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**TAXI CAB COMMISSION**

**CITY OF EDMONTON VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION**

**MEETING NO. 2**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2009**

**MEMBERS**

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

**PRESENT**

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

S. Weller                      Secretary  
P. Fearon                     Administrator

Gwendolyn Stewart-Palmer  
Shores-Jardine

**I.        Call to Order**

Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:50 p.m. Chairman requested industry members turn off their cell. phones and requested all in attendance to observe one minute of silence in remembrance of the woman who was the passenger in the fatal accident of a Yellow cab. Chairman also stated that todays meeting would be formal and only agenda items discussed – not the items outlined for discussion at the March meeting.

**II.       Approval of Minutes**

MOVED CLARKE/LEAHEY

#1-02-09

That the minutes be amended by having Section 6, Part 6, Sentence 2 modified to read "They will be selling the TP-1US-F partition manufactured by Troy Products".

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

**CARRIED**

MOVED LUBIN/CLARKE

#2-02-09

That the minutes be amended to reflect that the individual who nominated Mr. Lubin as Vice Chairman be identified as Mr. Leahey and not Mr. Khehra.

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

**CARRIED**

MOVED LEAHEY/CLARKE

#3-02-09

That the minutes of January 14, 2009 be approved as amended.

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

**CARRIED**

### **III. Approval of Agenda**

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#4-02-09

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

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

**CARRIED**

### **IV. Informal Delegations**

The following individuals requested to speak on agenda items;

Mr. Husni Al-Khateeb  
Mr. Phil Strong  
Mr. Balraj Manhas  
Mr. Alex Romano  
Mr. Jessie Halabi  
Mr. Amanuel Merezun

Mr. Adrian Smits  
Mr. Andrew Pilarski  
Mr. Gurdip Waraich  
Mr. Jatinder Deol  
Mr. Durech Voyto  
Mr. Muhammad Ali

Mr. Steve Alvanos  
Mr. Allah Chebli  
Mr. Abdi Abdullahi  
Mr. Miroslaw Malczyk  
Mr. Chris Piper

## **V. Business Arising from Previous Minutes (January 14, 2009)**

### **a. Decision of Issuance of New Taxi Plates**

Chairman reported that as a result of information received from the industry through the public input session as well as written submissions, after careful review it is the decision of the Vehicle For Hire Commission that NO ADDITIONAL TAXI LICENCES be issued, other than the 10 accessible licences approved by City Council. This issue will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Mr. Adrian Smits addressed the Commission and inquired if the public would have any input on the issuance of the accessible licences.

Chairman stated that information regarding the accessible licences will be made available in March.

Mr. Balraj Manhas addressed the Commission and thanked them for listening to the industry including the drivers association. He requested that for the future the Commission adopt a formula that will identify the requirement for additional plates accurately.

Mr. Allah Chebli addressed the Commission and suggested that a central dispatch system be developed for accessible taxi trips.

Mr. Andrew Pilarski addressed the Commission and indicated that Co-op taxi only received approximately 4 accessible trips per day. There is not enough accessible taxi work as it is and the additional licences will mean even less work for these vans.

Mr. Robert Ergil, representing the Turkish Community clarified that no new plates would be issued for at least a year. He indicated that the 80 families he represents believe that is a wise decision and hopes that next year an accurate formula is put into place so taxi drivers do not have to continually argue that it is not necessary to issue additional plates.

### **b. Update on \$3.00 Surcharge Bylaw Alteration**

Administrator clarified that the change would require an amendment to the VFH Bylaw, to be approved by City Council. It will take approximately four weeks and he will keep the industry apprised of the change to the surcharge.

Chairman indicated that the current surcharge would remain in effect until this change to the Bylaw has been approved and implemented.

Mr. Husni Al-Khateeb addressed the Commission and stated that he feels it should be mandatory that cash payments be made during the hours the surcharge is in effect.

Mr. Phil Strong addressed the Commission and clarified that the new hours for the surcharge include the night before any statutory holiday and that the new tariff stickers would include the surcharge.

Mr. Abdi Abdullahi addressed the Commission and stated that he feels the surcharge should only be in effect on Friday and Saturday and never on a Sunday.

Mr. Balraj Manhas addressed the Commission and inquired as to which holidays it would be acceptable to charge the \$3.00 fee.

Administrator clarified that it would be any holiday recognized by the City of Edmonton.

## **VI. Standing Discussion Items**

### **a. Executive Committee**

Chairman indicated that the Executive Committee continues to review various items, which were specifically outlined at the January 7, 2009 meeting and they will keep the industry apprised of the conclusion of each issue.

