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VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

CITY OF EDMONTON VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 7

Wednesday, July 8, 2009

MEMBERS

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

PRESENT

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

M. Sharma                      Acting Secretary  
P. Fearon                      Administrator

Fiona Moore  
of Shores-Jardine

1.     Call to Order

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

2.     Approval of Agenda

MOVED CLARKE/PNAICH

#1-07-09

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

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

CARRIED

3.     Approval of Minutes

MOVED FYSH/LEAHEY

#2-07-09

That the minutes from the regular meeting held on June 10, 2009 be approved as circulated.

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

CARRIED

4. Public Involvement

The following individuals requested to speak on agenda items;

Mr. Balraj Manhas	Mr. Steve Alvanos
Mr. Phil Strong	Mr. Jessy Halabi
Ms. Kathy Grady	

Mr. Balraj Manhas made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Mr. Steve Alvanos made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Mr. Phil Strong made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Mr. Jessy Halabi made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Ms. Kathy Grady made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

5. Reports from Commission

a. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has met on various occasions to discuss several issues brought to their attention at VFH Commission meetings by industry members in attendance.

Submission to Community Services Committee wherein the Commission recommends 0% increase in Honorarium and there not be any additional costs including meetings exceeding 3 hours.

Item being reviewed includes discussion concerning potential Commerce Place Taxi loading zone. Chair states that Commission will meet General Manager of Transport Department to resolve this issue.

All issues are considered relevant and the Executive Committee is considering each item individually to ensure that they receive adequate attention. Recommendations will be offered as the research and review of the issues is completed.

MOVED LUBIN/FYSH

#3-07-09

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

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

CARRIED

**b. Operation & Program Committee**

The Committee met on June 18, 2009 to finalize a recommendation with regards a request from the industry to implement a "super" license, i.e., one license that would enable a driver to operate all of the following types of vehicles: a taxi, and/or limousine; and/or a shuttle bus.

After reviewing the situation it was agreed that in the interest of providing drivers with maximum amount of flexibility and opportunity a "super license" should be made available for those members of the industry who should wish to apply under the new category.

MOVED LUBIN/CLARKE

#4-07-09

Therefore, it is recommended that driver's wishing to drive more than one type of vehicle for hire could obtain one license that would entitle them to be able to drive each of the following: a taxi (regular or accessible) and/or a limousine and/or shuttle for a single license fee which would be 20% less than whatever the combined cost of the three licenses amounted to. It must be noted that special additional training is required in order to drive some vehicles , for example, accessible taxis. Given that a Bylaw amendment is required, it is anticipated that this amendment would become effective by November 1, 2009.

Phil Strong suggested that it should be a Vehicle for Hire Drivers License, permitting the driver to operate any vehicle, and that it should only cost \$45 annually.

FOR THE MOTION:

Lubin

AGAINST THE MOTION:

Clarke, Khehra, Pnaich, Fysh, Leahey

MOTION FAILED

That the status update report of the Operation and Program Committee be received for information.

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

CARRIED

c. Safety Committee

The Safety Committee Chairman has come across two emerging issues concerning safety shields.

- Diane Bergeron, Former Vehicle for Commissioner and Member of the Premiers Council on Persons with Disabilities, has contacted the Commission to state she has received numerous complaints from members of the disabled community that the safety shields are causing some of them discomfort problems on entry/exit of the taxi. Floor Foot space is limited.
- Balraj Manhas, United Cabbies Association, has complained that the Yellow Cab partial shield does not meet the Commission specifications and is viewed by some drivers as "useless".

A proposal was made to address these issues in the following way:

- We determine through telephone contact with Ms. Bergeron what the level of concern is amongst the disabled community. We will then know what tact we should take. As of the present time, efforts to contact Diane have proven negative. We will continue to call her work and home and advise committee members of the result.
- A written response to Balraj Manhas, with Committee member input, has been prepared. Administration to take it forward.

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

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

d. Driver Training Committee

**Taxi Driver Training and Testing Review**

- Based on the May 13, 2009 Driver Training and Testing Committee report; industry input including the public involvement meeting on July 7, 2009; and the Administration research; the Committee would be finalizing its training priorities and implementation strategy.
- Any additional comments may be forwarded in writing to Mona Sharma by Friday July 17, 2009.
- As any changes would require Bylaw amendments, the industry would be given the opportunity to comment.
- The success of any program depends on the continuing commitment and support of all stakeholders.
- The Committee would like to thank the Administration for obtaining documents from selected jurisdictions and providing support.

**Limousine and Shuttle Services**

- A review of driver training and testing for the Limousine and Shuttle services would be commencing soon.

**Vehicle for Hire Appreciation Day, 2009**

- The Vehicle for Hire Appreciation Day would be held on November 18, 2009
- Limousines and Shuttle services will be added to the awards.
- The Committee expects the industry to fully support and promote this event.
- If any driver, broker, business or organization is able to assist with obtaining sponsorships, they may contact any member of the Committee or Shar Weller.

**Super Licenses**

- Super Licenses, if approved, would require that the applicants meet all training and testing standards.

**E-Newsletter**

- The Committee commends the Administration for developing an e-Newsletter to improve communication with the industry.

MOVED LEAHEY/LUBIN

#7-07-09

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

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

CARRIED

MOVED LEAHEY/FYSH

#8-07-09

That all Committee Chairman take responsibility to invite all Committee members to every Committee meeting.

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

CARRIED

6. Administrative Matters

a. Licensing

- General Administrative Matters

Administrator presented a verbal report on July 7, 2009 Public Involvement session in which general public had been invited at Holiday Inn Convention Centre to give their inputs and views on Driver Training Initiatives for taxi, limousine and shuttle vehicle drivers. In addition, the Commission also solicited views on methods of reducing taxi carbon dioxide emissions, in response to direction from City Council in this regard. Administrator shall continue to gather data from Taxi brokers to reflect the impact of the late night surcharge, as well as the availability of the accessible taxi service. The Administrator shall also complete reports for City Council regarding the late night surcharge, increasing from 100 to 200 days of active operation to renew a taxi vehicle license, collectivos and other forms of share-ride services which is for future consideration.

Administrator had met Mr. Balraj Manhas, United Cabbies Association, to review the agenda and to take his views on licensing before today's meeting.

Administrator also reminded the taxi industry regarding the last date for the safety shield installation in all taxis was May 31, 2009.

- June, 2009 Service Deliverable Report

Administrator reported on the attached document and elaborated on the highlights including the issuance of 658 violation tickets YTD and 758 Compliance notices YTD.

Administrator also reported that this is a busy month as the on-site inspections are currently being concluded at Yellow Cab.

- Web Page Newsletter Update

Administrator reported that the Vehicle for Hire Commission e-Newsletter was successfully launched on June 24, 2009. This online tool was effectively used for advertising to general public about July 7, 2009 Public Involvement Session. This electronic newsletter also gives links to the e-newsletters of other cities of Canada. This is primarily to educate the industry stakeholders as to what other jurisdictions are doing.

- Violation Ticket 6 month Summary

Administrator reported on the attached document and elaborated on the highlights including that 77% of the tickets issued have been to the industry and the remaining 23% has been issued to private vehicle owners. There was a discussion with the Commission members regarding 16 tickets been issued in the past 6 months to Limousines for allowing unlicensed persons to operate a Limousine and 11 tickets for operating without a valid Limousine Driver's license.

L. Lubin and R. Clarke appreciated the Taxi Inspectors for their hard work.

- Status of Information gathered on July 7

Administrator reported that the Commission has accepted the comments of July 7, 2009 meeting. The information has been tracked, shall bring forward to the Commission for their review and then announced to general public. Whether the points raised at the July 7, 2009 Public Involvement session are accepted or not, introduced in the Bylaw or not shall all be communicated to general public.

- 2010 Commission Budget

Administrator reported on the attached document and elaborated that the following budget notes represent duplicating the 2009 budget expenses, with 5 exceptions. The FIRST is inflation from 2009 to 2010. At this time we are

"assuming" a 5% inflation factor. The SECOND is the new cost of hosting 2 Public Involvement Sessions in 2010, according to the new Public Involvement Plan we are presently completing with Jill Bradford-Green's assistance. The THIRD is the new Parking Lot charges for Commission members that were historically paid by " the department". The FOURTH is a reduction to Business Travel costs. The FIFTH is a reduction to Local Training for our staff. Specific license fee increases were also identified to result in a \$45,700 increase for 2010.

A discussion continued on the 2010 Budget in which reduction on costs incurred on Public Involvement Sessions was brought forward. In the past, Council Chambers have been used for such sessions, even though its always been a policy that only City Council uses these facilities.

The Commission shall handover the approved packet for further recommendations to City Council. The Budget forms are expected from City Council in next 1 or 2 weeks. The City Council receives the budget forms in early September, asks specific questions if any for clarifications from the Commission. Once the answers are received and approved, that becomes a part of the public domain which is accessible to all citizens. The City Council opens its doors to general public to know their perspective on the budget by end of November or early December 2009.

**b. Bylaw Issues**

- Bylaw amendment regarding \$3.00 surcharge (verbal report)
- Bylaw amendment regarding 200 day operation for 2010 renewal (verbal report)

Administrator reported that a meeting with the Community Services Committee is scheduled on August 24, 2009. In this meeting, the industry gets a chance to put forward their comments to the Community Services Committee. The confirmed agenda and time for the meeting is known a week prior to the commencement.

**c. Enforcement**

- June 12 Sting Operation Results (verbal report)

Administrator reported that 2 Inspectors and 4 Municipal Enforcement Officers had carried out the Sting Operation at a Downtown hotel as well as the Whyte Avenue entertainment district. The number of companies that advertise about their services are actually not having the license to do so. The license is under some name and they are operating under some other name. For example – Black Knight Limousine Services operating under Alberta 123 Ltd. Significant fines were issued to them if the business was not licensed or if the driver did not



have a valid license. 22 violation tickets were issued; successful event and it will be a staggered way forward through the year.

MOVED FYSH/LEAHEY

#9-07-09

That the reports presented under items a, b and c of administrative matters be received as information.

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

CARRIED

MOVED FYSH/CLARKE

#10-07-09

That the 2010 expense and revenue budget be approved for consideration by City Council as follows:

A. Expenses

1. Increase the existing 2009 budget by \$37,000 to account for a 5% inflation.
2. Add \$7,200 for the provision of 2 Public Involvement sessions (reduce these expenses where practical).
3. Add \$1,500 to pay for Commission members parking as they attend Committee meetings.
4. Reduce business travel by \$1,259.
5. Reduce staff training by \$1,861.

B. License Fee Revenue

1. Increase taxi, accessible taxi, limousine and shuttle vehicle license plate fees by \$20, to \$330.
2. Increase taxi, accessible taxi, limousine and shuttle drivers' license fee by \$5, to \$50.
3. Increase Taxi Broker, Independent Driver Owner, Limousine Service and Shuttle Service business license fees by \$50, to \$200.

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

CARRIED

7. New Business

a. Colour and Marking Approval Request re: A-1 Taxi and Prestige cabs

Mr. Phil Strong made a presentation in front of the Commission regarding Prestige

Cabs color scheme. He gave the following explanations:

- His company has purchased A-1 Taxi and requests the Commission to approve retirement of the A-1 silver colour and red markings.
- He requests the Commission to approve revised colour and markings for the Prestige fleet as follows :
  - ❖ Vehicle colour to be solid silver (no blue roof)
  - ❖ "Prestige cabs" logo to remain as it presently exists
  - ❖ "Unit number" to remain as it presently exists
  - ❖ "Company phone number" to remain as it presently exists
  - ❖ A blue pin stripe runs the full length on both sides, above the door handles.

