

**TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 12, 2007**

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen D. Adams, Chair
Mr. Denis St. Laurent, Vice-Chair
Mr. Hari Boggs
Mr. Jamie Bolduc
Ms. Susan Carroll
Ms. Lisa Dahr
Mr. Kevin Bulley

ABSENT: Mr. Tim Hosford (regrets)
Ms. Cathy Towers (regrets)
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Robert Richards

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CALL TO ORDER	3
2.	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS	3
3.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES	3
4.	BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES	3
4.1	Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee's Workplan	3
4.2	Audit of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee's Progress in 20064	
5.	CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS	4
5.1	Taxi Driver Safety	4
5.2	Inequities in Taxi Owners Licenses	4
6.	CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS	4
6.1	Correspondence	4
6.2	Petitions	4
6.3	Delegations	4
7.	REPORTS	4
7.1	Safety Camera Standards/Technology Sub-Committee - <i>(Verbal)</i>	4
8.	NOTICES OF MOTION	5
9.	ADDED ITEMS	5
9.1	Transferability - Update	5
9.2	Code of Ethics - Update	5
9.3	By-law T018 - Update	5
9.4	No Leasing of New Taxi Owner Licenses - Update	6
9.5	Enforcement	6
9.6	Governance	7
9.7	Thorough Reform of the Taxi Industry	7
10.	MOTIONS	7
11.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	7
12.	ADJOURNMENT	7

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Adams, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:14 am in the Community Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Captain William Spry Centre, 10 Kidston Road, Spryfield.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

- Addition:**
- 9.1 Transferability - Update - Mr. Denis St. Laurent
 - 9.2 Code of Ethics - Update - Mr. Denis St. Laurent
 - 9.3 By-law T018 - Update - Mr. Denis St. Laurent
 - 9.4 No Leasing of New Taxi Owner Licenses - Update on Report to Regional Council - Mr. Denis St. Laurent
 - 9.5 Enforcement - Mr. Denis St. Laurent
 - 9.6 Governance - Mr. Denis St. Laurent
 - 9.7 Thorough Reform of the Taxi Industry - Mr. Denis St. Laurent

MOVED BY Mr. Denis St. Laurent, seconded by Mr. Hari Boggs that the agenda, as amended, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - January 11, 2007

MOVED BY Mr. Kevin Bulley, seconded by Mr. Denis St. Laurent that the minutes of January 11, 2007, as circulated, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee's Workplan

Mr. St. Laurent expressed concern with the lack of progress / attention given to the initiatives outlined in the Workplan from March 6, 2006 and encouraged the Committee to refocus on those initiatives.

The Committee responded that a number of the initiatives are underway such as:

1. A thorough review of By-Law T-108: The draft document has been reviewed by the Committee and comments forwarded to staff. Staff will forward a final report to Regional Council once the review has been completed.
2. Taxi Driver Safety: Ms. Dahr advised that the provincial Department of Environment and Labour (DEL) is working to develop a communication piece for the industry. Mr. Hindle added that the provincial piece will also include a training component.

4.2 Audit of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee's Progress in 2006

Deferred to the May 10, 2007 meeting as Mr. Hosford was not in attendance to speak to this matter.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

5.1 Safety of Taxi Drivers

Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi and Limousine Services, advised that a meeting was held in March with representatives from Halifax Regional Police, the provincial Department of Environment and Labour's Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHS), the National Certification Program and the Halifax Taxi Drivers Association. The provincial Taxi Driver Safety Awareness Program is nearing completion. He added that Mr. Vince Garnier, Provincial Manager, Inspection and Compliance Services - OHS Division Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour, is overseeing the Taxi Driver Safety Awareness Program.

5.2 Inequities in Taxi Owners Licenses

Mr. St. Laurent requested a more detailed breakdown of the multiple owners in the Halifax zone. Mr. Hindle responded that the information will be available for the May 10th meeting.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Correspondence from Mr. Darrell Downey, President, Halifax Taxi Drivers Association

Mr. Denis St. Laurent submitted a letter in support of transferability from Mr. Downey on behalf of the Halifax Taxi Drivers Association membership, dated April 12, 2007. He requested that the letter be attached to the report to Regional Council on this matter.

The Chair requested that a copy of the letter be provided to the Committee members.

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Delegations - None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Safety Camera Standards/Technology Sub-Committee - (Verbal)

Mr. St. Laurent advised that he has reviewed the information on cameras and all the devices look great. There is still a question of who would pay for the devices. He explained that he was unable to confer with Mr. Mathers on this issue and would like the opportunity to discuss the matter with him prior to putting forward a recommendation.