MOVED LUBIN/CLARKE

#5-02-09

That the status update report of the Executive Committee be received as information.

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

**CARRIED**

Mr. Lubin offered the following Notice of Motion'.

MOVED LUBIN/KHEHRA

In lieu of issuing additional taxi licence plates at this time, and satisfying the public demand for taxi availability, the Commission request City Council to amend the Vehicle For Hire Bylaw, Section 38.1 (f) by increasing the minimum number of operational days per year from 100 days to 200 days, effective June 1, 2009. This means that for the taxi licence renewal cycle commencing in 2010, all taxi vehicle licences must have been in operation for 200 days between May 1, 2009 and April 30, 2010, to qualify for taxi licence plate renewal. Further, an operational day will be defined as a minimum of 6 hours of active dispatch engagement."

Mr. Pnaich indicated that the motion 'is in lieu of not issuing plates to accommodate service requirements'. He suggested that the requirement be for 150 days rather than 200 days.

Ms. Stewart- Palmer stated that since it is not yet a formal motion, any amendment would have to be made at the next meeting. It may be considered at that time.

Chairman also indicated, as part of his report content, that the recommendations forwarded by Mr. Khehra have been partially implemented and the remaining recommendations will be addressed at a special meeting.

Mr. Phil Strong addressed the Commission and indicated he feels this Notice of Motion requires a lot more thought. There are many different scenarios which have not been explored and questions that have not been answered such as how will the information be verified, what are the consequences of non-compliance, etc.

Mr. Lubin indicated that further details regarding implementation of the Notice of Motion will be available by the next meeting. He also indicated that he would like to schedule a meeting with the Brokers and the Drivers Association to discuss the Notice of Motion.

**b. Operational & Program Committee**

Committee Chairman indicated that Notice of Motion offered and subsequent discussion comprise his activity report.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#6-02-09

That the status update report of the Operational and Program Committee be received as information.

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

**CARRIED**

**c. Safety Committee**

Committee Chairman stated he would like to clarify that in Section VI, Part C, Safety of the January minutes it should be noted that the first paragraph was meant to identify Whyte Communications as a supplier of an approved system of shield, specifically Troy Products TP-1US-F partition. Any other shield available through Whyte Communications requires further approval from EVFA.

Committee Chairman continued to report on shield supply/installation time frames. He stated that an experienced and active member of the industry has advised the Commission that his recent experiences in identifying an approved shield, placing an order, receiving the shield in Edmonton and installing the shield in a specified manner stretches over a two month time frame. As there appears to be approximately 26 models of taxi vehicles in service in Edmonton, it is strongly recommended that any owner not placing an order by the end of February may experience some difficulty making the (installation) deadline of May 31<sup>st</sup>. In addition, any 16 passenger van that operates with a taxi licence is required to have a shield and installation of shields is to be as directed in the manufacturers specifications, there is no specific list of approved installers.

Committee Chairman also reported some brief statistics he had received from EPS on fare by fraud occurrences which indicate there are not a large amount reported and they occur primarily in the NE section of the City.

Mr. Husni Al-Khateeb addressed the Commission and inquired if the Safety Committee Chairman had a breakdown on the statistics he reported such as the average amount of fare by fraud committed and whether it includes waiting time.

Committee Chairman indicated it was simply a compilation of statistics.

Mr. Al-Khateeb inquired if there will be any alteration to the May 31<sup>st</sup> installation date.

Committee Chairman replied that there will be no alteration, it is a 'drop dead' date. He stated that industry members are advised that for any taxi vehicle that does not have an approved safety shield installed by May 31, 2009, the taxi vehicle licence will be suspended and surrendered to the Administration until the shield is installed.

Mr. Dureche Voyto addressed the Commission and inquired as to who will take responsibility if someone is injured in a taxi as a result of the shield being in place. He also inquired if the shields are CSA approved.

Committee Chairman replied that no shields have been CSA approved and the manufacturers specifications are sufficient.

Mr. Steve Alvanos addressed the Commission and inquired as to what is the deadline for ordering the shields.

Committee Chairman indicated that the deadline of January 31<sup>st</sup> has already passed and although the Commission has been flexible with this the order date, they will not be with the installation date of May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Andrew Pilarski addressed the Commission and formally requested another vote be taken on the issue of safety shields. He indicated that the safety of passengers with shields in the vehicles is a major concern and that in New York shields are being removed from vehicles.

Mr. Alex Romano addressed the Commission and stated that when drivers report fare by fraud incidents they are told by EPS that they are not a collection agency. He also inquired about the heating and air conditioning problems that may be associated with vehicles having shields installed and about the fourth passenger who may have to sit in the front seat of the vehicle.