MOVED FYSH/CLARKE

#11-07-09

That the new colour request for Prestige Cabs be approved as requested and that the Regulations colour and marking scheme for Prestige Cabs be amended accordingly. Finally, that the A-1 colour and marking scheme be retired.

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

CARRIED

b. Roof Top Advertising – Speaker Mr. Shane Yarenko

Mr. Shane Yarenko made a presentation on Roof Top Advertising to the Commission and answered questions. He advised that the new model is European, a sleek roof top advertising which clamps on the roof top of the vehicle or is held in place by strong magnets. Many drivers have agreed to this suggestion and he sought the Commission's approval. He quoted an example where a driver if in trouble can flash a help sign which resembles a flashlight at the back of his taxi. The advertising on the roof top would be static and well protected from snow or rain. There would be no wraps around it and only the lottery advertising would be a digital display of numbers. This form of advertising has been agreed by Co-Op Taxi. The vehicle owners would have a choice to put the roof top advertising. Mr. Vijay Punjabi, Acting General Manager at Co-Op Taxi, confirmed that 80-85% of their drivers have given a positive response to this form of advertising.

MOVED LEAHEY/KHEHRA

#12-07-09

That the Commission approves the new European style roof top advertising with the understanding that the images are static, not in motion.

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

CARRIED

8. General Correspondence

MOVED FYSH/LEAHEY

#13-07-09

That the following items of general correspondence be received as information. In future, nature of correspondence to be indicated and names of persons, organizations along with personal information like email address, contact details are not to be disclosed.

- a. Correspondence dated April 14, 2009 from Mr. Predrag Ljubicic regarding "permission to lease a taxi plate".
- b. Email correspondence dated June 19, 2009 from Balraj Manhas regarding "yellow Cab safety shields".
- c. Email correspondence dated June 25, 2009 from Javed Chaudhry regarding "taxi Reforms are needed".
- d. Email Correspondence dated June 24, 2009 from Mr. Predrag Ljubicic regarding "driving my personal customers".
- e. Email Correspondence dated June 26, 2009 from Mr. Cameron Kubik regarding "dangerous / illegal driving by Co-Op taxi driver".
- f. Written complaint dated June 29, 2009 from Abdul Qureshi (Co-Op taxi driver) against Yellow Cab driver regarding his rude behavior & refusal to a lady customer

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

CARRIED

9. News Articles

- a. Edmonton Journal, June 15. Leaders converge to extol sustainable development: More than 600 delegates representing 57 countries discuss environmental issues.
- b. Montreal Cabbie Stabbing

- c. A notice to be sent to the Taxi industry for a meeting scheduled on July 20, 2009 at 2:00 p.m at Vehicle for Hire Commission office 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor in which changes in the procedures for the Indy Race shall be discussed. A Sergeant of Police will also be present that day.

10. In-Camera Items

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

Chairman offered individuals an additional minute of time for presentations to the Commission.

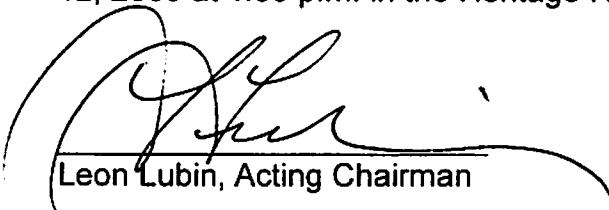
Mr. Steve Alvanos made an additional presentation and answered the Commissions questions.

Mr. Balraj Manhas made an additional presentation and answered the Commissions questions.


10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

The next regular Vehicle For Hire Commission meeting will be held Wednesday, August 12, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room, Main Floor, City Hall.



Leon Lubin, Acting Chairman



Mona Sharma, Acting Secretary