

City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Action Minutes

Thursday, March 26, 2015

8:00 AM

Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St, Fourth floor, conference room

Taxicab Board

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the City of Ann Arbor Taxicab Board was called to order by the Chair, Michael Benson, at 8:10 a.m. in the Fourth Floor Conference Room, 301 E. Huron Street.

The following people were also in attendance:

Kristen Larcom, Assistant City Attorney

Joe Morehouse, DDA Deputy Director

Tim Tobias, Michigan Green Cars

JP Heythaler, Blue Cab Company

Rick Clark, Amazing Blue Taxi

Bill Chinchon, AirTrain

Gordon Berry, Ann Arbor resident

Present: 6 - Stephen Kunselman, Michael Benson, Jamie Adkins, Robert Goeddel, LuAnne Bullington, and Jacqueline Beaudry

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Bullington, seconded by Goeddel, that the Agenda be approved as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

15-0362 Taxicab Board Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2014

Attachments: Taxicab Board Minutes 121814

A motion was made by Councilmember Kunselman, seconded by Goeddel, that the Taxicab Board Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2014 be approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council by 6/15/2015. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. DDA Conversion of Loading Zones to Taxicab Stands

Joe Morehouse, Deputy Director of the Downtown Development Authority, was present to update the Board regarding the DDA's plans to convert Loading Zone signs to Taxicab Stands during specific hours.

Mr. Morehouse stated it has been a slow process, noting that a TCO (Traffic Control Order) must first be approved prior to the conversion of the signs. Due to staffing changes, TCO approval has been slow over the last few months. Morehouse explained the program in more detail, stating the plan was to target the loading zones in the busy bar and nightclub areas, utilizing the zones from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. as loading zones, 6 p.m. to 3 a.m. for taxi stands and no parking from 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.

The Chair, Mr. Benson, asked how the program would be marketed and whether there would be enforcement after 6 p.m. for violations of taxicab stand regulations.

Mr. Morehouse stated those who use the loading zones, it is assumed, would understand the change and when the loading zones could be utilized.

Officer Adkins volunteered that she would send out information to the taxicab companies alerting them of the change and the list of which signs were affected.

2. Update on Operation Agreements with Uber/Lyft

Board members asked Assistant City Attorney Kristen Larcom to report on the status of the City's negotiations with Uber and Lyft for an Operating Agreement in the City.

Larcom replied that there is not a current operating agreement with TCOs and that staff was waiting on guidance on next steps from Council. Councilmember Kunselman stated Council most likely would need to be advised on the status and that the draft agreements are not moving forward.

Officer Adkins noted that Uber received 14 tickets last Fall and they are all due in Court on April 9. She stated there is concern from the prosecutor regarding how an operating agreement would affect the ability for Police to issue tickets under State Limo Law or local ordinance and for tickets to be prosecuted. Larcom noted that since the tickets are written under State Limo Law, they are prosecuted by the County, not Ann Arbor.

Officer Adkins noted that the tickets are issued under State Limo Law for operating as a limousine without State licensure.

3. Discussion of Local Limo Ordinance

Board Members continued discussion of possible changes to State Law and the possibility of a Local Limo Ordinance.

Councilmember Kunselman stated he doesn't think action on a local limo ordinance will take place at the Council level, as there is still a possibility of changes coming to State law. He stated there is no point moving forward at this point, noting that the City is still able to issue tickets under State law, and the Ann Arbor Police are doing that when appropriate.

Chair Benson noted that several new bills have been introduced in Lansing regarding the State Limo Act.

Councilmember Kunselman also noted that Uber continues to refuse to release information regarding insurance coverage, claiming proprietary information.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Best Practices/FAQ Guide

By mutual consent it was decided that an FAQ/Best Practices for new companies was not needed and the issue would no longer be discussed.

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

1. Update from Officer Adkins Re: Implementation of Ordinance Revisions

Officer Jamie Adkins spoke about the implementation of the new ordinance and the annual registration process. She stated that last May 107 taxicabs were registered in the City. She stated that numbers are down this year compared to previous years. Adkins stated she was recently notified that Blue Cab converted all but one of their vehicles to limo, but the issue was due to Medicaid work, not a problem with the City licensing process. Without Blue Cab, the City's taxi numbers would be around 66.

Adkins stated only one company took advantage of the ordinance change to raise rates as of right now; however, annual renewal is coming up in May. Letters were sent to all companies for annual renewal, which included information about the ordinance changes.

Beaudry questioned if driver numbers were down or just vehicles. Adkins replied that drivers were about the same at around 200.

INFORMATION/UPCOMING BUSINESS

Benson reminded the Board that annual elections will be held next month for chair and vice-chair.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rick Clark, Amazing Blue Taxi, spoke in opposition to the City entering into any type of operating agreement with Uber and/or Lyft.

Tim Tobias, Michigan Green Car, stated he attended the Senate Hearings yesterday regarding Senate bills 184 and 188. He stated there is another hearing next week. Uber and Lyft were both in attendance stating legislation to regulate TNCs was not necessary.

Gordon Berry, Ann Arbor resident, spoke in support of Bill 184, and urged others to speak in support.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Kunselman, seconded by Bullington, that the meeting adjourn. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:33 a.m.