

Minutes  
Metropolitan Taxi Cab Commission  
January 3, 2003

The meeting was called to order on January 3, 2003 at 2:06 p.m. and was held at Lambert International Airport. Those present were: Tom Dunne, Dave McNutt, Solomon Tedesse, Basil Rudawsky, Gary Earls, Karen Wittkoetter, Shermand Palmer, Airport representatives-Gerard Slay, Brian Malarney, and Brian Kinsey, and five visitors.

Several Commission members were unable to attend. Therefore, no old or new business issues were discussed or voted on.

Lambert International Airport representatives gave a presentation to the Commission. Please refer to presentation handout entitled Lambert-Saint Louis International Airport Presentation For Metropolitan Taxi Cab Commission January 3, 2003. Mr. Malarney referred to an aerial map of the airport and pointed out the taxi staging and line up areas at the pear tree (approximately 100 cars), air cargo road (approximately 50 cars), east terminal (6 cars), and yellow level- parking garage (10 cars) locations. Mr. Malarney also pointed out that on- call taxis, airport calls, and reserve cabs are located on the brown level-parking garage and premium sedans, located on the yellow level-parking garage, are licensed with the city or county and pay the airport a monthly fee for a hang tag.

Issues discussed during the presentation are as follows. Mr. Kinsey stated that prior to the lawsuit against the county the airport did not stage cabs on air cargo road. Mr. McNutt asked if the airport has an opinion of the number of cabs needed at the airport. Mr. Kinsey replied that a study by Dr. Ray Munday done in late summer/early fall of 2002 indicates that as few as a third of the cabs that are now licensed, a little over 100, are needed. Mr. Tedesse pointed out that there are often unlicensed cabs in the reserved area.

Mr. Kinsey pointed out that the Commission should consider that a percentage of the contracted trip fee between a contracted taxi service and the airport could be a source of revenue. Mr. Kinsey stated that the airport is 10 to 15% down in a given month. Mr. McNutt stated that the Commission is low on funding. Mr. Slay stated that the county used the licensing fees for starter salaries and that the Commission will take that and asked what the funding source for the starters will be.

Mr. Earls pointed out that the idea for airport taxis picking up fares and taking them to the airport has been discussed many times and never pans out. He stated that there is too much overhead unless the dispatcher is interested in getting in lines at the Convention Center or Harrah's.

Mr. Earls asked for an example where a city has entered into a contract with cab companies. Mr. Kinsey stated that a recent example is San Jose.

Mr. Dunne clarified that since the cars are required to be new that the length of the

contract is the age of the car. Mr. Dunne also commented that the Commission and the airport should have regulations that work together for convenience and efficiency, not two different sets of regulations.

Mr. Earls commented that it is difficult to have the operator or owner of 106 drivers be responsible for 106 drivers. The way the government agency or the Commission has operated is by disciplining the individual driver. The airport has structured the contract so that the drivers are employees of the operator. The taxi cab industry does not operate this way.

Mr. Tedesse again pointed out that he feels the #1 problem at the airport is the unlicensed cabs and asked how this problem can be solved. He asked how the airport report is a solution to this problem. Mr. Slay replied that the airport needs manpower resources. The county has been trying to increase the budget. He states that the airport has no funds to do it and no financial incentive to do it. Mr. Tedesse stated that the Commission's purpose is for the good of the public though.

Mr. Earls pointed out that the state law limits the Taxi Cab Commission. The Commission has sole authority for licensing. So, the airport can not follow through with the plan to contract out to taxi cab companies with out the Commission support. He also states that the airport has ground authority for the taxi cab starters. So, the Commission needs the airport support.

Mr. Rudawsky asked if the Commission can get the numbers for taxi trips per day. Mr. Malarney replied that the airport can track the trips.

Mr. Tedesse suggested that the Commission amend the draft of the code to hiring a dispatcher under the director. He also asked if the Commission could see a copy of the airport taxi study. Mr. Kinsey stated that Mr. Munday has offered to present the study to the Commission.

Mr. Dunne commented that a visitor's first impression of St. Louis is of the airport and the cabs. Their second impression is of the Convention Center or where they are located and how they can get around the city.

Mr. Dunne made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr McNutt seconds. Motion passed.

The meeting was followed by a tour of the staging and line up areas.