

**Minutes of Special Meeting of the Taxicab Advisory
Group (TAG) and the Limousine Advisory Group (LAG)
April 12, 2010 - 10:00 AM, 140 W. Flagler Street, Room #908**

TAG Members Present:

Les Eisenberg
Diego Feliciano
William Samek, Ph.D.
Dawood Akhtar
Rolando Aedo
Monica Beltran
Khalid Salahuddin
Jerry Moskowitz
Robert Slinger

LAG Members Present

Neil Goodman
Carla Boroday
Austin Cohen
Antonio Mellan
Robert Lopez
William D. Talbert III

Staff Present:

Cathy Peel	Director, CSD
Joe Mora	Director, PTRD
David Iglesias	Legal Advisor
Nancy Perez	Senior Executive Secretary, CSD
Bridgette Newsome	Secretary, PTRD

Mr. Neil Goodman welcomed everyone to the second combined meeting of the LAG and TAG. He asked members to introduce themselves and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The minutes were moved and seconded and unanimously approved.

One Hour Pre-arrangement: Mr. Goodman said that he had invited executives of different hotels to make brief statements explaining what impact the one hour pre-arrangement made on their guests.

Ms. Peel referred to the section of the Code attached to the Agenda which defined pre-arrangement. She explained that the requirement has been in place since 2000 when the limousine ordinance was adopted and that was one of the measures which provided market differentiation between limousine service and on demand service such as taxicabs.

Hotels representatives from Loews, Mandarin, Four Seasons, Fontainebleau and Ritz Carlton each stated their concern with the one hour prearrangement and that guests expressed dissatisfaction. In answer to a question, each representative indicated how often the one hour prearrangement was an issue.

Mr. Goodman invited comments from the public. A taxicab driver alleged that the limousine companies pay the hotels and when a passenger asks for a limo or a towncar, he gets it on the spot. Mr. Goodman said that the illegal companies bribe hotels and pick up passengers, disregarding the code mandating one hour pre-arrangement.

Mr. Raymond Francois said that if the one hour pre-arrangement is changed, there would be no difference between taxi and limo. Mr. Castro of Signature Limousine said that the one hour pre-arrangement limits the passenger from exercising freedom of choice and the consumer is not protected. Mr. Rudy Gonzalez of USA Taxi said that if there is a change, the taxicabs will be sitting while the black cars will be rolling.

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Mr. Goodman pointed out some differences between a taxicab and a town car. He said that town cars had the Sunpass, credit card machines, direct billing accounts, high insurance and adaptors to accommodate laptops.

Mr. Talbert asked if the one hour pre-arrangement applied to the Airport since there was no waiting time at the Ft. Lauderdale Airport. Ms. Boroday said Broward had the pre-arrangement but there was no active enforcement. Mr. Goodman commented that surveys of major cities such as Los Angeles, San Diego, New York, New Jersey, Chicago, San Francisco and Atlanta show no pre-arrangement condition.

Dr. Samek said that limousine companies should educate their clientele about the rule.

Mr. Eisenberg stated that the one hour pre-arrangement, the luxury vehicle and the minimum charge were established to differentiate the taxi from the limo; however, with the reciprocity law as it was, if there is any change in the one hour pre-arrangement, the taxi industry would not survive. Mr. Feliciano said he did not agree with removing the one hour pre-arrangement.

Mr. Singer commented that a great city is known to have a good cab system and he felt that the one-hour pre-arrangement was not a good idea; the wait time was not long and it gives the cab driver the opportunity to make his living. He said that if there no limits, someone may take a limousine for the same price as a cab.

Mr. Goodman said that the concierges are forced to call on illegal companies who stage their cars near hotels; and the only way to remove the illegals is to remove the one hour pre-arrangement clause.

Mr. Les Eisenberg said that he suggests staff make a request of the Miami-Dade Police Department to look into the buying of doors issue.

Mr. Cohen said that when a customer requests service, he has to wait for it because it usually takes time to deliver. He said the luxury sedan business needs the one-hour pre-arrangement in order to maintain a certain level of excellence. He requested a copy of the sign-in list and the video recording of the meeting indicating that TAG members were neither aware of nor comfortable with the videotaping process. Ms. Peel informed them that it was a public meeting and as long as the videotaping was not disruptive, there was an obligation to allow it.

Reciprocity: Mr. Eisenberg said that Palm Beach County has an open entry system for luxury sedans and if a company cannot get a permit in Miami-Dade County, it can get one in Palm Beach County for \$75, and through reciprocity, the company may operate in Dade County by producing a manifest stating that a job originated in Palm Beach, while in reality, the job had originated in Miami-Dade County. He said enforcement is very difficult. Mr. Eisenberg suggested that a Code change to remove Palm Beach County from the reciprocity clause in the Code. However, that could restrict Dade and Broward Counties from picking up passengers in Palm Beach County.

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Mr. Moskowitz made a motion to strike out Palm Beach County from the reciprocity. Mr. Eisenberg seconded the motion.

Ms. Peel said that in previous discussions, one of the complaints was that the Palm Beach County Ordinance needed to be updated. She stated that they still have the open entry system but they have upgraded their vehicle standards, put in place an inspection program and if someone is getting a license, he must establish a place of business there.

Asked what would be affected by eliminating reciprocity with Palm Beach County, Ms. Peel stated that Miami-Dade County would probably be eliminated from Broward and Palm Beach Counties and this would be problematic for some consumers. She quoted the section of the Code referencing reciprocity and said other counties have similar language.

Ms. Boroday said that the issue was the one-way trip where a fare, originating from another County could pick up a passenger from one of the other two counties as long as that passenger is transported to the county of origin. She said that drivers picked up passengers in Miami-Dade County with a manifest that originated in another County.

Ms. Boroday said that the Florida Limousine Association is working to establish reciprocity throughout the State of Florida and the wording could be as follows: "Reciprocity means that you can take someone from your County of origin and take him to another County. You have the right to return to the County, pick up a passenger and take him back to your County."

Mr. Moskowitz said he would amend his motion and make recommendation to strike the one way fare (31-602(b)) from the reciprocity ordinance. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion. The Legal Advisor said that staff would look into the issue. Ms. Peel advised that the Airport and the Seaport would also have to evaluate the impact on their operations and customers.

Dr. Samek reiterated that an out-of-County limousine could not pick up someone at the Airport or Seaport unless there was a written contract for the fare, signed at least an hour in advance.

Ms. Beltran said in addition to that, the Company must have permits for the Airport and the Seaport and comply with insurance, etc.

Dr. Samek commented that if a statute was not being enforced, it would be useless to amend the existing statute. Ms. Peel said that the record confirms that the Code is being enforced. Mr. Feliciano said there is code enforcement; however, the lack of tools to combat illegal operations is the problem.

Ms. Peel asked if there was still a motion on the floor. Mr. Moskowitz said he had withdrawn his motion.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 pm.