

# HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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## TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMITTEE MINUTES September 20, 2004

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen Adams  
Donald Hatcher  
Cal Demont  
Don Shannon  
Dave Withrow  
Bob Richards  
Jeff Rozee

ABSENT: Councillor Ron Cooper (Regrets)  
Derek Mathers  
Donald Swinimer

STAFF: Mr. Wayne Anstey, Municipal Solicitor  
Mr. Dave Steele, Taxi Inspector  
Mr. Kevin Hindle, Operations Coordinator  
Ms. Sherrill Murphy, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

**Additions:**

- 8.1 Transferability
- 8.2 Composition of the Committee

**Information Items**

- 1. Hotel Standards Committee Minutes - June 3, 2004
- 2. Information Report - By-law T-132, An Amendment to By-Law T-108, Respecting the Licensing of Taxi and Limousines

**MOVED by Jeff Rozee, seconded by Don Hatcher that the agenda, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3. Approval of Minutes - August 16, 2004 (Regular) and August 30, 2004 (Special Joint Meeting)**

The following corrections and/or additions were made to the minutes before the Committee:

**August 30, 2004**

Page 6 - the 100 calls per day referenced should more appropriately be 20 calls per day.

**August 16, 2004**

On page 4, Item 4.2, Transportation for Disabled Persons, the following sentence be added at the end of the second paragraph:

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Withrow suggested that HRM should stop issuing new owners licenses until more accessible taxis are operational.

Clarifying a point made by Mr. Withrow regarding Regional Council having approved amendments relative to limousine licensing, the Legislative Assistant indicated that, in fact, Council had not approved the By-Law. The only matters advertised for the public hearing were

rooflight positioning and flat rate fares to and from the airport. The limousine licensing portion of the proposed By-law were omitted due to a possible conflict pending the outcome of discussions regarding national certification. Ms. Murphy referred to the information report distributed at this meeting dated September 12, 2004 from Wayne Anstey which provided clarification of the matter.

**MOVED by Mr. Hatcher, seconded by Mr. Withrow that the minutes of the regular meeting of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee held on August 16, 2004 and the joint meeting of the Hotel Standards Advisory Committee and the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee held on August 30, 2004, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

##### **4.1 Update - Taxi Driver Incidents**

Mr. Shannon expressed concern that this matter was not moving forward more quickly and suggested that liability has been established because the process has stalled.

**MOVED by Dave Withrow, seconded by Bob Richards that consideration of this matter be deferred pending Mr. Mather's being present. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

##### **4.2 Numbering of Buildings/Homes**

As no information has been received relative to this matter, consideration was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

##### **4.3 Mandatory National Certification for all HRM Taxi and Limousine Drivers (Referral from Regional Council)**

- Minutes of the joint meeting of the Hotel Standards Advisory Committee and the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee were before the Committee for consideration. The previously distributed report from the Hotel Standards Committee recommending to Council mandatory National Certification was also before the Committee.

Mr. Shannon expressed concern that if this amendment was approved, an evaluator could tell a seasoned driver he can't drive taxi.

Councillor Adams assured Mr. Shannon that the intent was not put drivers out of work, but to upgrade their skills.

Mr. Shannon confirmed that he was not opposed to upgrading skills, however, the concern is that the National Certification program does not provide value for the expenditure. **MOVED by Cal Demont, seconded by Don Hatcher that the following questions be forwarded to Tourism Industry of Nova Scotia for response and an invitation made to Mr. Harrison, Ms. Grant-Fiander and Ms. Leblanc to attend the next meeting of Taxi and Limousine Committee to discuss the responses to these questions:**

1. Given that you are asking a blue collar worker to pay \$180 for a course or program, please justify the expenditure of money and illustrate the benefits.
2. Why would it be suggested that Halifax drivers would be the last certified when, in fact, we are the only taxi drivers in Canada to have this program in place?
3. Is this program not a refresher for what we already know?
4. Who will enforce the new standard?
5. How much of the \$180 the driver pays out will he/she make back as a result of being certified?
6. Where and what are the complaints received to justify national certification. What is the basis for suggesting that this course be given to all drivers?
7. Why is the Taxi and Limousine Committee not the sole Committee given authority to propose amendments to the Taxi By-law?
8. Why isn't the information contained within the National Certification Program included within the HRM testing?
9. What reminders are provided to the drivers at the office relative to appropriate dress, clean cars, etc.?
10. What is TIANS financial status?
11. What makes a nationally certified driver who has been driving one year and one day better than the driver who has been driving for many years?
12. What is the break even cost of the National Certification course for TIANS?

