

Minutes

Metropolitan Taxi Cab Commission February 7, 2003

The meeting was called to order on February 7, 2003 at 2:07 p.m. and was held at the St. Louis County Council Conference Room. Those present were: Tom McCarthy, Tom Dunne, Dave McNutt, James Harris, Solomon Tedesse, Basil Rudawsky, Lou Hamilton, Vince Bennett, Karen Wittkoetter, Shermand Palmer, Airport representative-Gerard Slay, the CORO fellows, and Speakers- Tim Rice and Mitch Riley.

Opening Remarks

Chairman McCarthy announced that Karen Wittkoetter, St. Louis County, will be receiving comments from the public. The Chair stated that the Commission needs the comments in writing. He also noted that the Commission expects changes in the Code and to continue to hear from the public.

Speakers

Mitch Riley, Clayton Coach, spoke regarding concerns for the Sedan industry. He pointed out his concerns regarding the age limit for Sedans and the 500 foot rule at hotels. The Chair noted that the Commission has received Mr. Riley's concerns in writing. Mr. Riley asked how the Commission arrived at the 4 year sedan age limit and the 500 foot hotel rule. The Chair responded that the Commission had discussed that the age of a premium sedan should be less than the age of a taxi. Mr. Harris commented that a premium sedan can earn \$400 a day- 10 trips at \$40, whereas a taxi earns \$50 a day - 10 trips at \$5. The Chair noted that the Commission needs to address the economics of each industry and that if this level of service brings in a higher income the Commission should address it separately. The Chair also requested for Mr. Riley to provide the Commission with an economic model and noted that the statutory charge of the Commission is to improve the industry.

Tim Rice, attorney at law, asked the Commission to refer to his written comments. He pointed out concerns regarding age limits, insurance, certificate of necessity, and regulation of taxi prices. Mr. Rice commented that he does not believe that age is the right approach for the Commission to be taking. He believes that quality is the characteristic the commission is trying to meet. He believes that safety and roadworthiness are the primary concern. He noted that St. Louis City has inspected for mechanical ability, aesthetics, and comfort. He noted that he attached a copy of the inspection form in his written comments. He commented that the Commission will raise industry costs and may have the unintended effect of decreasing quality. Mr. Hamilton pointed out that New York only allows new vehicles and sets a 3 year age limit and commented that the Commission raised the bar due to quality and service issues of the past, in order to protect the public. Mr. Rice argued that an inspection could provide this. The Chair stated that it is fair to say there is a useful life of a machine. Mr. Rice answered yes, but offered that the Commission look at the life of planes at Lambert Airport. Mr. Hamilton stated that airplanes are built for a greater number of hours.

Mr. Rice next commented that the State of Missouri has determined the amount of