

TAXI COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the November 17, 2008 meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Frank Daggett called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present: Members: Chair Frank Daggett; Councilor Eric Spear, Commissioners James Feehley; Peter Bresciano; Kent Kirkpatrick; and Joel Look, Sergeant Michael Schwartz and Deputy City Clerk Dianne M. Kirby

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 15, 2008

Commissioner Feehley moved to approve and accept the September 15, 2008 minutes of the Taxi Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Bresciano and voted.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bresciano requested to bring forth Item IV (2) and introduce the Commission's new members.

1. Taxi Commission Appointments

Deputy City Clerk Kirby handed out a Welcome Packet to Commissioner Kirkpatrick, Commissioner Look and Sergeant Schwartz. The packet included a copy of the most recent Taxi Commission Ordinance with the most recent amendment, a copy of the Taxi Agenda Mailing List which states the names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for all Commission members and taxi owners and the 2008 Meeting Schedule.

2. 2009 Schedule of Taxi Commission Meetings

Chair Daggett requested a motion to accept the 2009 Schedule of Taxi Commission Meetings. Commissioner Feehley moved to accept the 2009 Schedule of Taxi Commission Meetings. Seconded by Commissioner Bresciano and voted.

3. New Year's Eve

Chair Daggett stated that New Year's Eve has been a problem in the past for the taxi companies and he likes to start in November to ensure that there will be enough taxis available. Sergeant Schwartz asked how many taxi cabs would be out on New Year's Eve. Commissioner Feehley stated that Blue Star would have six cabs available. Alan Ladd, Sunshine Taxi stated that he would have all three cabs on the streets. Chair Daggett stated that Ed Spadafora, Anchor Taxi

usually has both his cabs available. Chair Daggett stated that we could use a few more taxi companies. Commissioner Bresciano asked how many cabs, by ordinance, a taxi company is allowed to have. Paul Ford, Blue Star Taxi stated that by ordinance a company is allowed ten taxi cabs. Commissioner Bresciano stated that if a taxi company wanted to add an eleventh vehicle, they would just have to bring it before the Commission and the ordinance could be changed.

4. Reduction of Taxi Fares (Not on the Agenda)

Chair Daggett stated that the question has been raised about reducing the taxi fare now that the gas prices are down. Commissioner Bresciano stated that there are many other things besides gas that went into raising the taxi fare. Paul Ford, Blue Star Taxi stated that the Commission should wait approximately six months to ensure that the price of gas is going to stay down before readjusting the fares. Commissioner Feehley stated that they just had a mandatory pay raise for all drivers. Commissioner Bresciano stated that there are also maintenance costs as well as new vehicle expenses that companies have to look at in order to keep their fleet up to Portsmouth standards. Paul Ford, Blue Star Taxi stated that a reduction in the price of fares could be detrimental to taxi companies at this time.

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. MISCELLANEOUS/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Sergeant Schwartz stated that as a reminder, the Holiday parade was scheduled for December 6, 2008. Chair Daggett stated that Taxi owners are usually up to date on special events within Portsmouth. He said his main worry is with New Year's Eve due to all the problems we had when Bananas was opened. Commissioner Feehley stated that there were no main problems last year. Commissioner Bresciano said that there have not been any major problems in a few years now. Chair Daggett stated that they have not really had any major problems since Bananas closed.

Paul Ford, Taxi Owner stated that he did have an ordinance change request. He said that each year the taxi companies have to submit their applications for renewal medallions and driver's licenses by June 1st with the new medallions and licenses issued by July 1st. He said that there isn't a grace period for anyone that is a new hire just prior to June 1st. He said it is a hardship on these people to do the paperwork and pay the \$50.00 fee in April and then turn around and do it again in June. He suggested an ordinance change to have a grace period of 60, 90 or 120 days from new hire to renewal. Commissioner Bresciano moved to put this item on the agenda for the December meeting. Seconded by Councilor Spear and voted. Commissioner Bresciano stated auto inspections/registrations use a grace period for new owners and maybe we can get a copy of the Tax Office's ordinance and mirror that.

Commissioner Bresciano asked if there was anything new with the Domino's driver. Commissioner Feehley stated that he has not seen them lately, but Lieutenant McQuate put out the word to all drivers to contact the Police Department if they see them picking up any passengers.

Commissioner Look stated that years ago there was a taxi with a wheel chair lift. He wanted to know who the person in charge of this vehicle was. Commissioner Bresciano stated that the Senior Center did have this service. Commissioner Look said that they did, but not for personal transportation such as UNH for a hockey games etc. Commissioner Bresciano stated that the disabled medallion still exists. Chair Daggett stated that Teddy Miller had the idea to offer this service and it was a good idea, but he just didn't realize the expense entailed in purchasing a disabled van. Alan Ladd, Sunshine Taxi stated that they are required to charge the same fare and therefore, could not re-coop the added expenses. Commissioner Look stated that he was talking about using a grant to purchase the vehicle. Chair Daggett moved to add this to next month's agenda for further discussion.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:22 a.m., Commissioner Feehley moved to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Bresciano and voted.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dianne M. Kirby, Deputy City Clerk