

VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

CITY OF EDMONTON VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 3

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

MEMBERS

L. Lubin, Chairman
R. Clarke
M. Fysh
C. Khehra
C. Kilburn
C. Leahey

PRESENT

L. Lubin
R. Clarke
M. Fysh
C. Khehra
C. Kilburn
C. Leahey

Also in attendance;

Legal Counsel Representative
Chief Livery Officer
Vehicle For Hire Secretary
Transportation Department Representative

G. Stewart-Palmer
G. Dziwenka
S. Weller
B. Vanderhoek

Not in attendance;

Edmonton Police Service Representative

Not in attendance

1. Call to Order

Chairman called the meeting to order at **1:45 p.m.** He introduced and welcomed Mr. Garry Dziwenka, who is the new Chief Livery Officer. He also introduced Mr. Brad Vanderhoek, who is acting as the representative from the Transportation Department.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED: FYSH/CLARKE

#1-04-11

That the agenda be approved as distributed.

FOR THE MOTION:

Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes

MOVED: FYSH/KHEHRA

#2-04-11

That the minutes from the meeting held on March 18, 2011 be approved.

FOR THE MOTION:

Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

4. Public Involvement

Mr. Bill Katz's presentation is "time specific".

Mr. Bill Katz -

Mr. Chris Leahey excused himself and left the meeting having received advice from legal counsel that the Commission may be perceived as having a reasonable apprehension of bias if it hears from Mr. Katz, as he was a member of the Commission until March 18, 2011.

Mr. Katz addressed the Commission and distributed a document that outlined two issues of concern he would like to see addressed by the Commission.

The first issue he discussed is regarding a comment, complaint, concern note in a taxi. He stated that he has heard the concerns of the taxi industry in respect to posting "yet another" piece of paper in a taxi. He agrees that posting a large "charter-like" document does not work, however, a simple sign, posted in a prominent place, will assist members of the public greatly. He recommends the wording; "If you have any comments, concerns, compliments or complaints, the City of Edmonton Vehicle For Hire Commission would like to hear from you: 780-4956-5244."

The second issue is he feels that taxi driver identification should be much larger and in a lit place. He was recently sitting in the front seat of a taxi and even with making a concerted effort he could not see the licence, the picture or name of the driver. How can the public protect themselves with this simple piece of identification being noticeable? He would like the Commission to consider posting this information inside the vehicle.

Mr. Katz indicated that the Commission had previously inquired as to how a bank used an asset and how to obtain a loan against an asset. He would be prepared to offer information on this issue and identify the problems any bank would have regarding this issue.

Chairman inquired as to the wish of the Commission regarding Mr. Katz commenting on this issue.

Ms. Charlene Kilburn excused herself and left the meeting having received advice from legal counsel that the Commission may be perceived as having a reasonable apprehension of bias if it hears from Mr. Katz, as he was a member of the Commission until March 18, 2011. Mr. Clarke, Mr. Fysh, Mr. Khehra and Mr. Lubin (Chairman) remained for the presentation.

Mr. Katz stated that financial institutions do not loan funds based solely on an asset – verification of income is also required. In addition, taxi licences are held by the City of Edmonton and banks could not get title if there was a default on the loan. Also, the value of the licence is based on a restriction of plates and there is nothing to say that the barrier to entry will remain in place. As a result, it would be very difficult for a banking institution to lend money based on a taxi licence.

Chairman thanked Mr. Katz for his presentation.

The following individuals requested to speak:

1. Mr. Abdullahi Abdi
2. Mr. Balraj Manhas
3. Mr. Jatinder Deol
4. Mr. Ian Lee
5. Mr. Phil Strong

Summary of comments/concerns raised:

Abdullahi Abdi

- Mr. Abdi is concerned with hotels using their own vans to transport customers to and from their hotel and to other destinations. He suggested the Commission look into why hotels can offer this service for free when taxi licensees are required to pay licence fees and various other expenses.
- He is also concerned with the City of Edmonton providing buses to go from hotels to the Agricom, the university to bars, etc., when they are taking business away from taxis.
- He stated there are many Bylaw infractions occurring including gypsy cabs operating and he would like to ensure enforcement personnel are visible and issuing violations tickets to offenders.

Balraj Manhas

- Mr. Manhas welcomed the new Chief Livery Officer, Mr. Dziwenka indicating his is a very important position dealing with many industry issues and he looks forward to working with him. He reiterated his welcome on behalf of all drivers in the 'Drivers Association' and also thanked the Transportation representative, Mr. Brad Vanderhoek for attending.

