

**TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 11, 2006**

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen D. Adams, Chair
Mr. Hari Boggs, Interim Vice-Chair
Mr. Wayne Black
Mr. Kevin Bulley
Ms. Darlene Grant-Fiander
Mr. Tim Hosford
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Denis St. Laurent
Mr. Robert Richards

ABSENT WITH
REGRETS: Mr. Bill Harrison
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 2:02 pm in Meeting Room "C, Keshen Goodman Library.

Mr. Robert Richards requested a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Brian Hill, a recently deceased Airport/County taxi driver.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Mr. Derek Mathers arrived at 2:03 pm.

Additions: 6.1.1 Correspondence received from Mr. Gerry Manley, Taxi Owner, Toronto, Ontario re: Taxi Driver Safety.

7.2.1 Status Update on the By-Law T-108 Review - *Mr. Denis St. Laurent*

Move: Items 6.3.1 and 6.3.2, Presentations re: Roof light advertising, moved forward on the agenda to be dealt with immediately following approval of the minutes.

MOVED BY Mr. Robert Richards, seconded by Mr. Tim Hosford that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - April 13, 2006

MOVED BY Mr. Hari Boggs, seconded by Mr. Robert Richards that the minutes of April 13, 2006 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS

6.3 Delegations

6.3.1 Advertising on Taxi Cabs

- An Information Package from *Power Promotional Concepts* regarding "Roof Top Advertising" Halifax Taxi Cabs, was circulated to the Committee at this time.

Mr. Harold McKay, Power Promotional Concepts, presented the information. A sample roof light was displayed at this time. Mr. McKay commented that:

- The roof light sign would meet all existing sign regulations and can be modified to meet specific shape requirements.
- Safety perspective: The lights are very bright (noticeable). An emergency button is incorporated into the design so that the driver can activate a flashing 911 light to indicate assistance is required.
- 30% of revenue generated from the rooftop advertising, approximately \$150-\$160 per month based on a market survey, will go to the driver.
- Option for the driver to buy the sign (ad light) or use a sign from Power Promotional Concepts.
- Power Promotional Concepts would consider paying a licensing fee to HRM. Revenue from this fee could be used by HRM toward enforcement of the regulations.

Mr. McKay encouraged anyone with questions to contact him for further information.

The Committee thanked Mr. McKay for his presentation.

6.3.2 Roof Light Advertising/Taxi Driver Safety

Mr. Ken Hollingum, MonkeyMedia, provided an oral presentation on the benefits of roof light advertising. He raised the following points:

- Safety for taxi drivers: taxi top advertising would make the cars more noticeable/recognizable and less of a target as rooftop lights with a 3' fluorescent bulb would make the vehicle less attractive to those with criminal intent. The vehicle would also be more visible to pedestrian traffic.
- Taxi top lights with advertising would create more revenue for the drivers as the cab would be more universally recognizable and there would be more flag downs.
- As a result of his market research, it is his understanding that a majority of drivers would welcome the taxi lights.
- A flashing light program could be incorporated into the lights which would be activated by the driver. Front and back bumper stickers could be placed on the vehicle notifying the public that if they see a flashing roof light, please call 911.
- Roof lights on to indicate the cab is available and off when the cab is in use is underutilized.
- He surveyed passengers as they exited cabs in Halifax and determined that less than 15% remembered the cab number or cab company. Roof light advertising would make the vehicle more memorable for the traveling public.
- \$900,000 to \$1.5 M is the estimated generated revenue for taxi drivers based on only 50% of the cabs using the taxi tops.

Mr. Hollingum responded to questions from the Committee indicating that:

- his company is located in Halifax
- the company would pay for the roof top lights with the option available for the driver to purchase the light.
- A portion of the revenue generated from the advertising would go to the company and a portion to the driver.
- Monkey Media would solicit the advertising and then approach the owner of the taxi.
- He clarified that the advertiser usually requests cars in specific areas.
- A public education PR campaign regarding the flashing lights would be considered.

Mr. Richards commented that the provincial government would have to approve flashing light signals in the roof lights. Approval had been granted previously for flashing brake lights.

Councillor Adams clarified that roof light advertising, if approved, would not be mandatory.

Mr. Boggs advised that 95% of the drivers approached by Mr. McKay and Mr. Hollingum were in favour of roof light advertising.

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee request a staff report regarding potential amendments to By-Law T-108 to permit rooflight (taxi top) advertising.

Mr. Denis St. Laurent commented that there is currently a review in progress of By-Law T-108 and perhaps this matter is already being considered.

