
VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

CITY OF EDMONTON VEHICLE FOR HIRE COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 9

Wednesday, September 2, 2009

MEMBERS

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

PRESENT

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

C. Leahey

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

S. Weller Secretary
P. Fearon Administrator

D. Campbell
Advisor (EPS)

1. Call to Order

Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED LUBIN/PNAICH

#1-09-09

That the agenda be approved with the following amendments;

That a procedural change be accepted that would allow the Administration to offer a report to the public with respect to the two recent sting operations including particulars about the specific vehicles/companies found to be in contravention of the Bylaw. Also that the item of 'parking permits' for industry members be discussed.

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

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes

MOVED KHEHRA/LEAHEY

#2-09-09

That the minutes from the regular meeting held on August 12, 2009 be approved.

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

CARRIED

As per the amended agenda, the Administrator was requested to offer a report on the two recent sting operations.

Sting Operations

Administrator reported that there has been two targeted enforcement campaigns carried out under Bylaw guidelines. One was operated out of a south side hotel and one out of a west end hotel, both on August 21st. Trips were booked from the hotels with unlicensed companies suspected of operating within the City of Edmonton. Tickets were issued to Reliable Ride and Sherwood Park Cabs Ltd. Two different drivers from Volta Limousine were also issued tickets. All tickets are filed with the Court system.

In addition, one week ago at the AC/DC concert, officers issued 68 violation tickets targeting illegal operators and two limousine vehicles were towed that were operating without valid insurance. Eight limousine companies were charged a total of 58 tickets, Edmonton taxi cabs in violation of the Bylaw received 6 violation tickets, 2 tickets were issued to unlicensed taxis and 2 private vehicles were issued tickets for parking illegally.

The goal of the Administration and Enforcement is to seek compliance with the Bylaw and offer protection to the public.

Chairman thanked the Administrator for his report.

At this time the Chairman called for a moment of silence to honor the driver who was fatally injured in a recent single vehicle accident.

Mr. Leahey inquired if Airport Taxi was involved in the sting operations.

Administrator reported that Airport Taxi was called, however, they declined to pick up in the City and offered the phone number of a limousine operator licenced to pick up in Edmonton who could assist the customer.

Parking Permits

Mr. Lubin suggested that the Vehicle For Hire Commission consider a motion to provide parking passes for company representatives who attend the regular monthly meetings.

Mr. Leahey stated he would second a motion to provide the passes for the remainder of 2009 and evaluate at that time whether to continue the practice.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#3-09-09

That the VFH Commission Administration provide two parking passes to each brokerage, the drivers association and limousine association for their representatives to attend the monthly meetings at City Hall.

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

CARRIED

4. Public Involvement

The following individuals requested to speak on agenda items;

Mr. Ali Mohamad

Mr. Alla Chebli

Mr. Jessy Halabi

Mr. George Psychoff

Mr. Balraj Manhas

Mr. Phil Strong

Mr. Marshall Rosichuk

Mr. Steve Alvanos

Mr. Ali Mohamad made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

Mr. Allah Chebli made a presentation and answered the Commission's questions.

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

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

Mr. Marshall Rosichuk declined to make a presentation.

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

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

Summary of comments/concerns raised;

- slow Police response time to incidents involving taxi drivers; at both on-site incident location and at Police station.
- possibility of information being generated from Broker location to EPS to generate report/file#.
- Perceived Police lack of concern when dealing with taxi related incidents.
- does the Commission have the ability to ensure non-licenced vehicles be prohibited from operating in addition to being issued fines.
- Enhanced focus on non-licenced 'party buses' being utilized.
- Multi-owners concern with speculation that they will no longer be able to own more than one plate.

5. Business Arising

a. Final Report on July 7, 2009 Public Involvement Session

MOVED LEAHEY/KHEHRA

#4-09-09

That the Commission accept the document attached to the agenda as the final report on the July 7, 2009 Public Involvement Session.

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

CARRIED

b. Request for Colour/Marking approval by Formal Shuttle

Mr. Halabi withdrew his request to address this issue.

