

**Minutes of the Taxicab Advisory Group (TAG)  
August 17, 2010 - 2:30 PM  
140 W. Flagler Street, Room #908**

**Members Present:**

Les Eisenberg	PSC Principal
Diego Feliciano	License Holder
Jerry Moskowitz	PSC Principal
William Samek, Ph.D.	Consumer/Chairperson
Monica Beltran	MIA Representative
Fred Wong, Jr.	Seaport Representative
Robert Singer	Consumer
Dawood Akhtar	Chauffeur

**Members Absent:**

Ilene Hyams	Office of ADA Coordination Representative
Rolando Aedo	Visitor Industry Representative

**Staff Present:**

Joe Mora	Director, PTRD
Steven Bobes	AO3, PTRD
Ivan Cotayo	Taxi Stand Coordinator
Bridgette Newsome	Secretary, PTRD

Dr. Samek called the meeting to order and requested Mr. Mora present the special presentations to several municipalities for their outstanding service in the enhancement of taxi stands within their municipalities. Recognition certificates were presented to Messrs. Schroder, Adam, Mando and Hayes from the City of Miami and Miami Beach respectively. Mr. Mora offered congratulatory comments and praise for their outstanding contributions in aiding County Staff in establishing taxicab stands within their municipalities. Mr. Moskowitz also praised them on behalf of all Passenger Service Companies for their continued support and emphasized the vital need for these taxi stands throughout Miami-Dade County.

Dr. Samek reviewed the April 27, 2010 minutes and requested a motion be made to accept them. Mr. Moskowitz offered the motion to accept the April 27<sup>th</sup> minutes and seconded by Mr. Feliciano, item unanimously passed.

**TAG Membership Sub-Committee:**

Mr. Mora discussed the two vacant TAG positions and the need to establish a selection committee to review applications. These vacancies are: 1) a Taxi Chauffeur with No Interest in a Medallion and 2) Taxi Passenger Service Company Principal. Mr. Mora further advised the department received six applications from chauffeurs with no interest in a medallion and two applications from taxi PSC principals. It was agreed that a Selection Sub-Committee would be appointed and consist of five members. The Committee selected the following members to serve on this committee. They were: Les Eisenberg, Dawood Akhtar, Robert Singer, Ms. Beltran and Chairperson Dr. Samek. Dr. Samek suggested these members meet after the meeting to select a date for the Selection Committee meeting.

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**Chauffeur of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (2010):**

Mr. Moskowitz moved to nominate chauffeur 2-1, seconded by Mr. Feliciano. Ms. Beltran moved to nominate chauffeur 2-5. Following a discussion, Mr. Moskowitz retracted his nomination and offered a new motion to nominate two chauffeurs: Chauffeur 2-5 Driver (A) and Driver 2-5 (B). Driver A was selected Chauffeur of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter. Driver B was selected as runner-up and awarded an additional \$100.00. This motion, seconded by Mr. Feliciano, was unanimously passed. Yellow Cab and Coral Cab agreed to contribute the additional funds for the runner-up awarded recipient. Mr. Mora thanked them for their generous contribution.

**Taxi Stands Update:**

Mr. Mora provided the taxicab stand report update. He read into record newly created stands: Calder Race Course, Earlington Heights Metrorail Station, NW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue; 2500 Brickell Avenue; the 300 block of Alton Road, the Grand Beach Hotel on Collins Avenue; the 1600 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, and 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Mora reminded members taxicab stand reports were posted and updated on the department's website. Mr. Cotayo advised he forwards a copy of the report and associated information on a monthly basis to all Passenger Service Companies (PSC) and interested parties.

Mr. Eisenberg commended staff's effort for a remarkable job in the creation of these stands. He expressed concern for driver utilization, frequency of use, assesses productivity and questioned what, if anything could be done to enhance use. Mr. Cotayo provided a detailed response. Mr. Eisenberg informed members he created a website called "miataxi.com". Mr. Eisenberg suggested the Committee come up with an idea or program to give drivers an incentive to utilize taxicab stands. Mr. Feliciano provided a historical overview of the history of taxicab stands and expressed his pleasure with the department's efforts in reclaiming these stands throughout the community. He emphasized, educating drivers was the key for retaining benefits that taxicab stands provide and avoid the practice of BOD. Mr. Mora echoed the importance of these stands throughout the County. He states, as a frequent guest on private property, it is imperative that all drivers understand and are made aware that taxicab stands are a benefit to drivers and as such, should not be abused. Mr. Feliciano questioned: whether taxicab stand etiquette training is provided in the training class. Mr. Mora responded to the affirmative, as well as, the department's posting of these policies and procedures.

Mr. Mora advised PTRD frequently conducts onsite visits to ascertain stand placement, check usage and determine whether stand is active or inactive. Mr. Cotayo reported 90% of the stands throughout the County were utilized and the few that are not were located in the Homestead and Florida City areas.

Mr. Feliciano reminded all the major reason for the inception of taxicab stands was to spread cabs throughout the County thereby providing faster service to the community and to lessen BOD activities. He advised complaints have arisen from several hotel managers concerning the behavior of taxi drivers who utilize stands and suggested PSC's remind drivers on the mode of conduct at taxicab stands.

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Audience participant Mr. Terry Eisenberg stated taxicab stands were effective only upon usage, similar to radio cabs. A vital component is the dissemination of information possibly utilizing photos until such a time as GPS modules are installed. Educating drivers in the knowledge of stand locations is paramount and PSC companies should take responsibility in posting and disseminating the updated information.

Mr. Mora distributed the 2010 Handbooks produced by the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau. Mr. Mora stated the handbooks have helpful information for drivers, to include taxi stand locations, hotels, restaurants and so forth. Mr. Mora said ownership of this information is ultimately the responsibility of the driver, as information is well disseminated.

**Buying of Doors (BOD):**

Audience participant Tony Machado spoke regarding BOD and other taxi issues surrounding the Airport.

Mr. Mora reported on a request to approach various police departments for assistance and intervention in BOD operations. Staff reported, in collaboration with the Special Investigative Unit of the Miami Beach Police Department, the Blue Moon Hotel together with several drivers was cited and their CR's were suspended for six months.

Ms. Beltran reported, at the Airport, a joint operation with the Fed's and Miami-Dade Police Department will be conducted to address, among other things, solicitation.

**Legislative Updates:**

Mr. Feliciano provided information concerning an item sponsored by Commissioner Barriero which could ultimately stop the taxicab industry from providing on demand service. It has been scheduled for placement on the November 2 ballot and should be monitored. If adopted the new law would provide free taxicab service to low income seniors citizens (55 years and older). If voters approve, program funding would come from the Half Penny Surtax.

**Commissioner Martinez' Proposed Ordinance:**

Mr. Mora advised the public hearing for Commissioner Martinez's Ordinance and the SunPass Ordinance is scheduled for September 14, 2010. If these items pass Committee level they would be scheduled for second reading on October 5, 2010. Mr. Mora explained the high points of the proposed Martinez Ordinance – 4 medallions to chauffeurs with at least 20 years of continuous service - \$5,000 each; 6 FHL licenses through an open auction, two (2) shall be wheelchair accessible – minimum bid \$100,000. The minimum bid for the four (4) shall be \$140,000. All licenses must have technology (2-way radio, electronic dispatch, security camera and a credit card processing system). Owner drivers have the ability to incorporate and equip vehicles with technology, except security cameras. The ordinance provides a number of fee reductions for 12 months and would then revert to their original amount. Mr. Eisenberg noted with the estimated return from the Auction, the department should consider dropping the \$35.00 inspection fee.

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Mr. Eisenberg proposed the following question regarding the owner driver clause. If a single owner driver died and he passed his license onto his child, and if the child does not incorporate, should he (the child) be required to have technology? Mr. Moskowitz replied he understood it to mean that if the person obtains the permit as an inheritance and does not want to incorporate, they are obligated to have technology in the cab.

Mr. Eisenberg also questioned if a person wins a cab in the auction and he decided to sell it within a 5-year period, could he do that. Mr. Mora answered in the affirmative. Mr. Moskowitz asked if he leaves his cabs for his children would that be considered a gift or an inheritance. There appeared to be some misunderstanding between a gift and an inheritance Mr. Mora replied, such questions and concerns could be expressed at the public hearing. Mr. Mora advised that owner drivers may transfer to a corporation; however, such drivers must have the new technology.

Regarding the SunPass Ordinance, Mr. Mora explained the ordinance requires drivers to have a SunPass for utilization of SunPass Lanes. Mr. Mora advised Open Road Tolling has been implemented on several of MDX Expressways 878, 874, and 924 at a cost of \$1.25, and is expected to eventually replace all old toll booths.

**Underserved:**

Mr. Ahktar informed the Group that drivers from the North and South Dade underserved areas are experiencing extreme hardships because of their inability to find enough work in the areas and they cannot find second drivers to work shifts because of the restrictions imposed on them. There are 49 drivers who are affected by the restrictions. The main restriction is, if a driver takes a passenger out of the area, he cannot pick up another passenger. He has to return to his assigned area. The drivers are requesting they be allowed to drive countywide. Group members recalled that at a previous meeting it was voted that if a driver wanted to leave the underserved area, he could sell his license and purchase another license. The driver, who purchased the license, would have to be an underserved driver forever.

Ms. Beltran offered her assistance and suggested staff schedule a special meeting with the UA drivers to discuss driver issues, formulate an action plan, or find a solution to present to the Group.

Mr. Feliciano suggested drivers speak to their respective Commissioners regarding development of an awareness campaign of the dangers of taking illegal cabs for Homestead residents. He recommended this issue be placed on the next TAG meeting agenda.

Mr. Moskowitz moved that a sub-committee of TAG and the UA drivers be formed to examine the motion that was passed previously and make recommendations for presentation to the Commissioners. This was seconded by Ms. Beltran with no opposition.

There being no further discussion the meeting was adjourned.