Without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, it was **MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Robert Richards that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee defer this matter to the June 8, 2006 meeting for further discussion prior to requesting a staff report. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Staff were asked to bring forward potential wording for amendments to By-Law T-108 that would allow for potential roof top advertising.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 Safety of Taxi Drivers - Update

- A copy of the VerifEye information dated March 23, 2006 re: Taxi Security Camera Specifications was before the Committee.
- A copy of the TaxiCam by VerifEye Technical Datasheet was before the Committee.
- A copy of the TaxiCam “Your Partner in Taxi Safety” brochure was before the Committee.
- A copy of the TaxiCam Mk IV Technical Datasheet was before the Committee.
- A correspondence dated March 7, 2006 from Malley Industries Inc. to HRM Community Projects, Taxi and Limousine Services was before the Committee.
- A copy of the information regarding a CD, DRIVECAM “Taking Risk Out of Driving” submitted by a member of the public at the April 13, 2006, was before the Committee.
- A copy of the Taxi Drivers Survey Results, sponsored by the Halifax Association of County Zone Cab Drivers, HIAA Taxi Drivers Committee and the Halifax Taxi Drivers Association, dated May 9, 2006 was before the Committee.

The Committee requested Mr. Gary Jollymore, member of the Halifax Taxi Drivers Association, present the results of the survey regarding safety devices in taxi cabs (cameras/shields).

Mr. Garry Jollymore advised that 500 surveys were issued and 214 surveys were returned. The survey results indicate taxi drivers wish to maintain the status quo. Taxi drivers:

- do not want cameras or shields to be made mandatory.
- do not want to charge a surcharge on the meter to help pay for the safety equipment.
- would like financial assistance to cover the cost of the safety equipment/installation if a driver did decide to install a shield or camera.

The results of the risk assessment indicate that:

1. Airport drivers feel they are low risk.
2. Daytime drivers feel they are at medium risk.
3. Night time drivers feel they are at high risk.

Comments received from Bob’s Taxi in Dartmouth indicate the drivers were more concerned with the response (slow or lack of response) from Halifax Regional Police after drivers report incidents/complaints. Mr. Jollymore suggested that the Halifax and County zones offer comment on police response as well.

The Committee thanked Mr. Jollymore for his presentation.

During the ensuing discussion, the Committee commented that the issue of safety may require some leadership as what the drivers want is not the only issue. As soon as something happens and safety is an issue, drivers will ask who is going to do something about it? Safety has to be considered more so than the "pocket" in this instance.

MOVED BY Mr. Denis St. Laurent, seconded by Mr. Derek Mathers that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee review other avenues including liaising with the provincial Occupational Health and Safety department and Halifax Regional Police. Further, that discussion on this matter continue at the June 8th meeting.

The Committee requested that Mr. Vince Garnier be invited to attend the June 8th meeting to offer comment on the Occupational Health & Safety aspect.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4.2 Accessible Taxi Service in HRM

- A draft letter to the Honourable Minister Angus MacIsaac, Department of Transportation and Public Works, was before the Committee.

Mr. Hindle and the Legislative Assistant advised that the letter will be forwarded once all information is obtained. Comment from other accessible taxi drivers, to be included in the correspondence, was expected by the end of this week.

Discussion ensued on whether or not the taxi industry could charge a \$7 surcharge when an accessible vehicle is requested. By-Law T-108 states that when a special vehicle, mini-van or station wagon, is requested, the industry may charge the \$7 surcharge. The rationale behind this request was that an accessible taxi is a special vehicle and that the \$7 surcharge may assist the accessible driver with the issue of deadhead miles.

Staff indicated that By-Law T-108 also states that you cannot charge extra for accessible taxi service.

The Committee also commented that the problem with the accessible taxi service is that no guidelines were associated with the service when the incentives were introduced. Incentives such as, owner/operators obtaining their own rooflight and a one time \$10,000

provincial grant were offered with no requirement for the operator/vehicle to be available for a specified number of hours.

It was suggested that perhaps the HRM Access-a-Bus service should augment their service with accessible vans.

4.3 Waiting List for Taxi Roof Lights

The following information was before the Committee:

- An excerpt from the March 21, 2006 minutes of the former Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee regarding discussion and subsequent motion re: the waiting list for roof lights (Agenda Item 8.1 pages 3-5).
- A letter dated April 5, 2005 to Ms. Nancy Dempsey, HRM FOIPOP Coordinator, from the former Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee.
- A response dated April 15, 2006 from Ms. Nancy Dempsey.
- An excerpt of the April 18, 2005 minutes of the former Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee regarding the correspondence dated April 15, 2005 from Ms. Dempsey.
- The November 17, 2004 summary from the Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Review Officer, Mr. Darce Fardy, regarding the issue of public disclosure of the waiting list for taxi roof lights.