6. Reports from Commission

a. Executive Committee

Chairman reported that he attended a very successful meeting convened by Councillor Sohi which was also attended by Danielle Campbell, the VFH Commission EPS representative, an EPS dispatcher Supervisor, Chief Mike Boyd, Balraj Manhas, Steve Alvanos and Phil Strong. Inspector Campbell advised that the Chief of Police is very concerned with the issues outlined by drivers and progress has already been made regarding the issues. She will continue to act as the EPS liaison and ensure that all concerns are addressed by EPS. In addition, she will endeavor to establish training sessions between the industry, Commission and EPS members to ensure all parties are aware of existing issues and work towards resolving them.

Chairman suggested that Inspector Campbell offer a brief progress report at each meeting.

MOVED NABOULSI/LUBIN

#5-09-09

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

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

CARRIED

b. Operation & Program Committee

Chairman reported that he and the Administrator, Mr. Fearon made a presentation to the Community Services Committee on August 24th and requested that Bylaw 14700 governing Vehicles for Hire be amended so that;

1. The late night surcharge of \$3.00 only be in effect on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and the night before Statutory Holidays. This surcharge was initially implemented on July 14, 2008 and it had a positive effect of encouraging more drivers to be in service during the late night hours. A review of the situation however, indicated there was less need for late night service from Sunday to Wednesday and after consultation with the industry the Commission approved the change, for recommendation to City Council.
2. The operational requirement for vehicles to be licensed is increased to 200 days from 100. This increase was motivated by the Commission's belief it was a more desirable method of increasing service delivery to the public as opposed to the idea of releasing additional plates especially given the current economic conditions. Notwithstanding, as you may recall, the Commission is obliged to review the number of plates to be in service each year sometime in the Fall.

After some discussion, the Commission was directed to provide the following;

- a report to the Committee in March of 2010 with information on working with the Edmonton Airport authority to explore consistent rates to and from the Edmonton International Airport and working towards a solution to ensure consistent rates prior to the renegotiation of the airport taxi contract.
- how the Commission is tracking the use of accessible taxis
- how a "day" is interpreted in the Bylaw as outlined in the August 4th, 2009 Report 2009PCS014, and,
- proposed Bylaw amendments required to implement tracking use of accessible taxis and the definition of a "day".

In addition, a motion was passed that Council direct Mayor Mandel write a letter to the International Airport Authority encouraging them to work with the Commission to rationalize rates and services.

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#6-09-09

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

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

CARRIED

c. Safety Committee

Chairman reported that he will be scheduling a meeting with D. Bergeron regarding safety shields and their effect on the disabled community. He also reported that there is almost 100% compliance with the installation of safety shields.

MOVED CLARKE/KHEHRA

#7-09-09

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

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

CARRIED

d. Driver Training Committee

Chairman reminded all present that Driver Appreciation Day is scheduled for November 18th during the Commission meeting. He would like to encourage people to attend and support the award recipients. There are two new awards this year, one for limousines and one for shuttles. Nomination forms are available through the office and the deadline for nominations is October 15, 2009. Lynda Steele will be requested to act as Master of Ceremonies for the event and as a sponsor the Vehicle For Hire Commission will waive the driver licence renewal fees for award recipients for the 2010 licence year.

Chairman also reported that the Committee continues to work on Driver Training issues and he will offer a progress report at the next meeting.

Mr. Clarke requested that a letter be provided to support Vehicle For Hire Commission members who are requesting sponsorship for Driver Appreciation Day. In addition, he requested the Driver Training Committee consider the possibility of creating an award for individuals who assist the Police in different scenarios.

Mr. Khehra suggested that EPS should sponsor an award for citizens who assist them. He will make arrangements for members to be supplied with a letter to assist in requesting sponsorship.

Mr. Lubin advised members of a positive incident involving a taxi driver that was witnessed by Mr. Mack Fysh who inquired if the driver may be eligible for an award.

Mr. Khehra stated that 'citation awards' are offered for individual acts of merit and his name could be submitted for that type of award.