Mr. Lubin advised Mr. Romano that he has a choice of many versions of shields that can accommodate various situations.

Mr. Miroslav Malczyk addressed the Commission and stated he still hopes for a vote on the issue of shields because he was not advised of the first vote and was not able to participate.

MOVED LEAHEY/LUBIN

#7-02-09

That the status update report of the Safety Committee be received as information.

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

**CARRIED**

**d. Driver Training Committee**

Chairman of the Committee offered the following report;

Driver Training and Testing Committee Report  
Submitted to VFH Commission on February 11, 2009

The Driver Training and Testing Committee is currently reviewing the following two issues:

1. Standardization of Driver Training and Testing: The objective is to standardize the training course curriculum, format, delivery, duration, testing, and the approval of both the training and the instructors.
2. Combining the Provincial Defensive Driver Course and VFH Experienced Driver Training Course to eliminate any possible duplication in content so that the drivers may not be required to take two separate courses.

On January 12, 2009 the Committee chair met with Gord Beatty, Alberta Co-op instructor, to discuss issues of common interest. On January 14, 2009 at the Commission meeting, the Committee chair invited the industry to submit names of their representatives to provide input on issues being reviewed. The following names were received: Steve Alvanos (Capital), Husni Al-Khateeb (Capital), Miroslaw Mazczyk (Co-op), Adrian Smits (Co-op). Mike Maharaj (Capital), Phil Strong (Yellow) and Balraj Manhas (Edmonton Cabbies Association).

On January 16 & 17, 2008, the Committee chair personally spoke to all the three primary training instructors (Gord Beatty, Daryl Current and Tony Jhawar) and invited them to attend the Committee meeting scheduled for January 23, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. Gord Beatty was out of town; both other instructors confirmed their attendance. However, Tony Jhawar was the only one to attend the meeting.

On January 23, 2009, the Committee adopted the following action plan/deadlines to seek industry input, review the input, prepare its interim report and submit it to the Commission on March 11, 2009.

1. January 26, 2009: Request Capital, Co-op and Yellow to submit their training curriculum and testing documentation.
2. February 11, 2009: Committee chair would report progress to the Commission and then invite the training instructors and other industry representatives (who had submitted their names) to provide their input to Committee on February 27, 2009, or any other suitable date.
3. March 5, 2009: Committee to review the industry input, prepare its interim report, and submit its report to the Commission on March 11.

On January 27, 2009, a letter was sent to all the three training instructors, with copies to their management, requesting them to submit their driver training documentation and to confirm if they were Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation approved instructors/examiners for defensive driving. As the result of a telephone reminder, Co-op and Yellow documents were received on February 9, and from Capital on February 11.

MOVED KHEHRA/LUBIN

#8-02-09

That the status update report of the Driver Training Committee be received as information.

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

**CARRIED**



Mr. Husni Al-Khateeb addressed the Commission and inquired as to the next date for a meeting.

Commission Chairman responded that approximately February 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> a formal meeting will be held.

Mr. Alvanos addressed the Commission and apologized for not attending the previous Driver Training Committee meeting to which he had been invited and indicated he would participate in the future.

Mr. Balraj Manhas addressed the Commission and stated that he would like to participate and would be willing to attend any meetings.

Mr. Gurdip Waraich addressed the Commission and inquired regarding the duplication of the Experienced Driver Seminar and the Defensive Driving Course and how not making the decision would effect drivers who have to renew their licence in February.

Administrator read the excerpt from the January minutes that explained to the industry that City Council must make the alteration to the DDC requirement.

Ms. Gwendolyn Stewart-Palmer clarified that the Commission cannot make this change. They can recommend that City Council make the amendment, however, since it is Bylaw driven, there is no alternative means of altering the requirement.

Mr. Adrian Smits addressed the Commission and indicated that he had put his name forward for the Driver Training Committee and was not advised of any meeting. The Committee should advise members if they wish them to attend meetings.

Mr. Jatinder Deol addressed the Commission and stated that additional training is not required.

M. Khehra stated that the dates outlined were for Committee members. There are specific dates for all processes and industry participation is not required at all meetings. He also clarified that his Committee is trying to standardize existing training and not develop new training.

#### **e. Licences**

Administrator indicated that the monthly Service Deliverable report was attached to the agenda. He elaborated on the highlights of the report and indicated he would be happy to answer any questions regarding the statistics.

Mr. Adrian Smits addressed the Commission and inquired if there has been a comparison study completed regarding all the various types of service delivery vehicles that operate in the City that are supposed to be included in the VFH Bylaw.

**f. Bylaw Issues**

Administrator stated that the only Bylaw issue that is presently being processed is the amendment to the \$3.00 surcharge which was previously discussed. He also reported some frustration with being able to obtain information from the VFH industry. He has been waiting since July, 2008 for specific information to complete reports, etc. and industry members may face penalties should they not comply with the submission of this information.

MOVED LUBIN/CLARKE

#9-02-09

That the Administrators status update reports on Licences and Bylaw issues be received as information.

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

**CARRIED**

Mr. Adrian Smits addressed the Commission and inquired as to how much effort is being extended to protect taxis from unfair competition and whether there are any stats on this effort.

Administrator replied that he provides a statistical report that outlines tickets issued and includes information on violation tickets issued to individuals who were operating without proper licensing.

Mr. Steve Alvanos addressed the Commission and inquired if the new Peace Officers would assist our Bylaw Enforcement Officers on weekends when most activity occurs with unlicensed vehicles.

Administrator replied that the Commission could submit a request to the Community Standards Branch Manager regarding this assistance.

Mr. Andrew Pilarski addressed the Commission and inquired if the Commission would be in favor of opening the Airport, even though at the present time they are under contract.

Chairman replied that the Commission would be in favor of an open system at the Airport but that the VFH Commission is not a decision maker on this matter.

**g. Budget**

Administrator distributed the 2008 year end budget report which outlines expenditures for the Commission for 2008 with comparables back until 2004. The expenditure and revenue statistics illustrate that the Commission is within 2% variance of their budget. He suggested members review the document prior to the March meeting at which time they may wish to further discuss the matter.

MOVED LEAHEY/FYSH

#10-02-09

That the Administrators report on budget detail be received as information

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

**CARRIED**

Mr. Steve Alvanos addressed the Commission and inquired if there was any possibility of the Licencing office being moved to a more convenient location or the meetings being held at a more convenient location such as the Lions Centre as parking is so expensive at City Hall.

Mr. Allah Chebli addressed the Commission and agreed that a change of location would be advantageous.

Administrator replied that the Commission would have to review the pros and cons of this scenario.

**VII. General Correspondence**

MOVED CLARKE/LEAHEY

#11-02-09

That the following items of general correspondence be received as information;

- a. Document submitted to the VFH Commission on January 14, 2009 by Kathy Grady on behalf of L.I.M.O.S. regarding agenda topics discussed at the Jan. 7, 2009 public input session.
- b. Correspondence dated January 19, 2009 to the VFH Commission from Larry Pempeit, Director of Community Development, Canadian Paraplegic Association regarding "Increase of Taxicab Licenses".
- c. E-mail submission to the VFH Commission from John Smith dated February 3, 2009 entitled 'Please Open The Taxi Plate'.

- d. News Release dated January 19, 2009 regarding 'New peace officers improve bylaw service for Edmontonians'.
- e. Edmonton Journal article dated January 28, 2009 entitled 'Taxi cab passenger killed in crash in southwest Edmonton'.

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

**CARRIED**

#### **VIII. New Business**

- a. VFH Commission 2009 Board Development Workshop (March 7<sup>th</sup>)

Administrator explained that a workshop has been scheduled for members to meet and discuss new ideas and review existing policy. The meeting is usually attended from 9:00 – 3:00 and members are invited to submit 'topics of discussion' via e-mail to the Commission office.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#12-02-09

That the meeting adjourn in-camera.

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

**CARRIED**

#### **IX. In-Camera Meeting**

- a. **Copy** of correspondence dated January 15, 2009 to Prestige Cabs regarding an airport trip.
- b. E-mail document to the VFH Commission from Allaa Chebli dated January 25, 2009 regarding a plate transfer.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#13-02-09

That the public meeting be resumed.

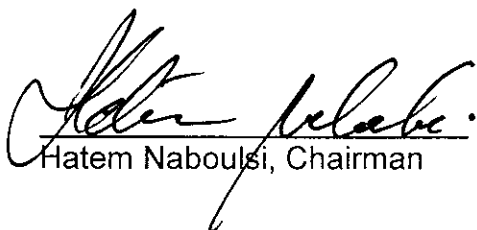
FOR THE MOTION: Naboulsi, Lubin, Clarke, Khehra, Pnaich,  
Fysh, Leahey

**CARRIED**

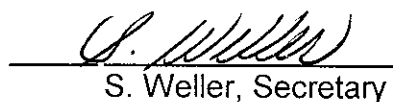
## **X. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

The next regular Vehicle For Hire Commission meeting will be held Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room, Main Floor, City Hall.



Hatem Naboulsi, Chairman



S. Weller, Secretary