8. NOTICES OF MOTION - None

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Transferability - Update

Mr. Hindle responded to Mr. St. Laurent that the report to Regional Council on transferability has been drafted and forwarded to his Director for review and signature.

9.2 Code of Ethics - Update

Mr. St. Laurent inquired when the Code of Ethics, previously approved by the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee, will be placed in the vehicles. He requested that there be specific guidelines as to the placement of the document in the vehicles.

Mr. Hindle responded that the Code of Ethics will be included as part of the report to Council on By-Law T-108 amendments.

Mr. Kevin Bulley added that the Committee agreed to provide further detail on the placement of the Code of Ethics once the document has been approved by Council.

9.3 By-law T-108 Update

Mr. St. Laurent inquired when the review of By-Law T-108 will be completed. Mr. Hindle responded that Legal Services is working on the amendments. There are two outstanding reports (Airport Fares and Transferability) that have to be dealt with by Council prior to By-Law T-108 amendments going forward.

In response to Mr. St. Laurent, Mr. Hindle advised that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee has already conducted the first stage of the review and provided comment/recommendations to staff which will be included in the report to Council.

Mr. St. Laurent expressed concern with the wording of the By-Law referencing HRM and not the individual zones as it appears to be a step toward removing the zones. He would prefer the By-Law reference the Halifax, Dartmouth and County zones.

Due to the delay in the By-Law T-108 review going to Regional Council, Mr. St. Laurent requested that his previous motion to place a moratorium on new taxi driver licenses in the Halifax zone until a thorough review of By-law T-108 has been completed be brought forward and dealt with now.

Mr. Hindle responded that the issue will be part of the By-Law T-108 review and will be included in the report to Regional Council.

Mr. St. Laurent expressed frustration with the length of time it is taking to address the issues.

9.4 No Leasing of New Taxi Owner Licenses - Update on Report to Regional Council

Mr. St. Laurent requested clarification from Mr. Hindle regarding comments on page 2 of the staff Information Report, dated May 29, 2006, that references retaining part time drivers while, at the same time, recommending the move toward an owner operator system that would not permit multiple licence holders and lease agreements.

Mr. Hindle responded that part time drivers do have a place in the industry as they would be able to drive a vehicle for another when that person is unable to drive due to illness or other reason. Part time drivers would be licensed taxi drivers but may not have an owner's license.

Mr. St. Laurent commented that a true owner operator system would permit better management and provide clarity on whether the demand for taxis is being met. For example, it would be easier to ascertain whether the demand for taxis is being met if you knew you only had 610 vehicles with 610 drivers. Currently, a car could have one or two or more drivers and you cannot do proper measurements.

9.5 Enforcement

Mr. St. Laurent requested clarification from staff on the enforcement budget and discounted fares. Staff responded as follows to Mr. St. Laurent's request.

Budget:

Mr. Hindle explained that there is no budget specifically for enforcement. There are three personnel who work Monday - Friday, 8:00 - 4:00 with assistance from Halifax Regional Police on evenings and weekends. Fourteen By-Law Enforcement Officers from the Dangerous and Unsightly unit are part of the overall enforcement.

Discounted Fares:

In response to Mr. St. Laurent's concern with the advertisement of discounted rates, Mr. Hindle advised that there are two articles in By-Law T-108 (Schedule 1 and Section 62) that allow for a contract, verbal or written, between the taxi operator and passenger. As long as there is a contractual/verbal agreement between the two parties for service at a certain fare, they have met the article of the By-Law. Complaints in regard to inappropriate activity will be investigated.

9.6 Governance

Mr. St. Laurent commented that he would expect the presentation of a budget or annual report from the Taxi and Limousine Services department. He further inquired if there is a budget plan/vision for the taxi industry of HRM.

Mr. Hindle responded that the Taxi and Limousine Services Department runs under the regulation of the By-Law. The By-Law is amended and enacted by Regional Council and it is Regional Council who has the vision and control over the industry. The Taxi and Limousine Services Department enforces what has been approved and passed by Regional Council.

Ms. Susan Carroll commented that the business plan and vision should come from the Taxi Industry itself not from Regional Council. Responsible leadership of the industry should come from the industry.

9.7 Thorough Reform of the Taxi Industry

Mr. St. Laurent expressed frustration with the current state of the taxi industry citing major concerns with the lack of accountability and transparency, a low standard of business ethics and no corporate governance. He added that he would like to see reports about the industry that would include information such as; the number of assaults on taxi drivers, the number of licences removed/issued, the number of trips, revenue generated as well as the budget for the Taxi and Limousine Services office.

Mr. St. Laurent requested that, in future, notices from the Taxi and Limousine Services office be signed.

10. MOTIONS - None

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Thursday, May 10, 2007

12. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 11:22 am.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant