

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMITTEE MINUTES October 18, 2004

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen Adams
Councillor Ron Cooper

Cal Demont
Don Shannon
Dave Withrow
Bob Richards

ABSENT: Donald Hatcher (Regrets)
Derek Mathers
Donald Swinimer
Jeff Rozee

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | CALL TO ORDER | 4 |
| | MOMENT OF SILENCE - JOHN HIBB | 4 |
| 2. | APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS | 4 |
| 3. | APPROVAL OF MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 20, 2004 | 4 |
| | PRESENTATION: NANCY COCHRANE, COCHRANE ASSOCIATES - NON - VIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION | 4 |
| 4. | BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES | 4 |
| | 4.6 Motion - Don Shannon - Prohibition on New Drivers Licenses | 4 |
| | 4.1 Update - Taxi Driver Incidents | 7 |
| | 4.2 Numbering of Buildings/Homes | 7 |
| | 4.3 Mandatory National Certification for all HRM Taxi and Limousine Drivers (Referral from Regional Council) | 7 |
| | 4.4 Breakdown of 'Other' Category (2004) - Taxi Complaint Statistical Report | 7 |
| | 4.5 Motion - Dave Withrow - Leasing Agreements | 7 |
| | 4.6 Motion - Don Shannon - Prohibition on New Drivers Licenses | 7 |
| 5. | GOOD NEWS STORIES | 7 |
| 6. | NEW BUSINESS | 7 |
| | 6.1 Update, County Owners Waiting List Draw | 8 |
| 7. | MOTIONS | 8 |
| 8. | ADDED ITEMS | 8 |
| | 8.1 Attendance at Taxi Committee meetings - Dave Withrow | 8 |
| 9. | NOTICES OF MOTION | 8 |
| 10. | DATE OF NEXT MEETING | 8 |
| 11. | ADJOURNMENT | 8 |

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE - JOHN HIBB

A moment of silence was held in memory of John Hibb, a taxi driver, who recently died as the result of an assault while he was on the job.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Addition:

8.1 Attendance at Taxi Committee meetings - Dave Withrow

Deletion:

Presentation: Nancy Cochrane, Cochrane Associates - Non-violent Crisis Intervention

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 20, 2004

Approval of minutes was deferred to allow Don Shannon, who received his package today, an opportunity to review them.

PRESENTATION: NANCY COCHRANE, COCHRANE ASSOCIATES - NON-VIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION

Consideration of this matter was deferred as Ms. Cochrane was unable to attend this meeting due to sickness.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

It was agreed that item 4.6 be dealt with at this time.

4.6 Motion - Don Shannon - Prohibition on New Drivers Licenses

- This matter appeared on the agenda for the last meeting of the Committee, however, due to a loss of quorum it was not dealt with at that time.

MOVED by Mr. Shannon, seconded by Mr. Richards that, for the Halifax Zone only, the issuance of new drivers licenses be prohibited for a period of two years.

Mr. Shannon addressed the matter noting the following:

- he could not say with certainty that there is not a need for more drivers, however, in the absence of a formula for how many is too many he believes a prohibition is the best avenue
- he believes that the testing has been compromised as the same three tests have been used for some time and consequently, the tests are not being passed fairly
- drivers are asking directions from their passengers
- the English proficiency test is not working well
- individuals masquerading as taxi drivers are eroding the business for licensed drivers

Councillor Cooper commented that:

- this will deny the opportunity for car a to be utilized on a 24 hours a day
- it is a form of protectionism
- some of the issues raised are not issues relating to the number of drivers
- under the existing By-law there is an opportunity to become a taxi driver, however, this would deny individuals that opportunity
- he will not support this proposed amendment

Mr. Richards indicated that :

- the Halifax zone has more drivers than it needs
- many drivers are not driving, merely leasing their vehicles

Mr. Anstey commented that:

- certain multiple license owners are having difficulty finding drivers for their cars
- they want to get good drivers coming in so that they can hire them to drive
- how is limiting drivers going to resolve this situation

Councillor Adams noted that there was a more extensive training course at one time, however, a policy change by this Committee made it easier to get into the industry.

Mr. Richards noted that many vehicles are being leased and are driving 20 hours. As a result cars are becoming dilapidated.

Councillor Cooper noted that this Committee had not taken a hard stand against leasing. He went on to suggest that if the Committee does not believe the present testing produces quality drivers, then perhaps drivers should be re-tested.

In response to a question from Mr. Withrow regarding the impact of changes to the By-law

relative to testing eligibility, Mr. Steele noted that 78 individuals were tested in the first five months of this year. In the next number of months only 42 were tested.

Confirming that these numbers were for all zones, Mr. Withrow commented that it was obvious that what has been put into place is working.

Mr. Shannon agreed that the testing slowing down is helpful, however, as the appropriate number of drivers is not known, a prohibition on testing will serve to stabilize the industry. Mr. Shannon indicated that he believe that this Committee should support those in the industry and ensure they stay in the industry.

Mr. Brian Allen, industry member

Mr. Allen indicated that there were a great number of drivers in Halifax and that business was on the decrease. He went on to note that cars are now in operation 20 hours per day with two drivers. In effect this eliminates limitation in the Halifax Zone. Mr. Allen indicated that an extra 150 drivers only adds to the difficulties being experienced.

In response to a question from Mr. Anstey regarding what training was required by other cities, Mr. Hindle advised that Metro Toronto required that drivers take a four week training program dealing with all aspects of driving taxi. Drivers are required to take a refresher after two years and a complete re-training every five. Mr. Hindle noted that Metro Toronto is experiencing the same problems as have been brought to this table.

Councillor Adams noted that in London, England, a two year training course is required, while in St. John's Newfoundland no training is required.

Mr. Demont expressed concern that if a freeze on drivers is established, taxi owners will have difficulty getting drivers.

Mr. Shannon noted that the proposed freeze was for two years only, after which the matter could be reconsidered.

Mr. Hindle commented that from an administrative perspective there would be no baseline from which to determine if in two years time it would be reasonable to open up the industry.

Following a further short discussion Councillor Cooper suggested that the freeze on drivers because it is difficult to make a living in Halifax. The Councillor further suggested that drivers may have concerns regarding driving at night.

At this point in the meeting, Bob Richards left the meeting.

As a quorum of members was no longer present, the meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

4.1 Update - Taxi Driver Incidents

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

4.2 Numbering of Buildings/Homes

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

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

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

4.4 Breakdown of 'Other' Category (2004) - Taxi Complaint Statistical Report

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

4.5 Motion - Dave Withrow - Leasing Agreements

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

4.6 Motion - Don Shannon - Prohibition on New Drivers Licenses

Discussion regarding this matter was held previously in the meeting. However, no resolution was reached due to a lack of quorum.

5. GOOD NEWS STORIES

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

6. NEW BUSINESS

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

6.1 Update, County Owners Waiting List Draw

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

7. MOTIONS

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Attendance at Taxi Committee meetings - Dave Withrow

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

This item was not dealt with due to a loss of quorum.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 15, 2004 beginning at 4:30 p.m. in the Chamber, 90 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Due to a loss of quorum, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Sherryl Murphy
Legislative Assistant