- He stated there still seems to be a problem with EPS clearances that must be resolved as drivers are very frustrated.
- Mr. Manhas advised of another driver assault that occurred against a taxi driver and requested that the Commission write a letter to the Province requesting tougher penalties for assault charges. He feels the same law that was recently passed to assist in protecting bus drivers should be applicable to taxi drivers. He also requested the Commission adopt a policy of zero tolerance for any assault.
- Another issue he is concerned about is that new vans are operating with limo plates as there is no vehicle definition for limousines. He requested the Bylaw be clarified so vehicles are not directly competing with taxis.
- Further, Mr. Manhas stated that for the fifth year drivers are suffering by not being able to pick up at the Airport – he requested that the Commission put pressure on the Edmonton Regional Airport Authority to bring the Airport back to City of Edmonton drivers with the next contract.

During a brief discussion regarding EPS clearances Mr. Dziwenka clarified that he is developing a policy for the issuance of temporary permits and reviewing cases on an individual basis.

Mr. Manhas requested that the current policy be relaxed allowing for temporary permits to be issued for 1 to 3 months allowing applicants to receive their clearance from their original application avoiding paying three times for a clearance. He also stated he agrees with the proposition of issuing licences for a two year period.

Mr. Manhas was going to comment on the presentation on licences and bank security by Mr. Katz, but was requested not to comment.

Jatinder Deol declined to speak.

Ian Lee

- Mr. Lee requested that the Commission consider being lenient regarding the 200 operational day requirement for this year as not only was the economy bad, there was a shortage of drivers for vehicles. Multi owners had a difficult time keeping the vehicles operational because of these two factors.

Phil Strong

- Mr. Strong stated that he obtained his EPS clearance which is required for a Brokers licence and it took approximately 3 weeks. He agrees with Balraj that issuing temporary permits for a longer period, perhaps 60 days, would probably be sufficient for all applicants.
- He commented on the Passenger Bill of Rights and stated he feels there should be a better system to communicate with the public and inquired if it would be debated at the next meeting.

Chairman indicated it would be discussed at the May meeting.

5. Business Arising

a. Notice of Motion - Proposed Passenger Bill of Rights

Chairman stated that he is requesting the Notice of Motion on the Passenger Bill of Rights be presented at the May meeting for discussion.

MOVED LEAHEY/CLARKE

#3-04-11

That nominations and elections for positions on the Vehicle For Hire Commission be conducted at the next meeting.

FOR THE MOTION:

Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

b. Regulation Amendments

MOVED FYSH/LEAHEY

#4-04-11

That the regulation amendments (see Appendix 'a') be accepted as presented.

FOR THE MOTION:

Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

6. Reports from Committees

a. Executive Committee

There is no information to report under this heading.

b. Operation & Program Committee

Regulation Amendments

Chairman reported that he and Mr. Khehra attended a very informative workshop presented by the City Clerks office. He subsequently received a copy of the proceedings and anyone interested in obtaining a copy should call the Commission office.

c. Safety

Mr. Leahey indicated that his Safety report was attached to the agenda so members had an opportunity to peruse the document prior to the meeting.

MOVED LEAHEY/CLARKE

#5-04-11

That the Safety Committee report be received as information.

FOR THE MOTION:

Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

d. Driver Training

Chairman stated that the Commission will be participating in a webinar presented by the Transportation Livery and Para-Transit Association regarding new programs for driver training. The webinar is scheduled for April 29th and information on the content will be presented in May.

MOVED KHEHRA/LEAHEY

#6-04-11

That the Driver Training Committee report be received as information.

FOR THE MOTION:

Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

7. Administrative Matters

a) Vehicle for Hire Commission

1. Temporary Taxi Drivers Licences

Administrator stated a policy will be developed specific to temporary licences within the next two weeks and he will advise the Commission when completed.

2. April Service Deliverable Report

Administrator elaborated on the statistics attached to the agenda.

3. March 2011 Violation Report

Administrator indicated that the violation report was attached to the agenda for members perusal.

4. General Matters;

- Neal Spicer Presentation Response
- Edmonton Regional Airports Authority Representative Inquiry
- Thomas Keez Presentation Response

Administrator reported that he is preparing responses, in conjunction with legal counsel when necessary, for all three matters outlined.

MOVED FYSH/LEAHEY

#7-04-11

That the Administrators report be received as information.,

FOR THE MOTION:

Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

b) Edmonton Police Service

No report at this time.

c) Edmonton Transportation

No report at this time.

8. New Business

There are no items of new business to discuss at this time.

9. News Articles

There are no items of new business to discuss at this time.

10. General Correspondence

There are no items of general correspondence to be presented at this time.

11. In-Camera Items

There are no in-camera items to be discussed at this time.

12. Adjournment

MOVED FYSH/CLARKE

#8-04-11

That the meeting be adjourned.

FOR THE MOTION: Leahey, Lubin, Khehra, Clarke, Kilburn, Fysh

CARRIED

The next regular Vehicle For Hire Commission meeting will take place at 1:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room at City Hall, Wednesday, May 11, 2011.



L. Lubin, Chairman



S. Weller, Administrative Assistant