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PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
July 6, 2004

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Eric Swain", written over a horizontal line.

Mr. Eric Swain, Chair of the Hotel Standards Committee

DATE: May 10, 2004

SUBJECT: **Mandatory National Certification for all HRM Taxi and Limousine Drivers**

ORIGIN

Hotel Standards Committee meeting of May 6, 2004.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council approve in principle that:

1. **The National Certification Program be made mandatory for all HRM Taxi and Limousine drivers;**
2. **Further, that all HRM Taxi and Limousine drivers be given one year, from the date of their 2004 license renewal to complete the mandatory National Certification Program.**
3. **Further, for those drivers who will have renewed their license prior to this recommendation being approved, that they be given one year from the date of their 2005 license renewal to complete the mandatory National Certification Program and**

that HRM staff be requested to arrange for the formal introduction of the necessary amendments to By-Law T-108, the Taxi and Limousine By-Law.

DISCUSSION:

The Hotel Standards Committee agreed the time has now arrived for mandatory National Certification for all HRM Taxi and Limousine Drivers. Currently, all new drivers applying for a taxi or limousine license in HRM must complete the National Certification course within one year of their application in order to obtain a permanent taxi or limousine license. There is no such requirement for longer serving drivers. The request for mandatory certification of all drivers is to ensure quality service for all clients of the HRM Taxi and Limousine industry including visitors to our region. Mandatory completion of the National Certification Course would also enable HRM to promote all Taxi and Limousine drivers as Nationally Certified.

The National Certification Program is subsidized by TIANS and would require each driver to pay only \$150.00 plus HST. The National Certification Program challenges the knowledge the driver already has of his/her occupation. It is considered earning your credentials similar to an Accountant writing his/her exam. Training courses on providing guided tours have also been offered to taxi and limousine drivers in an attempt to provide the most knowledgeable front line tourism contacts for visitors to our region.

Approval of the mandatory National Certification for all HRM Taxi and Limousine Drivers would require an amendment to By-Law T-108, the Taxi and Limousine By-Law.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budgetary implications inherent in this document.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Excerpt from Hotel Standards Committee minutes of May 6, 2004.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report prepared by: Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant , 490-6732.

4. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

4.1 **Status Sheet**

4.1.1 & 4.1.2 **Profile with Port Authority / Cruise Ships / Halifax International Airport Authority**

- A copy of an e-mail response from Municipal Solicitor, Mr. Wayne Anstey, dated April 2, 2004, was before the Committee.
- A copy of a letter from Councillor Adams, Chair of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee, dated April 27, 2004 was before the Committee.

Mr. Swain advised that in regards to Councillor Adams' letter, all future correspondence will be copied to the Regional Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee although there is no legal obligation to do so. The Committee agreed.

Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander advised the Port Authority is preparing a response to our correspondence regarding Hotel Standards service at the port. She further advised Councillor Adams has also met with a representative of the Port Authority.

Mr. Swain added contact has been made with Mr. Wayne Black at the airport. Mr. Black has spoken with airport drivers who have expressed concerns regarding Hotel Standards only service to the airport. Mr. Swain further advised on June 2, 2004 he and Ms. Fiander will be presenting the benefits of National Certification to the Airport Authority and some of the drivers servicing the area.

The Committee raised the following concerns during the ensuing discussion:

- 75% of the drivers at the airport are Dartmouth or County rooflights and are not required to take the National Certification. They will not take the course as they are not allowed to service the hotels or the port.
- The message to be relayed to the airport is that you have a license renewal coming up in September and National Certification should be part of the criteria the drivers must meet.
- Concerns being raised are due to the three zone system we now have. The County has been given permission to "freeze" the number of licenses in that zone and they want to maintain that zone which includes the airport.
- If the airport is open to all Municipal taxis then the Port Authority should be open to all Municipal taxis. The county drivers are concerned about loss of business if Halifax drivers come to the airport and Halifax drivers are concerned about loss of business if the County drivers come to the Port. Concerns it could be *the thin edge of the wedge* that will open all zones that will allow County drivers to come

into the Halifax area and take business from the Halifax drivers on a regular basis. Opening the Port Authority and Halifax Airport is not being perceived as a promotion of National Certification.

- National Certification does not limit anyone as anyone can do it. There is some miscommunication from members of this Committee to the drivers as well. We (Hotel Standards Committee) have to ensure our message is clear.
- In Dartmouth, the National Certification process is perceived as an additional expense with no revenue bearing for the drivers as there are no Hotels in Dartmouth that are Hotel Standards only. The County also has this perception. National Certification does not open up a "lucrative market" for the Dartmouth or County zones and they do not see the benefit as a personal growth.
- We should be meeting with key players in Dartmouth to present the right perception.
- We do not need to sell the drivers on National Certification, we have to sell the Airport Licensing Authority. If we present the reasons why the Airport Authority may want to consider National Certification then they can chose to make it mandatory as part of the licensing.
- Each time a driver renews their license, they are a new driver. If it is made mandatory to complete the National Certification course the drivers will do it. The cost of the course (\$150.00 with HANS rebate) could be made back in a couple of days.

Members of the public in attendance volunteered the following comments:

- Include in the TIANS newsletter the number of organizations who have National Certification with a message to the drivers saying "*Do you want to be the last group to be Certified?*"
- Suggest the tour guide course be part of the taxi licensing criteria
- Raise cost of entering into the National Certification program for the new drivers and use the extra funds to subsidize the National Certification course for the older drivers.

Ms. Fiander clarified the National Certification program is not a course, it is basically challenging the knowledge you already have of your occupation. It is earning your credentials., similar to an Accountant writing his/her exam.

The following comments were raised during the ensuing discussion:

- National Certification was designed by taxi drivers. The program is comprised of knowledge drivers across Canada have determined should be known. For anyone who has been driving taxi for 25 years, it should all be common knowledge.
- How many drivers consider themselves an *Ambassador* or simply a taxi driver - If all drivers were proactive on the service side, HRM would have the best industry in North America.

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- National Certification was designed by taxi drivers. The program is comprised of knowledge drivers across Canada have determined should be known. For anyone who has been driving taxi for 25 years, it should all be common knowledge.
- How many drivers consider themselves an *Ambassador* or simply a taxi driver - If all drivers were proactive on the service side, HRM would have the best industry in North America.

- **The Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee has to make a stand on the issue of Hotel Standards, we have reached a certain stage and it should now be made mandatory. This is the only way to have 100% participation.**
- **Change the term "Hotel Standards" and use "National Certification" as that is what it really is.**
- **We do not have to "sell" the drivers on National Certification, we have to sell the Airport Licensing Authority and if the drivers want to work there, they will take the certification program.**
- **The amount of money you (the taxi driver) pay in (for the National Certification) is well worth the investment you will get back.**

**MOVED BY Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander, seconded by Mr. Lorne Baccardax that the Hotel Standards Committee send a letter to Regional Council requesting it be made mandatory for all HRM Taxi and Limousine drivers to complete the National Certification program within one year of approval of this recommendation.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Upon further discussion, the following motion was made:

MOVED BY Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander, seconded by Mr. Lorne Baccardax that the Hotel Standards Committee recommend Regional Council:

- 1. Make mandatory the National Certification Program for all HRM Taxi and Limousine drivers.**
- 2. Further, that all HRM Taxi and Limousine drivers be given one year, from the date of their 2004 license renewal to complete the mandatory National Certification Program.**
- 3. Further, for those drivers who will have renewed their license prior to this recommendation being approved, that they be given one year from the date of their 2005 license renewal to complete the mandatory National Certification Program.**

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