

**TAXI AND LIMOUSINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 12, 2006**

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen D. Adams, Chair
Mr. Derek Mathers
Mr. Denis St. Laurent
Mr. Kevin Bulley
Ms. Darlene Grant-Fiander
Mr. Tim Hosford

ABSENT: Mr. Bill Harrison (*regrets*)
Ms. Cathy Towers (*regrets*)
Mr. Robert Richards

STAFF: Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi and Limousine
Services
Constable Regan Fong, HRP
Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm in Meeting Room "C, Keshen Goodman Library. He introduced Constable Regan Fong, HRP, who will be attending the meetings in regard to the Taxi Driver Safety issue.

2. MEETING PROCEDURES / DECORUM FOR BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- A memorandum dated October 10, 2006 from Municipal Clerk, Jan Gibson, was before the Committee.

Councillor Adams introduced Ms. Jan Gibson, Municipal Clerk, who was in attendance to explain the procedures/decorum for HRM meetings held in a public forum.

Ms. Gibson indicated that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee meetings are not public hearings or public engagement sessions; they are meetings of the body discussing business in a public forum. She apologized for the behaviour of some members of the public at previous Committee meetings.

Ms. Gibson, referring to page 2 of the memorandum, clarified the role of the public at HRM Committee meetings as observers who are to listen to, but not participate in, the discussions. If a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on a matter relating to the Committee's mandate, an application, in writing, is to be forwarded to the Legislative Assistant. She further advised that all HRM Regional Council, Community Council and Board and Committee meetings are governed by the rules outlined in Administrative Order 1. She emphasized that the public are to be respectful of the process by remaining silent during the meeting and not approach Committee members or staff while the meeting is in session. Ms. Gibson clarified that if members of the public do not respect the process, the Chair may call a recess or adjourn the meeting. The Legislative Assistant is to request police assistance, if necessary, to clear the room.

Ms. Gibson emphasized that volunteers provide an important contribution to HRM and are valued by the Mayor, Council and staff.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions: 10.1 Alternate Meeting Day and Time

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Tim Hosford that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - September 14, 2006

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Tim Hosford that the minutes of September 14, 2006 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee's Workplan

Deferred to the November 9, 2006 meeting.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Safety of Taxi Drivers

The Committee expressed concern with inaccuracies in Mr. David Rhodenizer's, Wednesday, October 4, 2006 Daily News column in regard to the Information Report to Regional Council on Taxi Driver Safety dated October 3, 2006. In particular, concern was expressed that the Nova Scotia Department of Occupational Health and Safety representative was quoted in the article based on the mis-information.

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee send a letter to the Editor of the Daily News outlining the following inaccuracies in Mr. David Rhodenizer's October 4, 2006 column:

- 1) The recommendations outlined in the Regional Council Information Report were those of the taxi industry as a result of their survey, not the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee.**
- 2) The Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee has not forwarded their recommendation(s) to Regional Council on the matter of taxi driver safety as discussion on the matter is ongoing. The Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee is in the process of reviewing all information and considering options.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

During the ensuing discussion on the matter of taxi driver safety, it was **MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Kevin Bulley that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory**

Committee recommend to Regional Council that cameras be made mandatory in taxi cabs.

Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander requested a friendly amendment to the motion that cameras be made mandatory in conjunction with a broadened safety awareness/education campaign. With the agreement of the Mover and Seconder, the motion was amended to read as follows: **MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Kevin Bulley that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend to Regional Council that cameras be made mandatory in taxi cabs in conjunction with a broadened safety awareness/education campaign.**

Mr. Hindle clarified for Mr. St. Laurent that not all drivers are required to take the National Certification Program which does contain a safety awareness component. A new safety awareness program, which would require an amendment to By-Law T-108, would have to be introduced to ensure all drivers receive the training.

Constable Regan Fong advised that Halifax Regional Police (HRP) could work proactively with the taxi industry to develop a safety training program specific to their industry as HRP currently offers general safety training to schools and volunteers. The safety training could be offered by HRP at no additional cost to the taxi driver.

Ms. Fiander suggested that safety awareness be part of the taxi licensing process.

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Kevin Bulley that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council request funding from the provincial and federal government levels, in partnership with the taxi industry stakeholders, to assist with the cost of implementing safety cameras in taxi cabs and the safety awareness/education campaign.

Ms. Fiander commented that it is important for the cost to be shared and the government may be more open to cost share on the premise of safety. She requested that staff re-circulate the information on surcharges for the Committee's review/consideration prior to forming a recommendation as pertinent information, such as a time line for the surcharge, had been included with that information.

Mr. Bulley commented that the Committee has not received information on possible provincial/federal funding sources that a former Committee member was to provide. He added that some concern has been expressed that if the wording in the survey had

included reference to partial funding to assist with the costs to implement the cameras, perhaps the industry would have been in agreement. He added that staff's research indicates that surcharges have been successfully implemented in other municipalities.

Mr. Hosford suggested that if there are no other funding options then perhaps a surcharge could be implemented. Constable Fong added that HRP could assist with community awareness in regard to safety. Mr. Mathers reminded the Committee that the Nova Scotia Department of Occupational Health and Safety had also offered assistance in regard to safety.

Ms. Fiander requested that staff provide the Committee with a list of standards and suppliers in regard to safety cameras.

Without a vote being taken on the motion on the floor, it was **MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Kevin Bulley that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee appoint a Camera Standards/Technology Sub-committee.**

1. **The membership for the Sub-Committee will include Mr. Denis St. Laurent (Taxi Driver), Mr. Derek Mathers (Taxi Broker), Constable Regan Fong, Halifax Regional Police and Mr. Kevin Hindle, Regional Coordinator, Taxi and Limousine Services.**
2. **The mandate for the Sub-Committee will be to review the technical options available for a variety of safety cameras, including a list of suppliers.**
3. **The Camera Standards/Technology Sub-Committee is to present their recommendation(s) to the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee for approval.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A vote was then taken on the original motion on the floor as follows: **MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Kevin Bulley that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council request funding from the provincial and federal government levels, in partnership with the taxi industry stakeholders, to assist with the cost of implementing safety cameras in taxicabs and the safety awareness/education campaign. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Committee agreed that the question of funding and type of camera be addressed prior to forwarding the recommendation for mandatory cameras to Regional Council.

The intent is to include all recommendations in one comprehensive report to Regional Council.

6.2 Transferability of Roof Lights

Mr. Denis St. Laurent and Mr. Robert Richards were to present on this matter. Due to the absence of Mr. Richards it was **MOVED BY Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander, seconded by Mr. Kevin Bulley that this matter be deferred to the November 9, 2006 meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

6.3 Bylaw T-108

- (i) Impact of Leasing Roof Lights on the Taxi Industry**
- (ii) Issuing of Roof Lights**
- (iii) Limousine Seat Belts**
- (iv) Moratorium on Licensing of New Taxi Drivers in The Halifax Zone**
- (v) Advertising on Roof Lights**
- (vi) Collection of Fees**

The Committee discussed the By-Law T-108 proposed amendments/topics for discussion as listed above. The following comments were raised during the ensuing discussion:

Mr. Hindle clarified that the six topics listed above were for discussion during the review of the proposed amendments to By-Law T-108. The intention was to discuss the topics that have long been raised at the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee meetings and, if a recommendation resulted, that recommendation would be included in the report to Regional Council on proposed amendments to By-Law T-108.

(I) Impact of Leasing Roof Lights on the Taxi Industry

The Committee agreed that this item is to be deleted from the agenda as the topic has been discussed with no action resulting from the discussions.

(ii) Issuing of Roof Lights

Mr. Hindle advised that this item is currently being discussed by the Committee as it pertains to the Dartmouth owners waiting list for a roof light. Discussion ensued on this matter with a suggestion that the Committee consider a motion in regard to the Corporations listed on the Dartmouth Owners Waiting List being replaced with the name

of the Director for that Corporation by January 1, 2007 and; if the Director's name is already on the list, that the position be defaulted.

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Tim Hosford that this matter be deferred to Legal Services for comment and that staff be requested to provide the status of the Corporations on the Dartmouth Owners Roof Light Waiting List. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Hindle responded to Mr. St. Laurent that the waiting list for each zone is reviewed/updated on a monthly basis.

(iii) Limousine Seat Belts

To be removed from the agenda as the issue is being addressed.

(iv) Moratorium on Licensing of New Taxi Drivers in the Halifax Zone

To be removed from the agenda as the issue is being addressed.

(v) Advertising on Roof Lights:

The Committee agreed that:

- Advertising on roof lights would not be aesthetically pleasing.
- Rooflight advertising could potentially be a cause of confusion for the customers when attempting to identify the cab company/roof light number.
- An amendment to By-law T-108 would be required in order to permit advertising on roof lights as the shape/size of the light may change.
- In regard to a revenue source for drivers, it was agreed that advertising is already permitted on the body of the vehicle.
- The general consensus of the Committee was that there be no advertising on roof lights.

This item to be removed from the agenda.

The Committee called a five minute recess at 2:57 pm due to interruptions from a member of the public in attendance. The meeting reconvened at 3:05 pm.

(vi) Collection of Fees

Mr. Hindle advised that the proposed administrative change is that the Taxi Inspector's Office will no longer accept payment of fees for an external organization. The taxi driver will be required to provide proof of payment/registration for the English Second Language Testing and TIANS National Certification Program fees when they arrive at the Taxi Inspector's office for their temporary license.

The following items were added to the discussion at this time:

(vii) **Wait Time to Re-Take the Taxi Driver Knowledge Test (Section 39, By-Law T-108)**

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Tim Hosford that the wait time to re-take the Taxi Driver Knowledge Test, after the second attempt, be reduced to three months from twelve months. MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

MOVED BY Mr. Kevin Bulley, seconded by Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander that the wait time to re-take the Taxi Driver Knowledge Test, after the second attempt, be reduced to six months from twelve months. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

(viii) **Halifax Taxi Zone Proposed Boundary Change**

MOVED BY Mr. Tim Hosford, seconded by Mr. Derek Mathers that the area in District 18 - Spryfield/Herring Cove, formerly known as county in Chebucto Peninsula, be considered part of the Halifax Taxi Zone.

Councillor Adams advised that this is a housekeeping amendment. He explained that currently, as the by-law is written, a county driver must service the Herring Cove/Sambro area but in reality the Halifax drivers are servicing the area. He responded to Ms. Fiander that as far as he knew there are no other areas that have this concern. Councillor Adams added that the county drivers are in agreement to this amendment. He will provide further detail in regard to the boundary to Mr. Hindle.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

(viv) **Taxi Inspector - Roles and Responsibilities**

Mr. Hindle clarified for Mr. St. Laurent, in regard to definitions in the by-law, that the term "Administrator of Licensing" is not a new position. He explained that all by-laws are moving away from individual to a departmental identity therefore, instead of using the

term "Taxi Inspector" the term in the by-law will be "Administrator of Licensing" which will include the entire department and not only the Taxi Inspector.

(X) Single Operators License (Zoning)

Mr. Mathers indicated that comments he has been hearing from members of the industry are that having a single operators license is one step closer to the elimination of the zones.

Mr. Hindle explained that the zone specific service is still in place by the owners license as the vehicle can only service the zone in which it is licensed. The proposed single operators license is to accommodate accessible taxi drivers, who go to all zones, and the fact that all drivers drop-off in other zones. Currently, if a driver wants to drive in other zones he/she is required to have three separate licenses, one for each zone.

Councillor Adams suggested that the wording in the by-law clarify that the zones will remain in place.

6.4 Code of Ethics

Upon review of the document, the following changes were suggested:

Addition: Add the sentence: "*A driver may request a deposit up to the estimated amount of the fare in advance.*" - Mr. St. Laurent

Mr. Kevin Hindle advised that the wording in the By-Law would have to reflect the wording in the Code of Ethics on this matter. He further advised that the By-law indicates that the fare is what is shown on the meter and without an amount showing on the meter, it may not be possible to request a deposit. He will request Legal Services to review this issue and provide comment.

Councillor Adams advised that a similar request for "cash on the dash" had been requested in the past but was rejected by Regional Council.

MOVED BY Mr. Denis St. Laurent, seconded by Mr. Derek Mathers that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee recommend to Regional Council that the following sentence be included in the Code of Ethics and that By-Law T-108 be amended to reflect the wording in the Code of Ethics as follows: "*A driver may request a deposit up to the estimated amount of the fare in advance.*" MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discussion ensued in regard to placement of the Code of Ethics in the vehicle. No decision was reached at this time.

Delete: Delete the use of “*will not*” in the second section of the document.
Delete the line “*Passenger appears to need immediate medical assistance.*” in the second section of the document.

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Ms. Darlene Fiander that the following sentence be included in the Code of Ethics; “That there be no smoking in a taxi vehicle while transporting a passenger.” MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED BY Mr. Derek Mathers, seconded by Mr. Tim Hosford that taxi drivers not use their cell phones while transporting passengers.

Numerous Committee members indicated that independent cab drivers rely on their cell phones for business and a missed call would mean a missed fare. The Committee suggested that short cell phone conversations be permitted as long as the vehicle is driven in a safe manner.

MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.

MOVED BY Mr. Denis St. Laurent, seconded by Mr. Derek Mathers that the Code of Ethics be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6.5 Presentation of Committee Reports to Regional Council

Mr. Hindle clarified that a Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee report would be presented to Regional Council by the Chair of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee and not by staff.

6.6 Membership

The Legislative Assistant advised that the advertisement for Volunteers was in the Saturday, September 16th newspapers. All applications submitted will be forwarded to the Membership Selection Committee and then to Regional Council for appointment to the Taxi.

6.7 Election of Vice-Chair

Mr. Denis St. Laurent volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair. Hearing no further nominations, Mr. St. Laurent was declared Vice-Chair.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS - None

8. REPORTS

8.1 STAFF REPORTS

8.1.1 Accessible Taxis - Update

Mr. Kevin Hindle advised that on September 28, 2006 he met with the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission in regard to accessible taxi service issues such as deadhead miles and possible enhancements for a more sustainable service. He explained that the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission is pushing to introduce a similar (Grant) program to bring accessible vehicles into the industry.

He further advised that the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission expressed concern with a \$7 surcharge for accessible fares only as that charge would be discriminatory and a violation of human rights. It was explained that if the \$7 surcharge were introduced and levied by all taxis in the industry and applied to all areas that do not have local taxi service, that surcharge would be acceptable. For example, if it would take 15 minutes to reach the fare, then perhaps the \$7 surcharge, if agreeable to the industry and applied to all, would be acceptable. It was further noted that those supplying accessible service may be eligible for the fuel charge tax rebate.

The Committee commented as follows:

- Suggested a review be done of the current zoning arrangement.
- Those who entered the accessible taxi service business did so with full knowledge that they were to cover all HRM zones.
- The City has to provide some funding for accessible taxi service or, augment their own Access-A-Bus service or, contract the service out to the taxi industry. Councillor Adams clarified that the Municipal Government Act (MGA) does not permit the municipality to provide funding to a private industry.

Deferred to the November meeting due to time constraints.

8.1.2 Taxi Inspector - Roles/Responsibilities - Councillor Adams

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting as part of the discussion for Item 6.3 By-Law T-108 Amendment viv) Taxi Inspector - Roles and Responsibilities. See page 10.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION - None

10. ADDED ITEMS

10.1 Alternate Meeting Day and Time

Deferred to the November meeting due to time constraints.

11. MOTIONS - None

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 9, 2006.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant