

City of Ann Arbor

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

Thursday, May 28, 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 8:09 a.m. in the Fourth Floor Conference Room, 301 E. Huron Street, Guy C. Larcom Jr. Municipal Building.

The following people were also in attendance:

*Gordon Berry, Ann Arbor resident
Abdullani Saed
Mark Neumann, Stadium Transportation
JP Heythaler, Blue Cab Company
Rick Clark, Amazing Blue Taxi
Mark LaSarge, Select Ride*

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

Absent: 1 - Jamie Adkins

Introduction of New Member - Kyle Lady

Chair Benson introduced the Board's newest member, Kyle Lady.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Kunselman, seconded by Lady, that the Agenda be approved with the following changes:

Move:

Administrator's Comments (Move to before New Business).

On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES**15-0687 Taxicab Board Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2015**

Attachments: Taxicab Board Minutes 032615 as amended, Taxicab Board Minutes 032615

One correction to the minutes was noted and unanimously accepted:

Unfinished Business

Item 2. Update on Operation Agreements with Uber/Lyft

...Officer Adkins noted that Uber AND LYFT DRIVERS received 14 tickets last Fall....

ALL CAPS indicates new language.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kunselman, seconded by Goeddel, that the Minutes of the May 28, 2015 Taxicab Board meeting be approved by the Commission as amended and forwarded to the City Council on 8/6/2015. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rick Clark, Amazing Blue Taxi, spoke about the age restrictions currently in place for taxicabs. He stated age does not necessarily equate to upkeep of a vehicle.

Mark Neumann, Stadium Transportation, also spoke about the restrictions in Ann Arbor regarding the age of taxicab vehicles. He stated the age of the vehicle is not relevant in determining the quality and upkeep. Mr. Neumann also expressed concern with the situation with Uber and Lyft, noting that they are continuing to operate unregulated and it is a safety issue.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

(Moved to later in the meeting.)

NEW BUSINESS**1. Election of Officers**

Commissioner Bullington nominated Michael Benson to continue to serve as Chair of the Taxicab Board for an additional year. Councilmember Kunselman seconded the nomination. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

Councilmember Kunselman nominated Commissioner Lady to serve as Vice-Chair for the upcoming year. The motion was supported by Commissioner Goeddel. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

2. Taxi Insurance Requirements - Chapter 77

Chair Benson updated the Board on some questions he had with regard to the City's insurance requirements for taxicabs, noting that the City's taxicab numbers continue to decrease. He stated he believes that the City's requirements for insurance are much higher than State minimums. Benson noted he has asked City staff for information regarding the rationale for the higher insurance requirements and whether a change could possibly be made.

Beaudry stated she spoke with Assistant City Attorney Larcom regarding Benson's question. Larcom indicated that she was further checking with Assistant City Attorney Mary Fales who is the insurance expert for the City. Beaudry said they have not yet received an answer from Fales, but noted that if the requirement is higher than what is necessary or recommended, a proposed change in the ordinance (Chapter 7) could be presented to the Board for a recommendation to Council. (The Board requested that any proposed change be returned to the Taxicab Board for consideration.)

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

(Continued from earlier in the meeting.)

2. Limo Companies and Taxis in Ann Arbor

(Discussion tabled pending Officer Adkins' arrival at the meeting.)

1. Officer Adkins - Update on Annual Registrations

City Clerk Jacqueline Beaudry noted that Officer Adkins was not yet in attendance. Beaudry stated that Officer Adkins was planning to discuss the ongoing reduction of licensed taxis in the City, down this year to under 50.

It was decided that additional comments from the Administrator would be tabled until Officer Adkins arrived.

Chair Benson remarked that with the reduction in licensed taxis in the City, the Board may need to consider future options, such as registration of both taxis and limos.

Councilmember Kunselman stated there had been some discussion in the past about limo registration, and a previous ordinance draft had focused on driver registration, not the regulation of limo rates. However, he noted that tickets are being issued for those limos (or transportation network drivers) operating illegally.

Goeddel noted that students are complaining more and more about the level of service from TNC drivers.

The committee concurred that they would continue waiting for action from the State level regarding TNC operators, but that enforcement would continue in the City when appropriate.

INFORMATION/UPCOMING BUSINESS

The committee discussed upcoming business. It was decided that the following would be discussed at the next meeting:

*Annual Registrations (2015 update)
Insurance Requirements (City Attorney)
Review of current Annual Calendar*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gordon Berry spoke about the City's high insurance requirements. He stated this may be contributing to the depressing of the number of cabs operating in the City. He questioned how long the City was going to wait to address the issue with Uber and Lyft. He urged the City to take the lead on the issue. Mr. Berry also spoke about the age of taxicabs, stating the requirement should be a fitness test, not an age test.

Mark Neuman urged the Board members to review the insurance policy in the City Code, stating he would consider returning to licensed taxis, instead of limos, if rate requirements were reduced.

Mark Kosarge, Yellow Cab, stated he attended the hearings at the State Legislature, noting that Uber will not pay medical bills for an accident involving a State Senator, under the current system.

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Officer Jamie Adkins arrived at 8:30 a.m.

The committee returned to Administrator Comments with the arrival of Officer Adkins.

Present: 7 - Stephen Kunselman, Michael Benson, Jamie Adkins, Robert Goeddel, LuAnne Bullington, Jacqueline Beaudry, and Kyle Lady

Officer Adkins - Update on Annual Registrations

Officer Adkins updated the Board regarding taxi cab registrations, stating the City is down to under 30 licensed taxis in the City. She stated Blue Cab and Amazing Blue have both switched to all limo except for one licensed taxi each. Officer Adkins stated the City has 69 registered drivers. She noted that Blue Cab is still registering all their drivers as taxi drivers, despite switching most of their vehicles to limo.

Officer Adkins stated M-Taxi has requested that they receive an exception for the use of a 2004 Toyota Sienna, which is older than the ten-year age limit allowed. She stated the company inadvertently purchased the older vehicle, not realizing the age limit. Officer Adkins recommended that the Board extend the 10-year age limit for one year for this specific case.

The Board discussed their options regarding approving this change.

The Board recessed the meeting from 8:42 a.m. until 8:46 a.m.

Councilmember Kunselman moved, seconded by Goeddel, to re-open the agenda and add the consideration of this item.

15-0937

Waive Requirement of R7:154(i) for the period of one-year for M-Taxi to allow for the licensure of a 2004 Toyota Sienna as a taxi cab operating in the City of Ann Arbor

A motion was made by Councilmember Kunselman, seconded by Goeddel, that the Resolution be adopted. On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried:

Yeas: 3 - Councilmember Kunselman, Bullington, and Lady

Nays: 2 - Chair Benson, and Goeddel

Enactment No:

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair offered an additional opportunity for public comment due to the additions and changes to the agenda.

Gordon Berry encouraged the Board to adopt a common sense approach to standards for vehicle maintenance.

Rick Clark, Amazing Blue Taxi, spoke about the number of licensed taxis in the City.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Lady, seconded by Councilmember Kunselman, that the meeting adjourn. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:52 a.m.