
VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

CITY OF EDMONTON VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 12

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

MEMBERS

H. Naboulsi
L. Lubin
R. Clarke
C. Khehra
M. Pnaich
M. Fysh
C. Leahey

PRESENT

L. Lubin
R. Clarke
C. Khehra

M. Fysh
C. Leahey

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

C. Cosgrove	Acting Secretary	D. Campbell	EPS Advisor
P. Fearon	Administrator		

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED FYSH/CLARKE

#1-12-09

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

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

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes

MOVED KHEHRA/FYSH

#2-12-09

That the minutes from the regular meeting held on November 18, 2009 be approved.

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

CARRIED

4. Public Involvement

The following individuals requested to speak on agenda items;

Mr. Balraj Manhas
Mr. Steve Alvanos

Mr. Phil Strong
Mr. Jessy Halibi

Mr. George Peichoff

The above persons made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Summary of comments/concerns raised;

- Concern over driver safety following recent robbery and assaults
- Today's Agenda did not appear on the website
- Access to parking at City Hall for Commission Meeting – some vehicles do not fit in the parkade at the Library due to height constraints
- Thank you to Commission for writing to Minister of Health regarding concern over priority access to H1N1 vaccination for Vehicle For Hire industry
- Concern over unlicensed limos – probably not properly insured and undercutting rates
- Concern over shuttle operating without plates
- Concern over communication between brokers, drivers, association and Commission resulting in people interpreting rules as they want
- Sign boards in brokers offices need all news, agenda and minutes of Commission posted as all drivers do not have access to internet
- Would like to have signs for vehicles as soon as possible regarding late night charge
- Concern over measurement of 200 days, will there be consideration on an individual basis for downtime due to medical, vehicle down and extended vacation

5. Business Arising

a. Proposed Regulation amendments

Mr. Lubin advised that the deadline has been extended to January 31, 2010 for industry members who wish to have amendments to the Regulations considered to submit their recommendations to the VFH Commission office.

b. Measurement for 200 days

To be addressed in Operation & Program Committee Report

c. Taxi loading zone on 102 Street by Commerce Place

To be addressed in Operation & Program Committee Report

d. 2010 Budget update. Consistent "administrative" fees with the City's Business License Bylaw

Council approved Bylaw 15330 on Monday December 7 amending the Vehicle for Hire Fees for 2010.

Mr. Fearon advised that the information regarding administrative fees was not brought forward at the last meeting as it was forgotten. 5 administrative fees were raised from \$25 to \$30. Non-resident fees were increased to take into consideration that they are not paying Edmonton taxes to level the playing field between Vehicle for Hire and other business licenses.

e. Wheelchair accessible taxi trips monitoring

Waiting for more information from Phil Strong regarding how many trips do not go through dispatch. Report to go to Community Services February 8, 2010.

**e. December 1 letter from Hatem Naboulsi, Chairman,
To the Honourable Ron Liepert, Minister of Health
And Wellness**

Have not received a response.

6. Reports from Commission

a. Executive Committee

No report.

b. Operation & Program Committee

Mr. Lubin advised that 2 meetings were held to review options with 4 brokers and the Drivers Association was in attendance for the 1st meeting regarding the 200 day requirement.

Mr. Fearon will send out details on information required and how and when audits will be conducted.

It is expected that signs will be posted at a new 102 St. Commerce Place Taxi stand within 2 weeks.

A request has been forwarded to Alberta Infrastructure by the Director of Service Development to allow accessible taxis onto transit right-of-ways on a trial basis.

Plans will be forwarded to the brokers and the Drivers Association for the Jasper Avenue Hospitality Area when completed.

The full report is added as Attachment #1 to these minutes.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY/FYSH

#3-12-09

That the status update report of the Operation & Program Committee be received as information.

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

CARRIED

c. Safety Committee

Mr. Clarke summarized the Safety Committee activities for 2009.

Safety shields were mandated on May 31, 2009. There continues to be pocketed industry dissatisfaction, however compliance is complete.

Safety strategies such as panic buttons, trunk releases and GPS were introduced and the committee will move forward on other issues.

The full report is added as Attachment #2 to these minutes.

MOVED CLARKE/KHEHRA

#4-12-09

That the year end synopsis report of the Safety Committee be received as information.

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

CARRIED

d. Driver Training Committee

Chairman indicated that Driver Appreciation Day went very well. He did express concern over the lack of attendance by drivers and brokers. The future of this event could be at risk due to lack of participation. They will continue for 2010.

The full report is added as Attachment #3 to these minutes.

MOVED KHEHRA/LEAHEY

#5-12-09

That the year end report of the Driver Training Committee be received as information.

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

CARRIED

7. Administrative Matters

a. Vehicle for Hire Commission

i. November, 2009 Service Deliverable Report

Administrator reported that the November, 2009 service deliverable report is attached to the agenda.

Highlights:

- 2007, 2008 and 2009 1/3 of the fleet has turned over
- There were 249 new taxi driver licenses issued year to date, the highest in 6 years, probably due to the economy
- Roving inspections down, staff attending court as a result of previous violation tickets and stings

ii. December and January Commission Workplan Report

Administrator reported that the January Commission Workplan Report is attached to the agenda.

