

**Taxicab Advisory Group  
Minutes for the April 23, 2013  
140 West Flagler Street, #908**

**Members Present:**

Dr. William Samek  
Monica Beltran  
Jerry Moskowitz  
Les Eisenberg  
Diego Feliciano  
Fred Wong  
Heidi Johnson-Wright  
Anson Jean-Pierre  
Vacant

Consumer/Chairperson  
MIA Representative  
PSC Principal  
PSC Principal  
License Holder  
Seaport Representative  
MDC ADA Coordination Representative  
Driver Representative  
Chauffeur

**Members Absent:**

Rolando Aedo  
Robert Singer

Visitor Industry Representative  
Consumer Services

**Staff Present:**

Joe Mora  
Steven Bobes  
Nancy Perez  
Bridgette Newsome

Division Director, For-Hire Transp.  
Administrative Officer, For-Hire Transp.  
Senior Exec Secretary, Business Affairs  
Secretary, For-Hire Transportation

Mr. Mora conducted member roll call. Mr. Mora advised the Chair a quorum was present although members Rolando Aedo and Robert Singer would not be in attendance.

Chairman Samek commenced the TAG meeting by welcoming members & audience participants. He set the agenda and established guidelines for audience participants to speak.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Dr. Samek requested approval of the January 22, 2013 minutes. Mr. Moskowitz offered a motion to approve the January 22, 2013 TAG minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Feliciano, with unanimous member approval.

**Chauffeur of the 1st Quarter:**

Mr. Moskowitz proffered a nomination for driver 1-2, stating there was value in the return to the passenger. Ms. Beltran nominated driver 1-3 for their excellent customer service to the Consulate. Ms. Beltran's nomination was seconded by Mr. Wong, with unanimous member approval. The recipient for Chauffeur of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Award was Driver 1-3.

**Taxicab Stand Update:**

The below information serves to update the quarterly taxicab stand report and staff accomplishments from the prior January 22, 2013 quarterly TAG meeting.

**As a result of our request the following taxicab stands have been established, re-established and/or increased.**

- Established a temporary taxicab stand to the Miami Beach Parking Department for the upcoming 2013 IDEA event, in an effort to provide additional transportation service.
- Four (4) car taxicabs stand at the Mandarin Oriental 500 Brickell Key Drive. Pending taxi sign.
- Homewood Suites by Hilton Miami Airport, 3590 NW 74<sup>th</sup> Avenue, pending taxicab stands.
- A one (1) car stand was re-established on 7436 Ocean Terrace adjacent to Ocean Surf Hotel and the Days Inn.
- A two (2) car stand was re-established on Collins Ave & 2<sup>nd</sup> Street that was removed due to construction.
- A four (4) car stand was reestablished on Collins Ave & S. Pointe Drive, which was closed due to construction.
- Coordinated the re-establishment of the JW Marriott (Brickell) taxicab stand, which was closed due to construction.

For a list of all taxicab stand locations, please visit the Miami-Dade County Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources website at:

<http://www.miamidade.gov/business/library/forms/taxi-stand-locations.pdf>.

**Taxicab Growth Formula:**

Mr. Mora read various recommendations and mechanisms for developing a taxicab growth formula. Mr. Mora advised ultimately this fundamental process will set forth an established formula for future taxi medallion growth. The growth formula proposal consists of the following measures: 1) electronic data files from Passenger Service Companies (PSC); 2) percentage growth in taxi trips dispatched by the Airport and Seaport; 3) percentage growth in hotel occupancy levels within Miami-Dade County as provided by the Greater Miami & Beaches Hotel Association; and, 4) general population growth of Miami-Dade County. This formula factors in: the Annual Medallion Tax Permits to issue = .25% > trips provided + .25% > Airport and Seaport + .25% > Hotel Occupancy + .25% > in population, where the symbol ">" refers to "growth in".

Mr. Mora noted when considering the percentage of population growth, members must consider, percentage of population and passengers with physical and mobility issues and those requiring use of wheelchair accessible cabs. The department would consider adopting the approach outlined in Dr. Mundy's 2007 Taxi Ridership Study. Although the for-hire industry would like to incorporate technology for vehicles most drivers are unwilling to do so because they will be responsible for technology fees.

