible Taxi Service in HRM.**

For information purposes. The matter of accessible taxi service in HRM was dealt with under item 6.1.1, see page 6.

7.2.2 Request for a Presentation - Advertising on Taxi Cabs

Both requests were dealt with under agenda item 7.1.3, see above.

7.2.3 Correspondence: Letter dated April 1, 2006 from Mr. Vince Garnier, Provincial Manager, Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, Occupational Health and Safety to Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi and Limousine Services.

Councillor Adams requested clarification on whether “the license holder” mentioned in the letter is in regard to the driver license holder or the taxi license holder? Mr. Hindle responded that it refers to the owners license.

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Tim Hosford that further discussion on this item be deferred to the May meeting as the letter was just circulated (today) to the Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.2.4 Election of Vice-Chair

Deferred until all members are in attendance.

7.2.5 Impact of Leasing Roof Lights on the Taxi Industry

Mr. Denis St. Laurent expressed concern on behalf of those drivers leasing roof lights in regard to:

- Leasees do not have security/control over their livelihood. At anytime, the roof light could be taken away by the roof light owner.
- Another driver could offer the owner more money and the other leasee loses the use of the roof light.
- The city is getting “stiffed”.
- There are two classes of drivers.
- A roof light owner could change residence and reside in another province and still lease out his roof light.
- The system, as it is now, can lead to abuse.

Mr. St. Laurent suggested the following:

- Implement a *use it or lose it* system.

- Implement an Industrial Review Commission.
- Recognize there are issues and address them.

Mr. Hindle advised that the extensive By-Law T-108 review that is underway includes concerns on the pros/cons of roof light leasing. The review is being conducted by HRM Legal Services. He added that the results of the review and any By-Law T-108 changes will come to this Committee and then to Regional Council.

Mr. Hindle added that all concerns/suggestions are welcome to come forward.

Mr. Hosford commented that he would like to hear some solutions to the problems identified by Mr. St. Laurent.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

8.1 Moratorium on Licensing of New Taxi Drivers in The Halifax Zone

The following Notice of Motion was before the Committee:

Take Notice that at the next regular scheduled meeting of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee to be held on Thursday, April 13, 2006, I propose to move that a moratorium be placed on the licensing of new taxi drivers for the Halifax Zone.

MOVED BY Mr. Denis St. Laurent, seconded by Mr. Bill Harrison that the Notice of Motion regarding the licensing of new drivers be deferred pending collection of additional information. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. MOTIONS

9.1 Issuing of Roof Lights

MOVED BY Mr. Hari Boggs, seconded by Mr. Robert Richards that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend that in future, when a roof light is issued, only the person the roof light is issued to be permitted to use that roof light. And further, that leasing of that roof light and additional drivers not be permitted.

Following discussion of the motion on the floor, and without a vote being taken, the following motion was placed:

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Richards, seconded by Mr. Bill Harrison that the motion be forwarded to staff for review. A response is requested, in the form of an Information Report, for the May meeting.

The Committee would like staff to comment on whether the intent of this motion is being considered as part of the current review of By-Law T-108. Also, staff are to provide comment on the implications this motion may have on the zones if approved.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, May 11, 2006, 2:00 pm.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant