

**TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
February 21, 2005**

PRESENT: Councillor Linda Mosher, Acting Chair  
Cal Demont  
Don Shannon  
Dave Withrow  
Derek Mathers

ABSENT WITH  
REGRETS: Councillor Gloria McCluskey  
Bob Richards  
Jeff Rozee

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

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:40 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

**Addition:**

- 8.1 Accessible Taxis - Concern from Industry re Influx of too Many Vehicles (Don Shannon)

Mr. Anstey advised that under the legislation the Taxi and Limousine Committee is unable to limit the number of accessible taxis either directly or indirectly. Therefore, any parameters relative to accessible taxis must not be an attempt to limit the number of vehicles.

Mr. Shannon further requested that the Committee be provided the waiting Lists for the next meeting of the committee.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - None**

**4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**4.1 Presentation - Sheila Nunn - East Coast School of Language**

Mr. Kevin Hindle, introduced Ms. Sheila Nunn, East Coast School of Language.

Ms. Nunn addressed the Committee indicating that the school enjoyed a combined experience of 40 years teaching English as a second language. She went on to provide the following information:

- East Coast Language School of Language have administered the test since July 2004 and have made some changes to the test.
- There are two components to the test: a picture about which the individual is asked specific questions and a testing of general conversation.
- Drivers have to achieve 25 points to pass and if they do not pass, the individual is asked to take a period of time to learn English. In most instances staff suggest that the individual get some assistance from MISA or at the Regional Libraries.
- The test assesses the ability to function in English and although some believe it to be very easy, it does assess function and English grammar.

- East Coast introduced the second part because they believed that the first part was very structured and drivers would be able to illustrate their English abilities with the general conversation
- There are three versions of the test and the test takes between five and fifteen minutes
- East Coast Language is more confident with the revised test that drivers are receiving a fair assessment and that the test is more balanced

Ms. Nunn then responded to questions from members of the Committee.

**MOVED by Mr. Withrow, seconded by Mr. Shannon that drivers be required to produce their Nova Scotia Drivers license and documentation from the Taxi Office before taking the English Language test. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Hindle thanked Ms. Nunn for her presentation.

## **5. GOOD NEWS STORIES**

The following good news stories were offered:

Bobs/Bluebell received a letter of thanks for the assistance provided by a Bluebell taxi driver in returning two dogs (Max and Dale) to their owners.

Birthday greetings extended to Frank Horwill, seated in the gallery.

Bob Richards is recovering at home and believes he will be able to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Decision re Presentation on Security Cameras**

- Information regarding recently approved legislation mandating taxi cameras in British Columbia was distributed to members of Council.

The Committee agreed that Mr. Salmon be advised that the Committee does not wish to have a presentation at this time. In addition, Mr. Salmon should be made aware that drivers are permitted to install safety devices in their vehicles.

Information regarding Mr. Salmon's company and product is also to be provided to the major brokers for reference by drivers

7. **MOTIONS** - None

8. **ADDED ITEMS**

8.1 **Accessible Taxis - Concern from Industry re Influx of too Many Vehicles (Don Shannon)**

Mr. Shannon expressed concern on behalf of industry members that drivers would be converting to accessible taxis just to get the equivalent of an owners license. Given that accessible taxis are not subject to the same restrictions as non-accessible taxis, Mr. Shannon asked if there will be some checks in place to ensure that the numbers of accessible vehicles are limited.

A lengthy discussion ensued, including comment from members of the industry, and the following key points were made:

- At the present time there are no accessible taxis in operation in HRM. The Province has \$40,000 in funding for the conversion of vehicles to accessible taxis. This represents approximately four (4) accessible taxis at \$10,000 per conversion. Drivers applying for these funds must present a business case.
- There is no history to indicate there will be an influx of accessible vehicles to the industry.
- The Federal legislation relates to the vehicle. The vehicle has to meet the requirements set out under the legislation. Individual owners must be familiar with the vehicle and the tie down system. Staff is unaware of any standard training. Drivers have to be able understand the operation of the vehicle and the disabilities of their passengers.
- An accessible rooflight is identifiable as it has an A plus two numbers on the front (i.e. A12) and HRM on the side.
- If an individual is not on a taxi owners waiting list now and obtains an accessible taxi license, he/she will not be placed on the list. If his/her name is on the list, it will not be removed if he/she gets an accessible taxi license.
- If the a driver obtains an accessible license in order to get away from a leasing arrangement, how can the taxi office ensure that drivers are providing the accessible services.
- Note was made that HRM, the Province and organizations advocating on behalf of the disabled community will be promoting any new accessible service. The Province does not intend that they will provide money for someone to just get a

taxi.

- The Provincial program will have checks and balances in place before the monies are handed over to retrofit a vehicle, The Human Rights Commission will respond to complaints of lack of service from the disabled community.
- There is a minimal demand for individual accessible taxi service in HRM .

In response to a question as to whether it is possible to disallow the use of a rooftop by accessible taxis, Mr. Anstey advised that the legislation states that accessible taxis cannot be limited. By disallowing the use of a rooftop HRM would indirectly limit their business. He went on to point out that it would be extremely difficult to go to the province with a request to limit the number of accessible taxis, given there are no accessible taxis at this time.

**Mr. Charles Bernell, taxi driver**, advised that he has converted a vehicle to handle four wheelchairs and was just waiting for final inspections to move forward with an accessible service. He noted that he had undertaken the conversion at his own cost. He went on to indicate that he would invite close monitoring noting that his primary focus should be and will be for wheelchairs. Mr. Bernell commented that his name is on the waiting list for a regular rooftop and indicated that he should either be required to choose when his name comes up for a license or his name should be removed.

A further short discussion and questioning of staff ensued. There was no further action relative to this matter at this time.

## **9. NOTICES OF MOTION**

Don Shannon gave Notice of Motion of his intention to, at the next meeting of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee, introduce a motion requesting HRM Council to lobby the Province to allow HRM to monitor and modify the number of accessible taxis.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, March 21, 2005

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Sherryl Murphy  
Legislative Assistant

The following information items were circulated to the Committee:

1. Correspondence from Peter James re Re-Structure of HRM Taxi and Limousine Committee
1. Minutes of the Hotel Standards Committee, December 2, 2004