

Metropolitan Taxicab Commission

**Tuesday, July 19, 2005 @ 10:00 am
100 North Tucker Boulevard, Auditorium**

Members present: Bennett, Hamilton, Harris, McNutt, Rudawsky, Shiferaw, and Chairman McCarthy

Members absent: Morgan and Satz

MTC staff: Barker, Boutte, Cannon, Deering, Hinton, Scherer, Tully

Legal Department: McCarthy

News Media: Elisa Crouch – St. Louis Post Dispatch

The meeting was called to order at 10:20 am by Chairman McCarthy.

MINUTES

Approval was requested for the Minutes of the April 22, 2005 Metropolitan Taxicab Commission Meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Rudawsky, seconded by Mr. McNutt, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval was requested for the Minutes of the May 12, 2005 Metropolitan Taxicab Commission Meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Shiferaw, seconded by Chairman McCarthy to amend the total number of airport cabs from 180 to 184. The amended minutes were then unanimously approved.

Approval was requested for the Minutes of the June 3, 2005 Metropolitan Taxicab Commission Meeting. A motion to amend was made by Mr. McNutt, seconded by Mr. Hamilton to correct the list of appointees on the Premium Sedan subcommittee. The amendment passed unanimously. A motion to pass the minutes as amended was made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Rudawsky. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Director Tully reported Central Parking will begin the regular transfer of funds collected to the Commission's account on July 20, 2005.

The Director reported the status of On-Call taxicab inspections. He reported 666 of 724 vehicles have been inspected. He noted that two companies remained to be inspected.

At the May 12th Meeting, ABC Cab Company submitted a request to expand their fleet by 18 vehicles. Discussion ensued regarding the proper method for allowing growth in the industry. The members concluded the topic would require further research. In lieu of a decision,

Chairman McCarthy proposed a motion to allow ABC Cab Company to increase their fleet by 10% (rounded up to the nearest whole number) with the stipulation that the vehicles are placed in service within 60 days. The motion was seconded by Mr. McNutt. Mr. Rudawsky recused himself from both the discussion and the vote. Discussion ensued amongst the remaining members. In response to Mr. Harris's question, the Director stated the company currently held 32 permits. The motion passed by unanimous vote. Counsel McCarthy then clarified that the fleet would now increase by 4 vehicles, due to the practice of rounding up.

During the June 3rd meeting, a subcommittee was formed to propose changes to the Premium Sedan staging requirements. A staff recommendation was distributed to the commissioners for their review. The subcommittee will subsequently review the recommendation and propose a draft of the change.

NEW BUSINESS

The commissioners scheduled the next meeting on Friday, August 26, 2005 at 10:00 am.

Recently, legislation clarifying the roles of both MoDOT and the MTC was signed into law by Governor Blunt. General Counsel was assigned the duty of interpreting the new statute and recommending the implementation of said statute before the full commission at the next meeting.

Chairman McCarthy requested copies of the current code to be distributed electronically to the commissioners accompanied by the verbiage of the recent legislation signed into law.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director reported recent enforcement activities including an inspection of "the Wall" at the airport and a few specific locations downtown. Six citations were issued and two vehicles red-tagged as a result.

Director Tully reported the MTC's statistics for the past month. The enforcement division issued 177 Vehicle for Hire citations. Of those, 97 plead guilty and paid. There are 63 cases pending for this Thursday's Court session. The licensing division has licensed 78 new drivers & renewed 54 driver's licenses. \$675 was generated in late fees for renewed licenses.

The Director attended a meeting with the CVB and Downtown Inc. Discussion with the Transportation Committee touched on the topic of cab stands. The Committee contracted with a transportation consultant to conduct a study. Copies of the recommendations will be provided for the Commission upon completion. On the same topic, the director met with Jim Suelmann, Director of Streets.

Mr. Tully then gave a brief synopsis of the NYC TLC Report he had prepared. Each commissioner was provided with a copy of his report for review.

On July 14th, Mr. McNutt and Mr. Tully attended the Annual Board Meeting of the SLAHA.

On, July 15th, MTC appeals court was held on July 15 with the Honorable Judge Ellsworth Cundiff. Four cases were scheduled on the docket. Of those, 3 hearings were conducted, one was continued. The Director is currently awaiting the Judge's decisions.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Due to the absence of Treasurer Morgan, no report was issued.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. John Beal, of ABC Cab Company, requested an explanation for the continued denial of his company's request for additional licenses. Unsatisfied with the 10% increase, he expressed his displeasure with the decision to postpone any additional permits. Mr. Beal requested that his company receive the full 18 permits requested and that the issue is resolved in 30 days.

Mr. Benny Amabile, of Archway Cab Company, commented on the handling of license transfers from one company to another. He suggested the Commission require "a letter of release" from the previous employer before the Commission issues a new license under a new employer. He provided examples of drivers leaving with unpaid debts and returning vehicles in poor condition. Comments were received from Commissioners McNutt, Harris, Hamilton, Rudawsky, and Shiferaw. The commissioners recommended that Mr. Amabile should attempt to arrange a gentleman's agreement between cab company owners.

Mr. Sozonte Castro, representing himself, inquired about the On-Call moratorium. He expressed interest in starting a cab service designed to cater to the Spanish speaking community. Chairman McCarthy explained the issue was similar to the ABC Cab request and the Commission was currently working on developing a method for allowing growth in the On-Call taxicab class.

Ms. Kim Smith Asfaw, part owner of the Metropolitan/Midwest Cab Company, requested the assistance of the Commission with the dissolution and separation of ownership of her company. Chairman McCarthy denied her request and explained the matter must be resolved Civil Court.

Executive Session

The motion to suspend the public session was made by Mr. Hamilton and seconded by Mr. McNutt with unanimous approval. The Public Session was suspended at 11:35 am as the Commission members were sequestered for the Executive Session. During the Executive Session, legal issues and personnel matters were discussed. The executive session was adjourned at 12:05 pm.

Adjournment

With no further business, the Commission meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm.

Minutes were taken by Drew Barker and Kim Hinton.