Upon review of the information submitted, it was determined that the provincial FOIPOP Reviewer's decision of November 17, 2004 was in agreement with HRM in that the names on the waiting list for taxi roof lights was not for public disclosure.

MOVED BY Mr. Denis St. Laurent, seconded by Mr. Bobbie Richards that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee submit an appeal in regard to the provincial FOIPOP Ruling. MOTION DEFEATED.

It was noted that anyone wishing to appeal the provincial ruling may do so on their own behalf.

4.4 Certification of Limousine Drivers

- A draft Information Report dated May 5, 2006 was before the Committee.

Staff submitted an information report, including comment from the By-Law Rationalization Committee, which is to be attached to the report going forward from this Committee to Regional Council on May 30th.

The Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee are to review the information, and provide comment if they so choose, prior to the report going forward to Regional Council.

4.5 Impact of Leasing Roof Lights on the Taxi Industry

Deferred to the June 8th meeting as Legal Services was unable to be in attendance to address the issue today.

4.6 Issuing of Roof Lights

Deferred to the June 8th meeting when Legal Services will be present.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

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

Deferred to the June 8th meeting. A copy of the report is to be re-circulated to the Committee.

5.2 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.

Mr. Garnier, NSDEL, is to be invited to the June meeting and requested to clarify the license he is referring to in his correspondence dated April 1, 2006.

5.3 Election of Vice-Chair

Deferred until all Committee members are in attendance.

5.4 Moratorium on Licensing of New Taxi Drivers in the Halifax Zone.

Deferred to the June 8th meeting when Legal Services will be present.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

**6.1.1 Correspondence received from Mr. Gerry Manley, Taxi Owner, Toronto, Ontario
re: Taxi Driver Safety.**

The letter was acknowledged by the Committee. No further action required.

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Delegations

6.3.1 Advertising on Taxi Cabs

This item was dealt with previously in the meeting. See page 4.

6.3.2 Roof Light Advertising/Taxi Driver Safety

This item was dealt with previously in the meeting. See page 5.

7. NEW BUSINESS/ADEDDED ITEMS

7.1 New Business

**7.1.1 Taxi Stand Located at the West Side of Hollis Street (Civic Area 1200 Block)
between Morris and Terminal.**

MOVED BY Mr. Denis St. Laurent, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend that the taxi stand at the west side of Hollis Street, (Civic Area 1200 Block) between Morris Street and Terminal Road, be maintained.

The Committee commented that the stand is used and is an important stand when the GPS systems are down. Consideration was given to the future importance of that stand when the proposed development of the Seawall is complete.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.2 Membership

The Legislative Assistant welcomed Mr. Kevin Bulley to the Committee as the member representing the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

Further discussion regarding the requirement for a Transportation Committee representative from the Chamber of Commerce was deferred to the June meeting. The Committee is to provide information regarding stakeholders who could be invited to serve.

7.1.3 Limousine Seat Belts

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee request an amendment to By-Law T-108 reducing the minimum seatbelt requirement for limousines to five from the current six. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Staff are to report back on whether or not this issue is already being considered under the By-Law T-108 review.

7.1.4 Cash on the Dash

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee request staff provide wording that would permit drivers to request an up front portion of the fare.

It was agreed that the drivers would use their own discretion when requesting partial payment from their fares.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.5 Driver and Passengers' Bill of Rights

The Committee suggested the term "Code of Ethics" rather than "Bill of Rights".

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee approve the creation of a Code of Ethics for Taxi Drivers/Passengers.

Staff will provide examples of Code of Ethics from other municipalities for the June meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.2 Added Items

7.2.1 Update Requested on the Status of By-Law T-108 Review

Staff explained that By-Laws are constantly under review as circumstances arise and complaints/requests for amendments are received.

The review should be ready for presentation to this Committee within six months.

Legal Services will be in attendance at the June meeting to provide further detail.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

8.1 Take notice that at the next regularly scheduled Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee meeting of June 8, 2006, I, Denis St. Laurent, propose to bring forward a motion to require licence owners to be in possession of a valid Nova Scotia Class 4 driver's licence, issued under the provision of the Motor Vehicle Act, at the time of renewal.

8.2 Take notice that at the next regularly scheduled Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee meeting of June 8, 2006, I, Robert Richards, propose to bring forward a motion for the transferability of HRM owned rooflights.

9. MOTIONS - None

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Thursday, June 8, 2006, 2:30 pm.

11. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 4:08 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant