

Minutes  
Metropolitan Taxi Cab Commission  
February 13, 2003

The meeting was called to order on February 13, 2003 at 1:15 p.m. and was held at Lambert International Airport. Those present were: Tom McCarthy, Dave McNutt, Solomon Tadesse, Basil Rudawsky, Lou Hamilton, Jim Harris, Vince Bennett, Airport representative-Gerard Slay, Airport Cab Owners-Lillian Miceli, Dr. Ioan Ziub, Seifu Gudeta, On-Call Cab Owner-Eyasu Asfaw and approximately fifteen visitors.

Mr. McCarthy opened the meeting with the request that anyone wanting to speak to please keep their comments to a reasonable amount of time, 5 minutes or so. This way we can ask questions and make comments.

Dr. Ziub made the first comments, stating that there are 288 airport licenses, 12 companies, and drivers from 18 countries. He stated that there are 2 types of businesses, the first, all of the cars are owned by the company and the other, the drivers all own their own cars. Dr. Ziub said the companies all came together in January and created the Airport Taxi Council (ATC) to have one voice and have one management system and enforce the rules and regulations. Dr. Ziub stated that the airport is overloaded with taxicabs and that they have to wait 4-6 hours between trips.

Mr. McCarthy asked if all of the companies have joined the ATC? Dr. Ziub stated that not all have joined the ATC. Some of the companies don't want to give up their names. Dr. Ziub went on to state the reasons for joining the ATC, 1) if all taxis are under the same name, its easier to enforce rules; 2) something left in the cab, easier for passengers to find their items; 3) with one logo there is one rate and causes no confusion to the passengers; and 4) it will help with enforcement, better business to deal with one set of leaders.

Mr. McCarthy, how do you propose to fix the problem of too many cabs? Dr. Ziub stated that each company must reduce a certain percentage (each company should set up their own criteria for reduction) and he feels that the commission should come up with tools to help reduce the number of cabs.

Mr. McCarthy, what if the commission set a reduced number of cabs each year and said this was what it had to be, how would you do this? Dr. Ziub said with the commission's code, with the vehicles having to be newer, not as many people would be able to renew their permits.

Mr. McCarthy, what do you think about the Airport's suggestion that it bid to a single vendor? Dr. Ziub said the current drivers would not be very happy with this plan. For several reasons, 1) the Airport plan is very tough; 2) 3 million dollar security deposit – not possible from the taxi view point; 3) One owner will put all 12 companies out of business (they have very qualified drivers at the airport now); and 4) the old plan of 129 cabs/5 companies just wasn't enough cabs – the ATC plan would recommend no more

than 200 cabs. Bringing all companies under the same logo will solve a lot of problems, enforcement, social problems, etc.

Mr. Bennett, asked if the ATC a legally formed entity? Dr. Ziub, not at this time.

Mr. McNutt, to get to 200 cabs, you are looking at a 30% decrease. Why is the police enforcement a problem? Dr. Ziub, it's not a problem. What the problem is a lot of trips are stolen from the airport cabs, by gypsy cabs and others not licensed to be at the airport. We are trying to work with the Airport Police to enforce Clayton's rules. The other problem is the cabs sitting on the Brown Level for longer than 10 minutes. I have even hired a private investigator to check into the skycaps and the gypsy cabs. Our proposal is for self-enforcement. Qualified people would be trained by the commission and have the power. Also no one can stay here 24 hours, whereas the cab drivers are always here.

Mr. McNutt, are you asking the commission to mandate that all of the airport companies be under one umbrella? Dr. Ziub, no, I am asking that all airport companies be allowed to work under one logo. Mr. McCarthy, I believe he wants us to permit it, not forbid it.

Mr. Rudawsky, do you know the percentage of owner/operators? Dr. Ziub, yes there are between 260-265 drivers who own their cabs. Mr. Rudawsky, "so when you all met on January 8, or thereafter, to discuss the way to trim down the number of cabs, what impression did you get as to the willingness to trim for the first round? Dr. Ziub, everyone said yes, we could trim. We could do this in 2, maybe 3 steps. We should limit before anyone pays their \$1000. Next, when someone is leaving, do not replace with another car, and when commission takes over, some drivers will not buy a newer car and this will leave open permits, do not replace them. In the long range, by 2005, we will be able to have 200 cabs. Mr. Rudawsky, can you live with that until 2005? Dr. Ziub, if you will talk about minimum conditions to living, no. At least 27-28% of the drivers are over 50 years old.

Mr. McCarthy, what if we said we're only going to issue 250 permits and the following June, only 200. We're going to take a look at every company out here and we're going to say you only get a certain percentage of the ones you got before, now that does cause some problems, because we have some independent drivers. Maybe we could do a lottery, I have no idea. What do you say to something like that? Dr. Ziub felt that by May 1 they could match that number (250). Mr. McCarthy said he thought they could use natural attrition on the first go round and the second go round they would be given a goal and you would have to figure out how to do it. What if we did something like that?

Mr. McCarthy asked Mr. Slay to go over the proposals and offer suggestions and observations from their point of view. Mr. Slay agreed to look the proposal over and make suggestions.