

**ANCHORAGE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**September 25, 2017**

Called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present were Mr. Eugene Harnett, Ms. Lucy Odden, Mr. Kevin McGee, Erich Reed and Mr. Carl Berger. Transportation Inspector Eric Musser was present as Secretary to the Commission.

**Approval of Minutes.** Moved by Mr. Berger and Seconded by Ms. Odden to approve minutes of August 28, 2017. Approved unanimously.

Secretary Musser requested the Commission amend the agenda for the purposes of adding a permit action to approve the sale of ½ interest in a permit. Approved without objection.

**PERMIT ACTIONS**

- |                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Permit 051 – Sale of 1/2 Permit | From: Danielle Otero      |
|                                    | To: Edmi & Gumesindo Pena |

**Moved by Mr. Berger, seconded by Mr. Reed – Approved unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

At the direction of the chair, the Commission moved down the agenda to public comments to hear additional testimony that was previously closed regarding issuance of new taxicab permits was reopened to hear concerns of the industry.

**NOTE: MOST SPEAKERS DID NOT SIGN IN**

Mr. Bruce Orton testified that he has been involved in the taxi business here since 1975. He stated that with Uber and Lyft operating now there are liquor deliveries being made, that Uber has used a software application called Graybar to stymie investigations into their activity and that the city needed to take a stronger role in demanding they adhere to the same regulations as the taxi operators.

Jackie Ransom testified and stated she would like the ATC to communicate to the mayor and assembly and advise of the negative impact the additional permits are having. She stated the cabs aren't full and there are not enough drivers for the existing cabs.

Suzie Smith, Owner of Taylor Taxi spoke and stated that she has collected some data from Checker Cab and that between May and August, call volume was down by over 6,000 calls and that there were not enough drivers to work nights. She stated that she understood there was an attempt to get local control back from the legislature but it would take time and something needed to be done before that. She

stated that she requested information from Yellow Cab Dispatch and they declined to provide it.

Slimane Bennaroudj, owner of Taxicab Permit 165, spoke and requested the commission intervene and stop issuing new taxicab permits since Uber came to town and has over 300 drivers, there is no more business.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Inaudible) testified and stated that he had been driving a long time and he had not seen such a decline in taxi business.

Rifiqat Chaudhry, owner of Permit 169 testified and stated there was not any business and they are unable to pay dispatch fees. Stated the Uber and Lyft are taking all of their business. No new permits should be issued. He further remarked that nobody sees what the taxi drivers see and they see no business.

James Morgan, chauffeur 3437 spoke and stated that we are in a recession and people are leaving Alaska. He stated that

Mike Pocceo spoke and stated he has been in the cab business since 1994 and has seen trends come and trends go. He testified that before the assembly issues these permits, show us the information, show us they are needed. He stated he could be anywhere in this town in 10 to 15 minutes and that he wasn't here to just voice his opinion. He was here to state that when he has 40 cars sitting in the garage with no drivers, what is he supposed to do. Up to now Anchorage has worked together and that when the last permits went to auction, two didn't sell.

John Reyes testified he is a new driver and drive for Taylor Taxi. We have over 40 cars sitting in the yard, all doing nothing. I used to make \$125 a night. I'm a driver, okay. So we could make money. Now yall need to help us. I'm just a driver. I can't even pay my rent now.

\_\_\_\_\_ Nunez. I am a part-time driver. Uber and Lyft came to town and took a lot of business. They've made it difficult for me to make any money.

\_\_\_\_\_ inaudible. Ask mayor and assembly to intervene and not let the present situation deteriorate.

Rafael Barboza, longtime owner and operator, submitted written testimony and further stated that Alaska Yellow Dispatch may raise their stand rent again. He offered to answer any question ATC members may have and stated his earnings have gone way down.

Autumn Hayes, nighttime taxicab driver, stated she works nights and has driven since 2003. She is now waiting between 30 and 90 minutes for a trip. Ms. Hayes submitted written testimony.

Kevin Ruston, driver spoke and stated it would be a crime to issue additional permits and urged the commission to not be a part of it.

\_\_\_\_\_ inaudible, stated he was a permit owner and would give his permit back to the city. I have a mortgage to pay off, bills to pay and now I am not able to pay them. There are shuttles taking people everywhere from the hotels to downtown and everywhere else. We have to follow the rules. Everyone should.

Mike Thompson, owner of Checker Cab Dispatch, spoke and stated that there were problems with access to JBER and could the commission help. He further stated he operates several permits and has cars sitting with no drivers. He remarked that all the Uber money is going out of state and that they pay nothing to support business or the local economy while the loss of taxi revenue is a loss for every aspect of the local business community.

\_\_\_\_\_ Hurt. We are in a critical situation. What is happening in New York is what is going to happen in Anchorage. ATC needs to step up and help those that can't help themselves. Many people don't have a credit card. There are many times that taxi drivers only make \$30 or \$40 a night. Who is going to do that? Everyone should resign to make a statement. Even if you won't you should stand up and do the right thing instead of what you are doing. Taxi drivers are good people that care about this community.

George Rendon spoke and stated he has been a taxi business operator for over 30 years. He submitted written testimony and then stated he made an offer to the municipality and it didn't get any result.

\_\_\_\_\_ Assayed. Spoke and said he only took \$30 home today and couldn't live.

\_\_\_\_\_ Barboza, daughter of Rafael, spoke and stated they really are hurting. That what the city is doing is hurting their family and many others.

\_\_\_\_\_ inaudible. Stated he is a new driver and that after driving a 12 hour shift what he makes isn't penciling out and making it worthwhile.

Balvinder Gautam, permit owner and operator, spoke and stated he agreed with all his colleagues and requested Title 11 be changed so he could use his car, which is a nice car, to drive for Uber in addition to using it as a cab.

\_\_\_\_\_, taxicab driver since 1992. Stated all taxi operators are dealing with a double standard right now and that either the city or the state had to step up and resolve the double standard. He remarked everyone is in a gloom and doom situation right now.

Commissioner Harnett thanked everyone for coming and felt that he did want to resign because there is nothing the commission can do as the ordinance made it clear on the permits. He stated he would like to make a suggestion that the taxi operators invite the media to the next meeting to try and get their story out.

Commissioner Odden remarked that she was familiar with the media and that perhaps they could do a story.

Commissioner Berger remarked that he was a new member but that he had previously served on a commission in Bethel and as a result he has heard a lot of things he hadn't heard previously and wanted to know what issuing this many permits is doing to the viability of the industry.

Chair McGee thanked everyone and was struck by the comment that no one is looking out for the needs of the poor and felt ATC needed to find a path and see what can be done.

Commissioner Reed stated he was new on the ATC and appreciated all the comments. He stated this meeting had the best attendance since he joined the commission and appreciated the volume of input.

Commissioner Odden thanked everyone for their comments.

Commissioner Berger suggested folks reach out to their legislators with an upcoming special session and felt they should get the word out.

Motion was made by Commissioner Berger and seconded by Commissioner Odden to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Commissioner Odden and seconded by Mr. Berger to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric L. Musser  
Secretary