

TAXI COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of the May 20, 2013 meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bresciano called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present: Members: Commissioners Peter Bresciano, and Michael Barker, Councilor Brad Lown, Lieutenant Mark Newport and Deputy City Clerk Dianne M. Kirby

Absent: Commissioner Aaron Lawson

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 25, 2013 AND MEETING NOTES FROM MARCH 18, 2013 AND APRIL 15, 2013

Councilor Lown moved to approve and accept the minutes of the January 25, 2013 Special meeting. Seconded by Lieutenant Newport and voted.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Welcome to Commissioner Barker

Chair Bresciano introduced Commissioner Barker and welcomed him to the Commission.

2. Drug Testing

Deputy City Clerk Kirby stated an individual came to the Clerk's office and said they thought some of the taxi drivers should be tested for drugs. Chair Bresciano said if the Commission does not get something in writing then there is no basis to discuss the matter, unless the Commission members think there should be an ordinance change dealing with drug testing. He further stated if the Commission wanted to pursue drug testing it would have to be an ordinance change which would have to be drafted and approved through the City Council. He stated he feels if someone suspects a driver is driving under the influence of drugs, they should notify the Police Department and let them handle the situation.

Lieutenant Newport stated it is ultimately up to the taxi owner to schedule drug testing if they feel there is a problem within their company. He asked Deputy City Clerk Kirby if this was brought up as one taxi company complaining about another taxi company. Deputy City Clerk Kirby stated the individual was not really complaining, she said they just said they had heard that some drivers were driving on drugs. She said they didn't really point fingers at any one

driver or company. She said they suggested the Commission might want to check into this further.

Stephen Gerrato, Rockingham Livery said he though all taxi companies should know who the person was that suggested drug testing. Chair Bresciano stated since there is no formal complaint, he does not want to pursue the matter further.

Lieutenant Newport stated he did not feel there is a problem at this time.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Taxi Inspections

Lieutenant Newport stated the taxi inspections went smooth. He stated there were not any major problems and all but 2 medallions were returned by the end of the day. He stated Portsmouth Taxi and Rockingham Livery both had one vehicle that they turned in the medallions and would replace the vehicles at a later time. He said Annie's Taxi did not show. Deputy City Clerk Kirby stated Annie's Taxi has not picked up her 2013/2014 taxi medallions.

Chair Bresciano stated the Public Works mechanics and the Police Department personnel do a very good job of knowing what to look for.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Police Representative Report

Lieutenant Newport stated there were only two complaints of vehicles parked in taxi stands. He stated one was ticketed and the other had moved by the time police arrived.

2. Time-limiting of Taxi Stand near Fleet Street

Chair Bresciano stated Deputy City Clerk was given an unofficial draft excerpt of the Parking Safety and Transportation Committee minutes. He said these minutes were from the May 9, 2013 PTS meeting and has not been approved by the Committee or the Council at this time. He stated the PTS has stated the taxi stand near Fleet Street is not frequently used during the daytime hours and therefore, they have voted to post the time of the taxi stand near Fleet Street for the hours from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m., Monday through Sunday as a taxi stand and all other times this parking space would be open to all. He asked if anyone had a problem with these time limits.

Merle White, Anchor Taxi, stated Public Works moved one taxi stand from the bus station to Fleet Street, but they did not stripe it and nobody pays attention to it as a taxi stand.

Chair Bresciano asked Deputy City Clerk Kirby to notify Director of Public Works Parkinson of this situation and ask them to follow up with striping this taxi stand.

Merle White, Anchor Taxi stated the only taxi stand that is regulated is the one in front of Fat Belly's in that it is a loading zone during the day and a taxi stand at night. He said the taxi spaces in front of G Willikers, Piscataqua Bank and Hanover Street are full time taxi stands.

Merle White, Anchor Taxi spoke to an article in the newspaper about not being able to get a cab late at night. He stated he contacted the reporter and explained the costs associated with putting taxis on the road and finding qualified drivers.

Lieutenant Newport asked if all taxi's are on the road on Friday and Saturday nights. He stated with all the people wanting cabs at closing time and the fights this has provoked, the Police Chief wanted to ensure that all available cabs are on the road.

Stephen Gerrato, Rockingham Livery stated you can not get a cab between 12:30-1:30 by calling. He stated they are to busy to answer the phones.

Councilor Lown asked if there are 20 cabs available downtown between 11-2 o'clock. Stephen Gerrato, Rockingham Livery stated there are not because a cab could be taken out of town by a fare. Councilor Lown stated it would be a shame if an intoxicated person tried to get a taxi and couldn't so he got into his car and killed someone. Chair Bresciano asked what can a cab company do. He asked if they should go to the expense of putting more vehicles on the road just for Friday and Saturday nights and then go out of business because the rest of the time there is no business.

Ed Heath, Anchor Taxi, asked Councilor Lown to repeat his question. He then stated even if they had a 100 taxi's on the road there would still be someone who would get in their vehicle and drive because at closing time these individuals want to go right now they do not want to wait for a cab.

Stephen Gerrato, Rockingham Livery requested if public transportation could be put on for Friday and Saturday nights to assist with this problem. He said this would at least give people an option to get out of town. Chair Bresciano stated public transportation doesn't work. He said public transportation only goes from point A to point B and that late at night people want door to door service.

Chair Bresciano stated he has not heard any complaints from patrons that a taxi has refused to take them out of town. Lieutenant Newport stated he has, but he stated these people can always call out of town cab to pick them up.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dianne M. Kirby

Dianne M. Kirby, Deputy City Clerk