
VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

CITY OF EDMONTON VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 3

Wednesday, March 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

1. Call to Order

Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and read a statement regarding the new agenda format and public input process.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Lubin indicated he would like to amend the agenda by adding two items of correspondence. Item 8. f. will be an e-mail document with a letter attached from Mr. Balraj Manhas regarding concerns of the United Cabbies Association and 8.6 is a document received from Rose Gadbois regarding cab drivers taking trips from couriers.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#1-03-09

That the agenda be approved as amended.

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

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes

MOVED CLARKE/LUBIN2

#2-03-09

That the minutes from the regular meeting held on February 11, 2009 be approved as circulated.

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

CARRIED

4. Public Input

The following individuals requested to speak on agenda items;

Mr. Jessy Halaby	Mr. Steve Alvanos	Mr. Jatinder Deol
Mr. David Sager	Mr. Balraj Minhas	
Mr. Gurdip Waraich	Mr. Manjinder Punia	

Mr. David Sager made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Mr. Gurdip Waraich made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

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

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

Mr. Manjinder Punia made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Mr. Jatinder Deol made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Mr. Jesse Halaby made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

5. Reports from Commission

a. Executive Committee

Chairman stated that he had a very successful meeting with Councillor Sohi recently to advise him of Commission achievements and challenges. They briefly discussed the possibility of Federal involvement regarding the International Airport and the associated transportation issues.

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

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

CARRIED

b. Operational & Program Committee

Chairman of the Committee offered the following report;

Operations & Procedures Committee

Further to a Notice of Motion presented to the Commission at the February 11th meeting, representatives from Yellow, Co-Op, Capital and the Driver's Association agreed to meet with the Committee on February 13th in order to discuss the issues associated with the intent of the motion, i.e., increasing the number of days required for license renewal from 100 to 200 days.

Three of the four parties attended and after some discussion unanimously agreed that 200 days would be a "no brainer" that is, if an individual only worked 7 hours a day, it would only take 7 months to fulfill the requirement. Notwithstanding, there were a number of questions raised with respect to implementation. For example:

- How would double shifts be handled
- Definition of what constitutes a "day" in terms of the six hour minimum
- The logistics of reporting and/or confirming the times worked
- An appeal process for dealing with extenuating circumstances
- How will independents be monitored
- How will time be accounted for when a license is transferred
- How would multi-plate owners be treated if most of the cars qualify and a few do not

In conclusion, it was determined that the terms would be drafted and circulated. To date, this has not been completed. Therefore, as the mover of the motion, I shall be asking that the motion not be heard at this meeting but be presented at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission on April 8th.

All of which is respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee: Hatem Naboulsi, Bob Clarke, and Mac Fysh.

Leon Lubin, Chair

The following motions were made at the conclusion of the report;

MOVED LUBIN/FYSH

#4-03-09

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

MOVED LUBIN/FYSH

#5-03-09

That the Commission defer consideration of his Notice of Motion from the February 11, 2009 meeting whereby the minimum number of operational days would be increased.

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

CARRIED

MOVED LUBIN/FYSH

#6-03-09

That the Administration prepare a report with recommendations for the implementation of an increased number of "operational days" and this report be made available to the Operations & Procedures Committee by April 6th at the latest.

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

CARRIED

Chairman commented that it would be the Committee's intention to then review the guidelines for implementation with the Brokers and the Driver's Association prior to the April 8th meeting.

MOVED LUBIN/PNAICH

#7-03-09

That the Administration prepare a report for the implementation of super licences in time for the May Commission meeting.

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

CARRIED

MOVED LUBIN/CLARKE

#8-03-09

That the Administration prepare a report on the potential for emission reduction by the industry in keeping with one of the strategic goals set by Council with respect to the 'air quality' index".

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

CARRIED

c. Safety Committee

Committee Chairman stated that there was no formal report to submit at this time. He did comment that the meeting of February 13, 2009 was a good example of the industry and the Commission working co-operatively.

d. Driver Training Committee

Chairman of the Committee offered the following report;

**Driver Training and Testing Committee
Interim Report on Standardization and Combining Certain Training Courses
March 11, 2009**

Introduction:

Following the earlier meetings with the Vehicle for Hire industry instructors, on February 19, 2009 the Driver Training and Testing Committee met with the industry representatives and instructors to seek their input on the issues of standardization of driver training and testing, and the combining of defensive driver and the VFH Commission advanced training courses. The objective of standardization is to standardize the course curriculum, format, delivery, duration, and testing; and the combining of defensive driving to eliminate any duplication of course content.

Guiding Principles:

1. Lifelong learning is necessary for personal and professional growth.
2. Driver training is an individual and collective responsibility, involving the driver, industry, educational and training institutions, and the Commission;
3. The Bylaw and Regulation require the brokers to provide driver training;
4. Such training must be Commission approved; and

5. Failure to provide training not only contravenes the Bylaw and Regulation; it adversely impacts the success of industry.

Issues/Concerns Raised:

(a) Standardization of Driver Training and Testing:

1. Standardization of training is an essential component of industry success.
2. It is the broker's responsibility to provide training.
3. Industry has developed varying non-standard practices.
4. There is no prescribed standard curriculum and other guidelines.
5. Issuing of 'super licenses' will require that the drivers be trained in more than one industry sector.
6. Standardize training will provide value for money.
7. Standardization must not create unnecessary bureaucracy.
8. A refresher course after 2 or 5 years is reasonable; instructors could make it interesting.
9. Industry instructors be provincially approved for defensive driving.
10. Centralize all training.

