

Agenda Item: 2

Staff Report and Commissioner Announcements [INFORMATION]



TO: Honorable Commissioners
FROM: Jordanna Thigpen
RE: Staff Report 05.13.08
Date: May 7, 2008

Administration/Policy

- **Meter Increase to Assist Drivers:** I have spoken with the Controller's Office and attempted to get the deadline for the meter and gate cap report moved forward from August 1 in an effort to assist drivers with the dramatic rise in the price of gasoline. This report will form the basis of any meter (including flag drop) or gate increase that is recommended by the Controller's Office, and adopted by the Board of Supervisors or SFMTA. I am hopeful that this report could be completed by June 15, 2008 and I will assist the Controller with information to complete the report as necessary.
- **Clean Air Taxi Program:** On May 1 sample plans went out, including a memorandum and a template for color schemes to use. Some color schemes have already begun to comply. An outline of administration of the program and proposed rules will be presented at May 27 hearing.
- **Merger:** The Board of Supervisors' Government Audit and Oversight Committee continued the item to a special hearing on May 12, due to some longer hearings which preceded the merger legislation on the May 5 agenda. At the May 6 SFMTA Board meeting, I appeared along with staff from the Mayor's Office and SFMTA staff to give an update on the merger process and provide a brief overview of the taxi industry.
- **Budget:** I prepared two separate budgets for FY 2009 and submitted them to the Mayor's Office, one assuming the merger is approved and one assuming it does not.
- **Annual Inspections:** A meeting had on April 23 with GTU, SFPD, and Weights and Measures personnel as well as rep from Veolia. Representatives from the following companies attended: National, United, Big Dog, Black & White Checker, Bay Cab, Delta, Metro, SF Taxi, Arrow, Six2Six, DeSoto, Green, and Royal. There were no other companies represented. Inspections begin in May 2008. Several companies have outstanding balances and they will not be inspected until they satisfy their outstanding balances.
- **Outreach:** Tamara Odisho, Outreach Coordinator, met with the San Francisco Convention and Visitors' Bureau. I held Open Forum with Sgt. Reynolds on Friday Apr 25 and another forum will occur this Friday at 2 PM.
- **Commendation Program for SFPD officers:** I am still in the process of developing this and will have it during staff report on May 27.
- **March 2007 Grant Funding:** Yellow Cab was able to take 3 grants of \$4,000 each, but we now have 12 grants at \$4,000 remaining.
- **June 2007 Grant Funding:** The Commission and the Department of the Environment are still waiting for the June 2007 grant agreement to be signed. There is funding for 51 hybrids in that particular grant.

- **Annual Filings (MPC §§ 1095, 1147.4):** 76 have not filed, but one was granted a 30-day extension. Additionally, there are 79 incomplete 1095 filings. Staff has contacted all 79 incomplete filers in an attempt to obtain a complete filing. All non-filers appear on the notice calendar for May 13, 2008 for revocation. All incomplete filers have been provided an additional two weeks to comply with the filing requirement, but any who still have not completed the forms will appear on the calendar for May 27, 2008. There are seven companies that did not file worker's compensation statements as required by MPC § 1147.4: ABC, Arrow, Bay Cab, Central, Lucky, Metro, and Six2Six.
- **A-cards:** The deadline was April 30. By May 8, 2008, the Treasurer's Office will provide the Taxi Commission with the names of those with expired A-cards. Now, the process must begin all over again for those individuals with expired A-cards, who must attend taxi school. When we know the individuals with expired A-cards, DAJA will be informed.
- Over the past few weeks, I have met with two sets of representatives with technology to improve the process for consumers to obtain taxis in San Francisco.

Enforcement/Regulation

- **Illegal limousine enforcement:**
 - I have met with representatives of the Fire Department, SFMTA and SFPD in an effort to address service-related issues at AT&T Park. I reallocated \$25,000 in savings from our San Francisco Police Department Work Order to the overtime enforcement fund in order to properly fund enforcement during night games for the San Francisco Giants. The new plan to ensure proper service at AT&T Park will be announced on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 and is not expected involve any changes to the traffic flow in the area.
 - The Taxi Commission continues to fund enforcement teams on a weekly basis to combat illegal limousines and conduct general street enforcement on out of town taxicabs.
 - Supervisor Sandoval will be conducting a special hearing at the Board of Supervisors' City Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee on May 15, 2008 on the issue of illegal limousines. I will present a report on the Commission's activities to date and present a copy of the Commission's most recent resolution which addresses the need for more resources at the state level to help with this problem.
 - Sgt. Reynolds and myself met with representatives of the California Public Utilities Commission and we are happy to report they are increasing their enforcement staff. We have discussed performing the second Operation Bandit and have selected a date for that operation.
- **Company charging drivers for credit cards:** Pursuant to the Commission's directive, I spoke with this company. This company does not charge gas and gates drivers for credit cards. However, it was charging credit card processing fees for affiliates. The reason for this is that brokers are "using these companies as credit card processing warehouses."
- **Administrative hearings:** A hearing on a summary suspension for driver Thomas Poole was had on May 2. A hearing for driver Yakub Mahmudoglu will be held on May 16.
- **Board of Appeals:** I will defend the Commission's position on four separate cases at the Board of Appeals on May 7, 2008 at 5 PM. These include: (1) Peter Witt's rehearing request on the addition of 69 medallions; (2)
- **Sunshine Task Force:** President Gillespie and I will appear on May 27, 2008 to defend the Commission's position in Peter Witt v. Taxi Commission, a Sunshine Task Force complaint.
- **Superior Court:** I will be drafting a request to Presiding Judge Ballati of the San Francisco Superior Court to hold a special seminar for judges and members of the bar (including the District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office) in the criminal division regarding the PUC Code, Article 16, and other developments in misdemeanor law with regards to motor vehicles in San Francisco.
- **Current Gate Charges:** The Commission had requested on April 22, 2008 that staff determine the gate charges that all companies are charging by asking all companies to fax their gate charges to our office. Many companies did not comply with this request and were fined \$25 for violating Rule 5.A.1.

