

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
Taxicab Advisory Committee Meeting

September 20, 2017

10:00 a.m.

James R. Mills Building
Board Meeting Room, 10th Floor
1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101

1. Roll Call

Lorie Zapf, Chair of the Committee, called the Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Taxicab Advisory Committee member attendance is attached.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 14, 2017

Mr. Hueso moved for approval of the minutes of the June 14, 2017, Taxicab Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Palmeri seconded the motion, and the vote was 13 to 0 in favor with Mr Chasteen, Ms. Mercer and Mr. Weldegeorgis absent.

3. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Victor Lopez driver for Asena Cab – Mr. Lopez is requesting the committee members to install a new cab stand on the side where the buses stop at the El Chaparral border exit. Mr. Mr. Lopez states the cabs are across the street and at least 50 yards away from the customers and he is concerned with the safety of the public as the patrons are being forced to cross a very dangerous street to get to the cabs. The patrons need to scream “taxi” in order to get the attention of a cab driver. Mr. Lopez also states that there are a lot of Uber drivers that make their own “Stop” signs and they place them on the middle of the road. Mr. Lopez states a new cab stand will be helpful to keep the public safe and will also help the taxicab industry in obtaining more customers.

Jason M-B Wells representing San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce – Mr. Wells stated his comment is also regarding the border exit which is the new crossing at the San Ysidro border (Virginia Avenue). Mr. Wells states the public is not able to see the taxicabs because the buses are blocking to the view and he recommends for MTS staff to revisit this location and hopefully work out something for all vehicles to be visible. Mr. Wells informed staff there are currently 8 pedestrian lanes and that will increase to 20 pedestrian lanes by the end of this year. Mr. Wells also recommends for MTS to bring down the LSV program to San Ysidro, which we see is a viable option.

MTS Staff will take this situation into consideration and look into further options.

Alyssa Turowski representing Westin San Diego, Marriot Int’l – Ms. Turowski states she understands the importance of having taxicabs to serve the public and informs the members of some continuing customer service challenges her customers have encountered with taxicab drivers. Ms. Turowski states she has 3 documented incidents her staff and customers have had with drivers; 2 of these incidents involve airplane pilots. These incidents have involved unlawful restraint of the pilots as well as drivers holding luggage

hostage in their vehicles because taxicab drivers are not being paid the rate the driver is requesting; the drivers attempted to charge the pilots between \$20.00 to \$28.00 from the airport to the San Diego Westing. Ms. Turowski also states the drives have engaged in altercations with her front desk staff as well as with her managers on duty. These altercations have included verbal abuse and profanity in front of hotel guest and pilots. As the general manager of the hotel, Ms. Turowski is requesting for the Airport to ensure that the taxicab driver are still following the same rate standards all day. Ms. Turowski states the problems are usually happening after 11:00 p.m.

4. Management and Committee Member Communications

MTS Approved Driver Training Course Program Content Update – Mr. Fewell presented a verbal report regarding the Driver Training Course content. The program content would be composed of 2 sections (Component 1: Best Practices and Component 2: Driver Safety). These 2 components would be completed in a one 1 day (8 hour) session and section 3 (Component 3: Passenger Service and Safety Training). Component 3 is an addition to the current training and drivers will have the option to opt-out of it if they wish. Each component will include lecture, discussion and role-play elements as well as a written exam.

Each component is outlined as follows:

Component 1: Best Practices

Suggestions & Themes to improve vitality of Taxi industry

Component 2: Driver Safety

Steps drivers can take to improve their safety on a daily basis

Component 3: Passenger Service and Safety Training

Ensures that community transportation drivers have current expertise in passenger assistance techniques and sensitivity skills appropriate for serving persons with disabilities.

The members of the committee asked questions regarding fine tuning the program and some had concerns regarding the length of the sessions. Mr. Fewell addressed the committee and informed the members that since this is an in-house training MTS is able to make changes to the program in an as needed basis.

5. Results of WORM Proposed Revisions to MTS Ordinance 11

Public Comment

Adrian Kwiatkowski – President and CEO of Transportation Alliance Group recommends to the committee members to make an effort to modernize and restructure the taxicab industry as an effort to better compete with Uber and Lyft. Mr. Kwiatkowski states the reason why Uber and Lyft are successful is because they make their service user friendly to the consumers and do not place a burden on drivers such painting or marking their vehicles. Uber and Lyft also does not have heavy government regulations like the taxicab industry does and the consumer has accepted that. Mr. Kwiatkowski encourages the committee members to modernize the industry before it becomes obsolete.

Mr. Fewell presented to the members the results of the WORM Proposed Revision to MTS Ordinance 11 which were discussed in detail on September 12, 2017. The items pertaining to Ordinance 11 were as follows:

- Vehicle Color Scheme/Paint (Make it Optional/Amend Current Requirements).
- Vehicle Markings (Possible Exterior/Interior Advertising).
- Rates of Fares/Soft Meters (Eliminate Maximum Rate of Fare, Adjust fares based on Market Demand).
- Mobile Radios/FCC Licenses (Make it Optional/Amend Current Requirements).
- Listing in telephone directories (Make it Optional/Eliminate current Requirements).
- Top lights/Code Blue lights (Make it Optional).
- Credit Card payment acceptance methods (Allow Drivers to use Personal Credit Card acceptance methods, i.e, Square,).
- Driver Licensing Requirements (Eliminate Current Requirement on Driving Agreement / 4 Maximum).

After discussion with the committee members Mr. Fewell requested to direct staff to have another WORM Subcommittee meeting and revisit the proposed ordinance changes to be then sent to the MTS Board of Directors for approval.

Action Taken

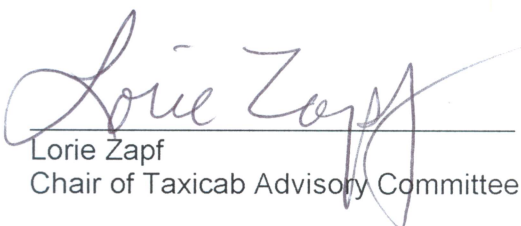
Mr. Palmeri moved take the input discussed today and have it discussed at the WORM Subcommittee level; the WORM subcommittee will direct legal staff to revise Ordinance 11 and forward to MTS Board of Directors for approval. Mr. Afifi seconded the motion, and the vote was 12 to 1 in favor with Mr. Tasem opposing.

6. Next Meeting – December 14, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

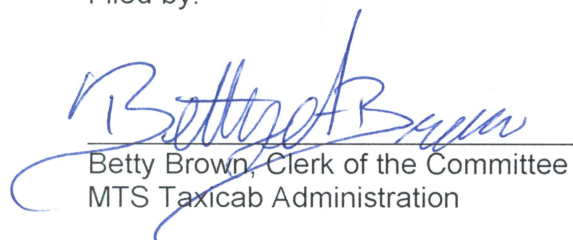
7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Accepted:


Lorie Zapf
Chair of Taxicab Advisory Committee

Filed by:


Betty Brown, Clerk of the Committee
MTS Taxicab Administration

Attachment: Roll Call Sheet