Mr. Eisenberg noted within the last three months his company has witnessed a growth spurt in dispatching lines. Mr. Eisenberg went on to discuss the lack of productivity from taxicabs, the

lack of service in North and South Dade; down time before drivers can obtain their chauffeur registrations, license transfer and sells for single owner drivers, fleet operations if cabs could be transferred within a specific timeframe should they be allowed to sell their license. Mr. Eisenberg suggested a formula of 43 cabs with 2% growth mechanism annually, licenses held for three years with maximum productivity of 2 shifts (night/day), after the fifth year drivers should have the ability to sell their license to whomever. The end result would be more fleet cabs, if afforded transfer ability without restrictions.

Mr. Feliciano agreed. Mr. Feliciano emphasized all new licenses must be required to operate a double shift 24 hours a day.

Chauffeur John Valdes informed members his lease rate have risen at least fourteen times over these past years yet there has not been a meter rate increase since 2007. Mr. Valdes complained about the abundance of competition within the industry and suggested no more than forty-three permits be issued annually.

Chauffeur Jackson Rip Holmes felt the industry needed more lotteries to empower drivers. Mr. Holmes believed members should reinstitute the prior formula taken out of the Code several years ago dealing with the growth population x 1000.

Chauffeur Niez Mohammed discussed rising lease prices, there unaffordability, and the industries need for future medallion growth in order to control rising lease prices. He further stated, allowing driver's freedom to distribute licenses would create a higher productivity from drivers.

Owner Operator Jorge Cortez & Frank Hernandez agreed that fleet operators would have vehicles on the road at all times. It was suggested this industry needs to get back to basics in order to run a smooth operation with a re-vamping of the system.

Discussion continued as many audience participants voiced their concern regarding the mechanisms for developing a growth formula measure, New York City's methodology, Ride Share, the merits behind the '98 Ordinance verses what did not work from passage of that legislation.

Ms. Beltran stressed this industry must address higher customer services standards and professionalism to engage clientele. The riding public today demands higher technology and service. Drivers must embrace technology as the lack of technology will impact taxi services. Ms. Beltran as noted, technology is here to stay and on demand from consumers.

Ms. Beltran reported the population in Miami-Dade County is roughly 2.6 million people. Travelers with mobility issues under the ADA laws have the right to demand the same service as other customers. Lately, their service demands have increased tremendously and the industry is just not servicing the needs of that community.

Mr. Feliciano stated there was a lack of money on the streets of Miami and adding more competition would only flood the marketplace. At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Feliciano proffered a motion to accept the percentage growth formula language from Dr. Mundy's Taxi Rider Study. Mr. Feliciano also motioned to consider adding the lost language to the formula from the Code prior to the 1998 ordinance passage. Mr. Eisenberg seconded motion although there was no vote taken.

Mr. Mora will review language change and have information for the next TAG meeting for members. Mr. Mora posed concerns that all modes may not be captured.

Ms. Wright-Johnson raised concerns on changes to the percentage in population growth. It's essential somewhere in the formula that staff should consider seeking certain taxi cabs for people with mobility issues and/or disabilities. Ms. Wright-Johnson also states to look into tourist population as well.

Mr. Mora noted the Code reads three (3%) percent of for-hire fleet vehicles must be designated wheelchair accessible (WAC). Mr. Mora informed members to keep in mind all proposed growth formula language must also have the approval of the Board of County Commissioners. Growth formula implementation deadline is January 2014.

Member discussion pursued reiterating various methods for developing a reasonable formula for growth within the taxi industry. Mr. Moskowitz requested this topic be continued at the next quarterly TAG meeting. Mr. Wong noted his concerns and agreed the matter required further discussion. Mr. Mora responded, duly noted and agreed matter would be placed on the next agenda.

Mr. Feliciano requested his prior motion be tabled in order for the department to supply further research data to present at the July quarterly TAG meeting. Mr. Feliciano's motion was seconded by Mr. Eisenberg with, unanimous approval.

To conclude, members agreed upon the propose language below as the method for establishing a growth formula mechanism. It read:

"A taxicab growth formula that consists of a 2% increase in the total number of medallions rounded up to the next whole number ending in five (5), for a period of five (5) years. Two (2) of the total number of licenses annually, would be subject to an auction".

**Taxicab Advisory Group Vacancies:**

Mr. Mora provided members with a status report on the five vacant TAG seats. The application process closed March 29, 2013 although the department only received three out of the four applications for the five separate categories. The department plans to re-advertise this vacancy.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Samek moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Moskowitz and unanimously approved by all.