MOVED KHEHRA/CLARKE

#8-09-09

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

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

CARRIED

7. Administrative Matters

a. Licensing

- August, 2009 Service Deliverable Report

Administrator indicated that stats are straightforward although the tickets issued may appear low as the AC/DC concert infractions were not included. Over 5,000 inspections have occurred this year and 926 notices have been issued. Also, VFH Commission representatives will be attending the Community Services Committee meeting on September 8th to table a report regarding dead-heading to and from the International Airport.

- Bannister Survey Results

Administrator reported that as part of a recent survey, 94% of individuals surveyed indicated they felt the City was ensuring safety to the public and adequate insurance in public transportation vehicles.

- General Administrative Matters

Administrator indicated that he had the honor of being a talk show guest on Punjabi Radio. He was joined by Mr. Manhas and Councillor Sohi and the duration of the discussion was approximately three hours.

Administrator also reported that the I.A.T.R. is encouraging agencies to have a common Taxi Driver Appreciation day and at the power point presentation being shown at this years conference an award recipient from our last ceremony will be highlighted.

- August 21 Sting Operation

Administrator indicated that this matter had already been discussed.

Administrator concluded his report by reminding members that the 2009 work plan for September indicates the following should be placed on the agenda;

- Report requested from administration for ratio of Taxi Vehicle Licences per 10,000 population
- Report from Operation & Program Committee regarding update to Regulations
- Report and Recommendation on Carbon Emissions
- Report on Security Checks
- Report on Substitution Vehicles (P. Strong Request) process for limousines

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#9-09-09

That the reports presented under Administrative Matters be received as information.

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

CARRIED

MOVED LUBIN/KHEHRA

#10-09-09

That the Administrator prepare information for consideration by the Commission with respect to what the Commission will consider when they examine the population to licence ratio.

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

CARRIED

MOVED KHEHRA/LEAHEY

#11-09-09

That the Report and Recommendation on Carbon Emissions be referred to the Administration.

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

CARRIED

MOVED CLARKE/PNAICH

#12-09-09

That the Report on Security Checks be referred to the Safety Committee.

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

CARRIED

Mr. Lubin requested that the Committee Chairman forward any suggestions they may have regarding changes to the Regulations.

Mr. Lubin also requested that the Administration forward the Substitute Vehicle Request from Phil Strong to the Operations & Programs Committee.

8. News Articles

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#13-09-09

That the following news articles be received as information;

- a. Calgary Herald, August 20. Riders in despair over cab service; Survey cites availability, wait issues.
- b. Calgary Herald, August 21. Taxi industry waits for city survey.
- c. The Edmonton Sun, August 25. Stings snare rogue cabs; Bandits caught operating without licences.
- d. Edmonton Journal, August 25. Bandit operators can't continue.

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

CARRIED

9. General Correspondence

MOVED LUBIN/LEAHEY

#14-09-09

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

- a. Correspondence dated August 13, 2009 regarding "commendation directed to Vehicle For Hire Commission".
- b. Correspondence dated August 24, 2009 regarding "evil taxi surcharge".

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

CARRIED

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

Mr. Adrian Smits
Mr. Steve Alvanos
Mr. Phil Strong

Summary of comments/concerns raised;

- who is approved to review vehicle camera information;
- Delay in process Security Clearance Details and the question of why other Police services or companies cannot perform this service
- Inquiry as to whether or not 20% of fleets may have to be accessible taxis;
- Formula for population to licence ratio not considering Airport taxi

Inspector Campbell discussed the difference between security details obtained through the R.C.M.P. as opposed to E.P.S. and indicated she would inquire as to the delay in processing the documents.

10. In-Camera Items

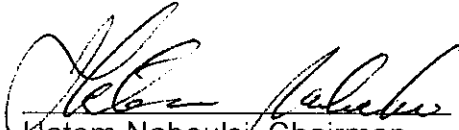
There were no in-camera items to be discussed at this time.

Inspector Campbell advised that she will not be in attendance at the October meeting, however, she will have an Acting Inspector replace her for October.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

The next regular Vehicle For Hire Commission meeting will be held Wednesday, October 14, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room, Main Floor, City Hall.


Hatem Naboulsi, Chairman


S. Weller, Secretary