13. Do the concierges or door staff direct guests to cars on the stand when they request a tour or would they call a driver who specializes in tours?
14. Why would a driver take this course if it did not mean more business for the driver?
15. What are the complaints that are being received from tourists?
16. What are the perks to being nationally certified? Is a driver a member of TIANIS by virtue of national certification?

Mr. Shannon went on to indicate that the present lack of enforcement will not be improved by introducing mandatory national certification.

A further discussion ensued with Mr. Withrow noting that national certification has been mandatory for drivers since 1998. Mr. Withrow went on to comment that any uncertified drivers in the industry have at least six years experience and many drivers have much more than that.

In response to a concern from a driver, Councillor Adams indicated that he would meet with Mr. Harrison, Chair, Hotel Standards, regarding the problem with special arrangements between particular drivers and concierge staff at the various hotels.

Mr. Hatcher commented that from the customer's perspective national certification represents a level of service proficiency. He commented that from the driver's perspective it is a continuous learning not unlike that which employees of a variety of companies have to undertake. Mr. Hatcher noted that this step would be influential when seeking future rate increases. The industry could point to the fact that all members of the industry are now certified.

Following a further discussion, the **MOTION WAS PUT AND PASSED.**

#### **4.4 Limousine Licensing Requirements and Limousine Limitations**

- A draft By-Law T-133 was before the Committee for consideration.

**MOVED by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. Withrow that the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee recommend that By-Law Number T-133 regarding Limousine Licensing Requirements and Limousine Limitations be approved, as distributed.**

Note was made that the reference in the Footnotes that particular sections had been previously approved should be removed.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **4.5 Membership of Committee**

- A draft By-Law T-134 regarding the addition to the Committee of a representative from Destination Halifax and one from the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, was before the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Adams suggested that the Committee forward a recommendation to staff for comment regarding the appropriate composition of the Committee. The Councillor noted that the Committee has been criticized because six of its members have a direct interest in the industry.

A discussion ensued with the following points being made:

- Brokers on the Committee have a vote, however, they are not governed by the By-Law
- A suggested format for the Committee is that it be made up of voting members of the public and tourism industry and that drivers and brokers sit on the Committee as non-voting members

**MOVED by Mr. Withrow that By-Law T-134 regarding the addition to the Committee of a representative from Destination Halifax and one from the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, be approved, as distributed.**

As there was no seconder to the motion, the **MOTION WAS LOST.**

**MOVED by Mr. Hatcher, seconded by Mr. Richards that staff prepare a report regarding the composition of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee including a recommended format. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

#### **4.6 Taxi Complaint Statistical Report**

- A Taxi Complaint Statistical Report, October 2001-August 2004, was distributed to members of the Committee.

The report was discussed in detail with the following comments being made:

- The information provided is vague. Clarification of the categories was sought.
- The 'Other' category includes the second largest number of complaints
- Generally speaking the level of complaint is low

- Concern was expressed regarding who makes the decision as to which category a complaint is assigned. Is there a procedure in place to standardize the recording of the complaint?
- Staff should be provided guidelines to help them to determine the 'key issue' within a given complaint

As a result of the discussion, staff agreed to provide a breakdown of the 'Other' category for 2004.

## **5. GOOD NEWS STORIES**

No good news stories were offered.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Presentation: Mr. Richard McNeil, Taxi Driver re First Aid Training**

Mr. McNeil was not present.

## **7. MOTIONS**

### **7.1 Motion - Dave Withrow - Leasing Agreements**

Mr. Withrow proposed that consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting.

Following a short break, Mr. Withrow left the meeting.

Due to a loss of quorum, no further action was taken on this matter

### **7.2 Motion - Don Shannon - Prohibition on New Drivers Licenses**

Due to a loss of quorum, no further action was taken on this matter

## **8. ADDED ITEMS**

### **8.1 Transferability**

This matter was considered in conjunction with agenda item 7.1 upon which no action was taken due to a loss of quorum.

**8.2 Composition of the Committee**

This matter was considered under agenda item 4.5.

**9. NOTICES OF MOTION - None**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday, October 18, 2004**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

As a quorum of the members of the Committee was lost, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Sherryl Murphy  
Legislative Assistant