Highlights:

- December workplan was met
- January emission reduction report is moving to February 8
- Will have a very busy February and March
- Plan to do year end review before Christmas report card to be completed and forwarded by email

- Board Development Workshop will be scheduled for March
- Mr. Pnaich has forwarded his resignation for March 2010. City Clerks Office hopes to have a replacement in place in time for the Board Development Workshop
- Workplan continues to grow on a monthly basis

iii. General Matters

The signage for the \$3 a night surcharge is being worked on with some additional messaging regarding accessible taxi and vans. This should be ready before Christmas. Mr. Fearon will discuss with Communications on the rollout, possibly including information about bandit cabs and their safety issues.

MOVED FYSH/LEAHEY

#6-12-09

That the Administrator's report be received as information.

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

CARRIED

b. Edmonton Police Service

- i. Inspector Campbell shared information on tracking that has been done since the beginning of 2009.
 - Concern over sexual assaults allegedly committed by drivers on fares. 11 reported, 6 charged and 1 warrant for arrest issued. This is not the conduct of the norm.
 - Concern over horrific assaults and robberies on drivers. There are 13 reported to date.

As a result Inspector Campbell has requested that she be allowed to sit on the Safety Committee in 2010 to address the concerns for safety of drivers and the riding public. She will also facilitate in communicating changes and facts about the Vehicle For Hire Commission to the membership of the Police.

Commissioner Khehra raised concern over these issues being included in Driver Training Courses provided by brokers.

8. New Business

- a. November 16, 2009 Letter from Mr. Sadhu Singh addressed to Phil Fearon, copied to the Commission and the City Manager will be replied to by Mr. Fearon directly. This is not a matter for the Commission to address. It is deemed a civil matter between Mr. Singh and his former employer.

9. News Articles

- a. Edmonton Journal Article dated November 19, 2009 regarding "Driver Appreciation Awards", comments of Balwinder Dhanoa
- b. Calgary Herald Article dated November 19, 2009 regarding "Taxi concerns in City of Calgary".
- c. News 880am Article dated November 23, 2009 regarding "Stand Rent".
- d. Calgary Sun Article dated November 30, 2009 regarding "Taxi Service in Calgary".
- e. Edmonton Journal Article dated December 1, 2009 regarding "Edmonton Cabbie Assaulted by Passenger".
- f. Edmonton Journal Article dated December 3, 2009 regarding "Edmonton Police Make Arrest In Cab Driver Assault".

10. General Correspondence

- a. November 27, 2009 e-mail regarding poor accessible taxi service from a customer.

Forwarded to taxi broker. Mr. Fearon will follow up and address number of accessible vehicles in service.

11. In-Camera Items

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

The following individuals were offered the opportunity to address or re-address the Commission;

Mr. Jessy Halibi asked if limos would be included in the taxi stands at Commerce Place. Concern limos are being ticketed when picking up in taxi loading zones. Should be considered as licensed under same Vehicle For Hire Commission. Suggested minimum charge of \$75 signs to be placed in limos.

Mr. Steve Alvanos extended a thank you from the brokers for the work of the Commission in getting more taxi stands. Also thanked Inspector Campbell for her participation. Concern over what steps can be taken to remove drivers charged with assault from driving. Inspector Campbell advised that once formally charged it is public record. They are innocent until proven guilty. The police can share who has been

charged, the event and when with the Commission. The Commission can then advise the broker.

Mr. Alvanos was also concerned about pimping and drug trafficking out of vehicles for hire. Inspector Campbell advised she is aware as this falls under her jurisdiction.

Mr. Phil Strong advised that there is a module in their Driver Training Course that is very blunt concerning any attempt of sexual assault by a driver. He also expressed concern over a flat rate to the airport, when will this matter move forward.

Administration advised that this has been brought to Council about every 2 years since 1996 with reluctance from the industry every time. There has been a renewed interest since Airport Taxi out of Leduc has been charging a flat rate into Edmonton. Mr. Fearon suggested that the industry will have to lead this. Mr. Strong responded that he will write a letter to the commission requesting a flat rate be considered.

Mr. Alvanos and Mr. Strong advised that they have Bulletin Boards in their offices available for Vehicle For Hire Communications.

Mr. Sadhu Singh expressed concern over his issue being on the agenda.

Mr. Fearon distributed a Proposal from New York City regarding a Public Hearing for the Taxi and Limousine Commission for information, dealing with a proposed cell phone ban.

12. Adjournment

Commissioner Lubin extended Season Greetings on behalf of the Commission. The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

MOVED CLARKE/LEAHEY

#7-12-09

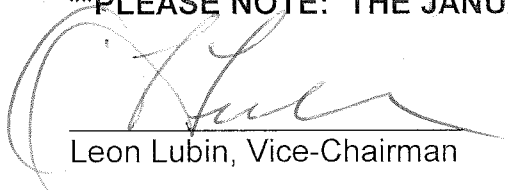
That the meeting be adjourned.

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

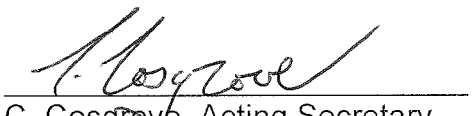
CARRIED

The next regular Vehicle For Hire Commission meeting will be held **Wednesday, February 10, 2009** at 1:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room, Main Floor, City Hall.

****PLEASE NOTE: THE JANUARY 13, 2010 MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED****



Leon Lubin, Vice-Chairman



C. Cosgrove, Acting Secretary