

Taxicab Board Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2014

Members Present: Michael Benson
Robert Goeddel
Stephen Kunselman
Tom Crawford
LouAnne Bullington

Members Absent: None

Guests: Officer Jamie Adkins, A2 Police
Kristen Larcom, Sr. City Attorney
Mark LaSarge, Yellow Car/Select Ride
JP Heythaier, Blue Cab Company
Rick Clark, Amazing Blue
Gordon Berry, Ann Arbor Resident
Brian Slizewski, City Project Management
Sarah Singleton (Recording Secretary)

I. CALLED TO ORDER – 8:42 a.m. by Mr. Benson

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Bullington moved to approve the agenda, Mr. Kunselman seconded. The motion passed.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTARY

1. JP Heythaier of Blue Cab asked the Board to change the regulation of where the taxicab rates are placed on the vehicle. Currently, the regulation state's the rates should be placed on the door of the cab, Mr. Heythaier is asking that the rates be put on the window. He said that the paint on the vehicle may be damaged if and when the rates are changed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of Taxicab Board Minutes from September 25, 2014

Mr. Benson asked that Ms. Singleton's name be added to the minutes' list of attendees.

Mr. Kunselman moved to approve the Taxicab Board Minutes for September 25, 2014, seconded by Mr. Goeddel. The motion passed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Timing of the Operating Agreement to Council

Mr. Crawford said he has been working with the attorney's office and the TNC on the operating agreement as directed by city council. Mr. Crawford said he is expecting the agreement to be presented to council at its November 17th meeting. Ms. Larcom said the agreement has not been drafted.

Mr. Kunselman asked, "What is the process when trying to negotiate with companies that are not in compliance with State law". Ms. Larcom said council instructed the city to negotiate so they are negotiating as they would with any other contract. Legal advice will be given to council as requested.

Mr. Kunselman asked if there are any other operating agreements in Michigan other than Detroit. Ms. Larcom said she is not aware of any other agreements.

Mr. Benson stated that to his understanding there are two specific TNCs. He asked if the agreement will be specific to the two TNCs or will the agreement be a template that can be used for others. Mr. Crawford said

his expectation is that it will be one agreement and the companies can choose to sign or not sign. The intent is to have one agreement that any TNC can sign. Mr. Benson asked that the agreement presented to council also be given to the taxicab board for public record.

2. Staff Discussion on Taxicab Stand – Michigan Union Location

Mr. Slizewski from the city's project management service unit said they have a small project coming up that will affect the taxicab stand near Michigan Union. The city is constructing a new cross walk going across State Street. This new cross walk will move the taxicab stand south about 30-35 feet which would move the taxicab spaces closer to the intersection of State and S. University. In the long term, there will be no net effect to the taxicab stand other than the shift of the location. The decision to install this cross walk is to make a safe crossing for pedestrians as this is a very busy section of State Street with lots of student crossing at or near the area. It will take about a week to construct the cross walk beginning Saturday, October 24, 2014.

Mr. Crawford asked if this location should be reduced to two spaces since the city is looking into dual taxicab/loading zones. Mr. Kunselman said this taxicab stand is heavily used by taxicabs. He feels it is important to keep the three spaces. Mr. Benson asked the Board and the taxicab owners present at the meeting if three spaces are enough at this location. Mr. Clark from Amazing Blue Taxi said 26 years ago, there were five spaces at this location. Mr. Goeddel said if additional spaces were added, it would interfere with the flow of traffic as traffic already backs-up in this area.

3. Holiday Schedule

Ms. Singleton presented the current taxicab board meeting calendar. Last year the calendar was approved with the understanding that the November 27, 2014 and December 25, 2014 meeting dates would be changed due to the holiday. The Board agreed to reschedule the meetings to November 20, 2014 and December 18, 2014.

VI. ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

Mr. Crawford handed out Articles of Incorporation of the Greater Lansing Taxi Authority, an agreement between Lansing and East Lansing forming authority for regulating taxicabs as well as two court cases referencing limousine cited for operating as a taxi without license. Mr. Crawford stated that the State legislation for MDOT is interested in eliminating their regulation around limos that carry less than nine passengers. He said there is a lot of activity at the State level but no progress at this point.

In looking at the Articles of Incorporation, Mr. Benson said he would like to see item 2 which states "The organization maintains a website that provides a customer service telephone number or email address" incorporated into the taxicab ordinance. Officer Adkins said her contact information is on the city website as a means to speak with someone about a problem. Mr. Kunselman asked what options do passengers have that used TNCs to file a complaint. Officer Adkins said passengers should file a police report if it is a criminal issue. If it is a civil issue such as a disagreement over fares, they should contact the company or small claims court. Officer Adkins said there have been Uber drivers ticketed over the last six weeks for not being in compliance with the local taxicab ordinance or the State limo law.

Mr. Benson asked for an update on ordinance changes for deregulation of taxicab rates. Officer Adkins passed out a packet that was sent out to all taxicab companies outlining their responsibilities. Currently, no one has contacted Officer Adkins that is interested in changing their rates. The only question that has come up is the posting location of the rates on the vehicle. Mr. Crawford said he recalls there being concern with the rates posted on the window because when the window is rolled down, you can't see the rates. Some of the taxicabs back windows don't go all the way down, therefore, the rates could be posted near the top of the window or it can be posted on the door. The ordinance language states that it must be a clearly visible location on the vehicle.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTARY

1. Gordon Berry, Ann Arbor Resident, said the Board's discussion seem to hinge on two different things, taximeters and who owes the car. He said taxis, limo and Uber are all doing the same thing. If city council agrees to an operating agreement, the cab board should tell council that they have created a discriminatory system and the taxicab board prefers not to be a part of it and therefore, the cab board should be demolished. He believes council is allowing Uber to run free and the taxicabs are held to regulations.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kunselman moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Bullington seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 a.m.