Faxes are still arriving as this report is being drafted and thus a report on whether or not all companies are charging lawful gates will be provided during the verbal staff report on May 13, 2008.

- All Taxi Commission staff is working towards preparing a *2008: State of the SF Taxi Industry* report to be presented May 27, 2008 describing regulatory compliance, in an effort to provide as much information as possible on each color scheme. This will include the results of the 2008 Color Scheme Audit.



SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT *TAXICAB DETAIL*

April 21, 2008

Yellow Cab Company
1200 Mississippi Street
San Francisco, CA 94124

Dear Mr. Richard Wiener,

I would like to commend one of your drivers, Mr. Andrew Lee, owner of Medallion #9097. In the early morning hours of April 13, 2008, Mr. Lee responded to Market and 4th Streets to assist the SFPD with a gentleman whose battery on his wheelchair had died. All attempts to re-start his wheelchair failed and the prognosis of the situation was looking gloom. Not only was it extremely cold outside, but the stranded individual had no money to pay for his transportation. Lt. Mannix offered to give Mr. Lee \$5 from her own money. Mr. Lee politely refused any money and gladly transported the gentleman and his wheelchair.

Such kindness and graciousness is not only appreciated by the San Francisco Police Department Taxi Detail, but by all citizens of the City.

Sincerely,

Officer Cynthia Kulstad #321
San Francisco Police Department
Taxi Enforcement Unit

cc: Taxi Commission
Mr. Andrew Lee

Serving San Francisco



Since 1928

2230 JERROLD AVENUE - SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94124 - PHONE 282-1224 FAX 282-1706

April 21, 2008

This is to take note of praise for driver Johnny Huynh that was expressed at the April 9, 2008 meeting of the Paratransit Coordinating Council.

Council member Griff Humphries, who is a wheelchair user, said that he had received notably excellent service from Mr. Huynh as the driver of Luxor ramp cab #9029.

Congratulations to Johnny Huynh for doing a top job for customers, and for projecting a strongly positive image of Luxor Cab.

Sincerely,

Charles Rathbone
Operations Department

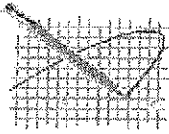
RECEIVED

APR 23 2008

SAN FRANCISCO
TAXICAB COMMISSION

Cc: Johnny Huynh; SF Taxicab Commission; Paratransit Coordinating Council





SFTaxi
Commission/ADMSVC/SFGO
V

05/06/2008 12:48 PM

To ,

cc

bcc

Subject Fw: SF Taxis

San Francisco Taxi Commission
25 Van Ness Avenue, Room 420
San Francisco, Ca. 94102

415-503-2180
415-503-2186 Fax

-----Forwarded by SFTaxi Commission/ADMSVC/SFGOV on 05/06/2008 12:49PM -----

To: <sftaxi.commission@sfgov.org>
From
Date: 04/29/2008 03:13PM
Subject: SF Taxis

Dear Ms. Thigpen,

I understand that you are the person to write to about the poor taxi service in SF. We moved to North Beach over 5 years ago. We thought it would always be easy to catch a cab on Columbus. It's such a main street. Alas, that is not true. There are so few cabs in the City, in the past few years I have started driving more. I hate to do it because of the environment and parking problems, but the cab service in this town is so unreliable, I have no choice. I don't understand why we have this problem. Even when you are lucky enough to get a cab, frequently they are dirty, and the drivers drive like maniacs. It's just a bad situation in all respects. A city of San Francisco's stature should have clean, reliable taxi service. Other big cities do. Why not us?

Sincerely yours,
Susan Halling

Bring a friend! Enjoy a Fun Concert of Light Classical Music by Dawn Harms

While helping to promote accessible transportation for persons with disabilities around the world!

**Saturday, May 17,
7:30 p.m. in San
Francisco**



Accessible facilities donated by Temple United Methodist Church, 1111 Junipero Serra Blvd. near Holloway and SF State. Lots of parking on hand at the main entrance on Beverly Street.

Dawn Harms is a member of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and also performs as co-concertmaster with the Oakland East Bay Symphony. Learn more at www.dawnharms.com. Dawn will be accompanied by Dennis Johnson, an outstanding pianist who is also contributing his talents pro bono to create “mobility for all.” A reception will follow the concert.



Access Exchange International has had startling success sharing accessible transportation knowledge and skills here in the Bay Area with developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Learn more at www.globalride-sf.org. or call AEI at (415) 661-6355. RSVP with a check to “Access Exchange International” at 112 San Pablo Ave., San Francisco, CA 94127, or you may pay at the door. A tax-deductible donation of \$15-\$50 per person is suggested.