(b) Defensive Driving and Advanced Training Course:

1. There is unnecessary duplication of content in defensive driving and advance training course.
2. The exact nature of duplication needs to be identified.
3. Are the industry instructors provincially approved for defensive driving?
4. New requirements should apply to new drivers.
5. Safety training be a precondition for obtaining taxi driver's license.
6. To some a refresher or advanced training course is unnecessary, others disagreed.

Committee Recommendations:

1. The Committee fully supports in principle both the standardization of driver training and testing, and combining the defensive and the advanced driver training courses.
2. Any changes would require amendments to both the Bylaw 14700 and Regulation.
3. As there are still many unresolved issues (including the curriculum for each course), the Committee is seeking additional time to complete its review and to submit its final report. no later than May 13, 2009.

Charan Khehra
Chairman

MOVED KHEHRA/LUBIN

#9-03-09

That the Driver Training Committee be received as information and the recommendations outlined in the report be approved by the Commission.

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

CARRIED

6. Administrative Matters

a. Licences

Administrator indicated that the monthly Service Deliverable report was attached to the agenda. He elaborated on the highlights of the report and indicated that as a result of some work on the year end review there may be some changes for the future that will be implemented on the April meeting report.

Administrator also elaborated on enforcement statistics indicating that there was 500+ roving inspections conducted during each of the first 2 months of 2009 for a total of 1124 inspections. 292 deficiencies were noted and dealt with by issuing notices and 199 violation tickets were issued. In addition, in one night in February, one Inspector was responsible for catching five 'bandit' taxis and issued 17 violation tickets of \$1,000.00 each.

b. Bylaw Issues

Administrator reported that the amendment to modify the \$3.00 late night surcharge to be applicable only on Friday and Saturday nights as well as Sundays before stat holidays has been sent to the legal department to create the appropriate template. He anticipates it will be sent back toward the end of the month and will probably go to City Council in approximately May.

Mr. Lubin indicated that some members of the industry have requested additional information and inquired if they could contact the Administrator directly or if there is a means of offering additional statistical information.

Administrator indicated that an improved communication strategy is being developed.

Ms. Stewart-Palmer reminded members that all requests for information must comply with FOIP restrictions.

MOVED FYSH/CLARKE

#10-03-09

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

7. New Business

- a. Correspondence dated March 3, 2009 from Mohaned Alma, Airport taxi regarding an incident.

MOVED FYSH/LUBIN

#11-03-09

That the Administration request Yellow Cab to prepare a written response to the Commission regarding this incident.

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

CARRIED

- b. E-mail correspondence dated February 25, 2009 from Thomas Barknowitz, G.M., Rosslyn Inn & Suites regarding taxi service levels.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#12-03-09

That the Administration prepare a response to Mr. Barknowitz on behalf of the Commission, including the fact that Co-op has a stand at the Rosslyn and also that the industry has been advised of his concerns.

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

CARRIED

- c. Correspondence dated February 11, 2009 from Dave Sager regarding Bylaw Violations.

MOVED FYSH/LEAHEY

#13-03-09

That the Administration investigate the concerns expressed in the correspondence from Mr. Sager and prepare a response for the Commission by the May meeting.

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

CARRIED

- d. Correspondence dated February 9, 2009 from Jim Suave regarding seasonal plates.

MOVED KHEHRA/LEAHEY

#14-03-09

That the Administration investigate the proposal forwarded by Mr. Suave and prepare a response to the Commission.

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

CARRIED

8. General Correspondence

MOVED CLARKE/LUBIN

#15-03-09

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

- a. Newspaper article (undated) entitled "Gypsy cabs filling the void".
- b. Newspaper aarticle from the Calgary Herald dated February 17, 2009 entitled "Driving Miss Daisy".
- c. Newspaper article dated February 24, 2009 entitled "Pickering worker jailed in taxi scam".
- d. Document from Northern Lights Limousine to Hatem Naboulsi, VFH Chairman.
- e. Correspondence dated February 19, 2009 from Kassem Issa to the VFH Commission regarding Safety Shields.

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

CARRIED

Chairman thanked all industry members for their co-operation in adhering to our new agenda format and invited their comment on it. He also thanked industry members for participating on various Committees. A five minutes recess was announced

MOVED LUBIN/CLARKE

#16-03-09

That the five minute recess be concluded and that the meeting adjourn in-camera.

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

CARRIED

9. In-Camera Items

Members held a brief in-camera discussion.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY #17-03-09

That the public meeting be resumed.

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

CARRIED

MOVED CLARKE/FYSH #18-03-09

That the Administration be directed to prepare correspondence to the City Manager outlining the provisions of the Bylaw with respect to ddc requirements and indicate actions taken to date to ensure Bylaw compliance.

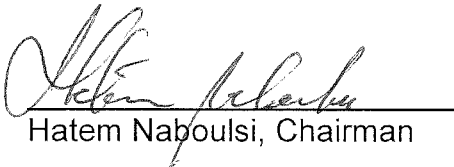
FOR THE MOTION: Naboulsi, Lubin, Clarke, Khehra, Pnaich,
Fysh, Leahey


CARRIED

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

The next regular Vehicle For Hire Commission meeting will be held Wednesday, April 8, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room, Main Floor, City Hall.


Hatem Naboulsi, Chairman


S. Weller, Secretary