

MINUTES
August 12, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen Adams, Chair
Ms. Joanne Coffey
Ms. Cathy Towers
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Richard McNeil
Mr. Robert Richards

REGRETS: Mr. Gary Russell
Ms. Lisa Dahr
Mr. Tim Hosford

STAFF: Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator of Taxi and Limousine
Services
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Barb Allen, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. at the Captain William Spry Centre.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - June 10, 2010

MOVED BY Mr. McNeil, seconded by Ms. Towers, that the minutes of June 10, 2010 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3.

APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Addition:

8.1 Presentation – Ms. Amanda Jenkins

The agenda was approved as amended. It was agreed that item 8.1 would be dealt with immediately.

Ms. Amanda Jenkins stated that she and her sister, who lives in North Carolina, had written a letter expressing concern for persons with disabilities who rely on taxis as their primary mode of transportation.

Ms. Jenkins said her other sister, Ms. Holly Bartlett, who was visually impaired, was celebrating the end of her Masters in Business Administration term on the evening of March 26, 2010. Ms. Jenkins indicated that her sister had a little bit to drink and called a taxi to take her home. She stated that the taxi did pick her up properly; however, Ms. Bartlett did not make it to the front door of her apartment building. Ms. Jenkins stated that her sister was taken to the parking lot of her apartment building; however, she got out of the wrong side of the taxi; not in front of the apartment building. Ms. Jenkins advised that her sister must have become frantic and, as a result, she fell down an extremely steep embankment and was found the following morning, seven hours later. Ms. Jenkins stated that her 31 year old sister later died in hospital of her injuries.

Ms. Jenkins stated that her sister was extremely important to the family and was the second child of her mother and father. She advised that Ms. Bartlett was an advocate for accessibility in the community. Ms. Bartlett attended St. Francis Xavier University, where she received her degree in psychology with high honors and lived off campus for four years. Ms. Jenkins indicated that Ms. Bartlett had worked for the government; noting that she was actually working on an advertising campaign focused on workplace equity within the Province at the time of her death.

Ms. Jenkins advised, on behalf of her family, that she was in attendance to open up discussion to ensure that those with disabilities who rely on taxi services to get from point A to point B can have reasonable expectations that they get to the front door safely. Ms. Jenkins indicated that they did not expect drivers to get out and lead people to the door; they were simply requesting that reasonable steps be taken to ensure that

persons with disabilities get home safely.

Ms. Jenkins stated she had read By-law T-108 and noticed that it did not include any information related to this matter; noting that it was her goal was to change the verbiage in the By-Law. She indicated there could be a paragraph added that would basically take the choice out of the matter and instruct drivers to wait to be sure that persons with disabilities do reach their destination which would eliminate any error in judgment.

Ms. Jenkins advised that her sister had sat on the Board of Directors for Independent Living and was also heavily involved with NEEDS (National Educational Association of Disabled Students); noting that she was an advocate for persons with disabilities. She stated that Ms. Bartlett took part in Accessibility Week and had recently been given an award for her volunteerism during the event.

In closing, Ms. Jenkins stated that she had looked at her sister's MasterCard bill and the same taxi service was on her bill 17 times in one month; noting that this was clearly something that she relied on and there was never any question that she would get from point A to point B safely.

MOVED BY Mr. McNeil, seconded by Ms. Towers, that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee request Regional Council's consideration to investigate appropriate wording in By-law T-108 to address the concerns brought forward by Ms. Jenkins regarding reasonable steps being taken to ensure that persons with disabilities arrive safely at their destination. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Coffee asked what would be involved in changing the By-law as per Ms. Jenkins' request.

Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator of Taxi and Limousine Services, indicated that staff would work on wording and bring this item back to the Committee.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Zoning Issues

A motion was currently on the floor from the June 10, 2010 meeting as follows:

MOVED BY Mr. McNeil, seconded by Mr. Russell, that the taxi zones be open from 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Committee members were provided with an information report, Central Zone Weekend Time Comparison, a review of call types for service in the Central Zone area of Halifax Regional Municipality.

Mr. McNeil amended his motion as follows:

MOVED BY Mr. McNeil, seconded by Mr. Russell, that the taxi zones be open from 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

A discussion ensued regarding the information in the report. Mr. McNeil said the reason this was deferred was to establish the volume of calls.

Ms. Coffey said that the information presented did not seem compelling enough to increase hours of open zones.

MOTION DEFEATED.

MOVED BY Mr. McNeil, seconded by Ms. Coffey, that the taxi zones be open from 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. MOTION DEFEATED.

4.2 Rate Increase – Mr. Derek Mathers

Mr. Mathers said that he would be meeting with Brokers and Drivers and would bring this item back at a later date.

Discussion was held.

Mr. Buffett drives a van and he says he hears the same comments about additional costs for a van repeatedly. He continued that there appears to be no justification for increased charges for vans. Mr. Buffett said that some van drivers park by busy businesses and pick up passengers then they charge the additional costs. Recently these costs have increased from \$7.00 to \$9.00 extra. He said that some of these drivers also charge an additional .50 cents per passenger.

Mr. Hindle said this issue is being raised more often in recent times. He said that originally there were not many vans in the area, which is why the additional charges were implemented.

Ms. Towers said at the airport they call for a larger vehicle when required.

The Chair said it would be helpful to have the staff report come back before decisions are made so that options can be explored.

Mr. Mathers said the more defined the By-Law can be, the better. He said that there are legitimate reasons for the additional charges for a van, however, some drivers blatantly break the rules and there needs to be recourse for By-Law violations.

Mr. Hindle stated that this was about deadheading a vehicle as the By-Law states a fee

will apply if a specific vehicle is required.

MOVED BY Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. McNeil, that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee request that staff explore options to eliminate the \$7.00 surcharge for vans. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions None

6.3 Presentations

6.3.1 Membership Selection for the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee- Mr. David Buffett

Mr. Buffett reported that he has applied to be on the Taxi & Limousine Committee for the past eleven years; however, he stated that the process must be flawed as his application has never been acknowledged and he has never been given the opportunity to sit on the Taxi and Limousine Committee.

The Chair explained that there was a process in place, that the opportunities were advertised, and applications go to the Municipal Clerks Office. He continued that the Municipal Clerks Office summarizes qualifications and forwards a list to the Membership Selection Committee, after which the names go forward to Regional Council for approval. He stated that there had been a change this year, as Council was reviewing their boards and committees, which is why there had been no advertising for positions this year so far. He advised that, as a result, nothing would change until Council makes a decision and the new committee structures are in place.

Mr. Richard's said that the Taxi and Limousine Committee should have members representing drivers from each zone.

Ms. Coffey said that this would be a change to the committee's Terms of Reference, which could not take place until Council decides on committee structure moving forward.

The Chair requested confirmation that the recommendation had been forwarded to the Membership Selection Committee.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Roof Light Protocol - Mr. Rick McNeil

Mr. McNeil has spoken to business owners who ask why Halifax drivers do not turn their roof lights off to let people know that the taxi is unavailable.

Mr. Hindle said that there are no requirements to have roof lights off when occupied. In other areas they are trying different indicators to show the car is available or occupied. He said that for safety purposes all options need to work day or night.

Mr. Hindle will do research and bring information back to the committee for consideration.

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Presentation – Ms. Amanda Jenkins

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting. Please see page 3.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for September 9, 2010

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Barb Allen

Legislative Support