

Metropolitan Taxicab Commission

March 6, 2007 @ 10:00 am
100 North Tucker Boulevard

Members present: Chairman Hamilton, Commissioners Bennett, McNutt, Reeves, Rudawsky, and Satz.

Members absent: Commissioner Banahan (*Two seats on the Commission remain vacant.*)

MTC staff: Deering, Barker, Hinton, Hammond, Scherer, and Tully.

Legal Department: Counselor McCarthy

Chairman Hamilton called the meeting to order at 10:12 AM. Mr. Reeves arrived at 10:20 AM.

MINUTES

Due to the short period of time between Meetings, the February Meeting Minutes were not completed.

The Commissioners scheduled the next Commission meeting for Monday, April 9, 2007 at 10:00 AM at 100 North Tucker Boulevard in the Auditorium.

OLD BUSINESS

Director Tully reported on the Sporting Venue taxi stands. As of the Meeting, the stands at the Edward Jones Dome and the Scottrade Center were in place. Photos were provided to the Commissioners. A memo to all Cab Companies will be sent explaining the locations. Included in the memo will be a map indicating each stand. Busch Stadium is expected to be completed in the next few weeks. Director Tully suggested a taxi stand could be located at the Fox Theatre.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director began by commenting on the statistics in the Commissioner's packets. He explained there wasn't much to report due to the short turn around from the last meeting.

The Director re-capped the activities of the Commission regarding the St. Louis Auto Livery and Allen Cab Company situation.

2/22 Rumors of closure prompted an investigation.

2/23 Investigation revealed the company continued to operate normally.

2/24 Notified by Post-Dispatch operations had ceased. Confirmed upon investigation of premises.

- 2/26 Director's Order issued Suspending both company's CCNs and effectively shutting down the company. Certified letters were sent to the corporate officers. Notified the media.
- 2/27 Advisory letters sent to all licensed drivers to cease operations immediately. Posted large copies of Director's order on company premises. Met with other CCN holders to inform of the situation and request assistance with displaced drivers.
- 2/28 Issued BOLO with instructions for law enforcement regarding Allen/Auto Livery Cabs operating illegally.
- 3/1 Began licensing qualified cabs and drivers who changed companies. Drivers began voluntarily surrendering vehicle permits and plates. Agents began seizing plates and permits of vehicles not reporting for voluntary surrender. Began inspecting vehicles moving to new companies. Worked with DOR so that Commission will pay the transfer fee for the displaced vehicles.
- 3/5 Purchased public advisory notices with St. Louis American and St. Louis Sentinel newspapers advising the public of properly licensed CCN holders and their dispatch numbers to serve their taxi needs. Met with representatives from SLMPD 4th District and coordinated enforcement plan.

After some discussion, the Director concluded his report.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Reeves reported on the Commission's finances. After referring to the balance sheet and profit & loss statement for February, he reported the operations had a slight loss of \$12,500. This loss was due to payment of some insurance items that should smooth out over the next few months. The numbers are tracking well. Mr. Reeves reiterated the Commission is still maintaining a strong cash position.

Mr. Reeves indicated that the final Audit report should be completed shortly and copies will be presented to the Commission at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Juan Romero and Mr. Hashi Mohamed, formerly of St. Louis Auto Livery, addressed the Commission. Mr. Romero spoke on their behalf. Due to the collapse of Allen/Auto Livery and the Commission's limits on transferring older vehicles, the drivers have been placed in particular hardship. Mr. Romero requested the Commission to grant his application for a new company so the drivers can continue to work. Chairman Hamilton explained that the Commission is not ready to make any decisions. The Commission does not have enough information to make any decisions regarding the matter. Some further discussion ensued with Mr. Romero and the Commissioners.

Ms. Patricia Lynn, representing herself, addressed the Commission. Ms. Lynn stated she made application for CCNs three years ago. Due to the moratorium, her application is still pending. She requested the Commission allow her to start a company in light of all the displaced drivers. Chairman Hamilton responded by explaining that a moratorium is in place and the Commission is currently working with a transportation specialist from University of Missouri-St. Louis to conduct a study. The study is based on studies conducted in other metropolitan areas about the way to measure how many taxicab permits are appropriate for the business and population served. Until that study is complete, the Commission is going to keep the moratorium in place.

Mr. Zerebrook Gebru and Mr. Ezezew Biru, of Metropolitan Taxicab Corporation, addressed the Commission. Mr. Gebru spoke on Mr. Biru's behalf. Mr. Gebru requested an answer regarding the request for 10% growth requested by his company. Chairman Hamilton apologized for not having an answer due to the current issues with the Allen Cab and St. Louis Auto Livery Companies' collapse. He reiterated the Commission is not going to take a position until the dust has settled.

Mr. Romero again addressed the Commission. He questioned the policy of having a moratorium while allowing existing companies to grow. He further went on the record opposing the Commission granting new licenses to existing companies. Chairman Hamilton explained that the Commission was awaiting the results of the study before taking any action. Ms. Lynn inquired about the expected completion of the study. The Director responded that the study would begin in about 30 days. The Chair notified the public that the status of the study will be posted on the website.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Chair entertained a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Reeves and seconded by Mr. Satz. The motion to adjourn was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 am.

*The meeting recording was transcribed by A. Hammond.
Minutes were interpreted from the transcript by D. Barker.*