



**TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
February 5, 2019**

PRESENT: Councillor Lorelei Nicoll, Chair
Councillor Tim Outhit, Vice Chair
Councillor Waye Mason
Councillor Lindell Smith
Councillor Shawn Cleary
Councillor Sam Austin

OTHERS PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Tony Mancini
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Russell Walker
Councillor Stephen Adams
Councillor Matt Whitman
Councillor Lisa Blackburn
Councillor Steve Craig

STAFF: Dave Reage, Director of Halifax Transit
Colin Taylor, Solicitor
Phoebe Rai, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, information items circulated, and video (if available) are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m., and the Standing Committee adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Austin

THAT the Order of Business be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

4. REPORTS

4.1 Vehicle for Hire Licensing Program Review

The following was before Transportation Standing Committee:

- A staff information report dated January 25, 2019
- A staff presentation dated February 5, 2019
- Correspondence dated February 4, 2019 from Brian Herman, Casino Taxi Limited

Sally Christie, Supervisor Regional Licensing, provided the staff presentation regarding the Vehicle for Hire Licensing Program Review. It was noted that if the motion is approved, the supplementary reports would return to the Transportation Standing Committee for consideration and recommendation to Regional Council.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Cleary

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to:

- 1. Prepare amendments to By-law T-1000 and Administrative Order 39, as identified in Attachment A of the staff report dated January 25, 2019, for Council's consideration;**
- 2. Prepare a supplementary report relative to regulating Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber or Lyft; and**
- 3. Request the Mayor write a letter to the Province to request the required amendments to the HRM Charter to enable the Municipality to provide business grants for vehicle purchase or conversion and to provide a subsidy, per trip fee, to all accessible taxi license holders.**

Sally Christie responded to questions of clarification; key highlights include:

- The purpose of licensing brokers is to achieve a reporting relationship to improve the amount of information;
- Staff have been engaged with counterparts with the provincial government regarding funding programs to support accessible taxis;
- The proposed subsidy for accessible taxi license holders would be applied only to trips serving people with accessibility needs; and
- Staff do not recommend mandating the use of cameras in taxis due to questions of feasibility in storing the information longer than a few days.

Responding to a question from a Committee Member, Colin Taylor, Solicitor indicated that staff would consider in subsequent reports the viability of restricting accessible taxi license holders from exchanging their license for a standard license given the proposed increase in standard licenses.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Outhit

THAT part 1 of the motion be amended to include amendments to the Code of Conduct and clarity around the role of the Appeals Standing Committee as per section 3.3 of the Hara Report and recommendation 3.7 Appeals of License Suspension and Revocations

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The question was called on the main motion as amended:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Cleary

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to:

- 1. Prepare amendments to By-law T-1000 and Administrative Order 39, as identified in Attachment A of the staff report dated January 25, 2019 and including amendments to the Code of Conduct and clarify around the role of the Appeals Standing Committee as per section 3.3 of the Hara Report and recommendation 3.7 Appeals of License Suspension and Revocations, for Council's consideration;**
- 2. Prepare a supplementary report relative to regulating Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber or Lyft; and**
- 3. Request the Mayor write a letter to the Province to request the required amendments to the HRM Charter to enable the Municipality to provide business grants for vehicle purchase or conversion and to provide a subsidy, per trip fee, to all accessible taxi license holders.**

AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Todd MacDonald, representing an HRM citizens advocacy group, spoke to transportation concerns in the municipality and noted that residents want access to ride hailing services such as Uber and Lyft because they consider it less expensive, safer and a better service as it offers a peer review function.

Dave Buffett, President of HRM Taxi Association, noted that taxi drivers have experienced many safety issues, the greatest of which is motor vehicle accidents. They noted that adding more taxis will lead drivers to work more in order to compete, and would result in sleep deprivation and impaired driving. Buffett concluded by recommending the municipality use mystery riders to ensure drivers are following the rules of the by-law.

Paul Boyd, taxi driver, spoke in favour of the zone system in HRM to ensure that cabs are available throughout the municipality, and suggested addressing enforcement issues and adding cameras to taxi vehicles. Boyd noted that mass transit or light rail is needed to bring residents in from outlying areas.

Darshan Virk, taxi driver, raised questions regarding the total number of taxi roof lights and indicated they believed adding 600 taxis would have an overall negative effect. Virk spoke to the potential impact of companies such as Uber and Lyft and the need to ensure they are regulated.

Bruce Cochrane, Dartmouth taxi operator, advised that there needs to be improvements to reduce bureaucracy with respect to relicensing. Cochrane noted that as an independent operator they accept cash and find it safer than other methods of payment, and highlighted the difference between telephone headsets and voice amplification headsets.

Terry Morier, Casino Taxi, noted they drove an accessible vehicle and financed the necessary retrofitting. Morier spoke to media reports of various concerns with Uber that should be taken into consideration and provided commentary with the respect to the impact of adding 600 taxi licenses.

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Paul Vienneau, Halifax provided information regarding their positive experiences with accessible cab drivers and spoke in favour of subsidizing and working to improve the quality of accessible vehicles.

Vlado Ostarcevic, taxi driver advised that changes need to be made to the taxi industry, but they should be carefully considered.

Amir Abdullah, Taxi Driver, noted issues with respect to zoning and inquired whether there is a possibility that HRM taxis could pick up passengers from the airport if they have gone to the airport to drop a passenger off.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - February 28, 2019, Halifax City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax – 1:00 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Phoebe Rai
Legislative Assistant