

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SEPTEMBER 07,2004

LICENSING BY-LAW **TAXI-CAB SENSITIVITY TRAINING**

Recommendation

The City Clerk in consultation with the Manager of Special Projects, Licensing and Permits recommends;

That staff be directed to continue with the requirement that all taxi drivers take the orientation and sensitivity training program.

Purpose

To provide that all taxi drivers be required to attend the orientation and sensitivity training being offered by the City of Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

In December 2002, Council passed staffs recommendation to implement a taxi driver sensitivity training program. At the time of Council's approval similar training for owners and drivers of taxi cabs was and continues to take place in the City of Toronto, Mississauga and Oakville. A comprehensive training course was developed in consultation with the City of Mississauga tailored to meet the needs of taxi drivers operating in the City of Vaughan.

The course covers topics such as dealing with disabilities, expectations of a taxi driver and communication. The course is two-days in duration. Day one consists of an orientation session and day two is dedicated to sensitivity training. The cost of the course is paid for by the drivers.

On July 29,2004 representatives of the taxi industry met with Mayor Michael Di Biase and staff to discuss various issues one of which dealt with the requirement to take the two day orientation/sensitivity training. Representatives argued that long standing owners and drivers should be exempted from the training citing that their long years of working in the industry has provided sufficient training.

Staff has considered this argument and is of the view that notwithstanding the long years of dedicated service to the industry there is merit in having all owners and drivers attend training. The course being provided deals with customer service and how good customer relations are an important part of their business. It offers tips to drivers on how to provide good customer service and how to deal with difficult customers and complaints. It offers information on how to communicate effectively with customers and tips for the proper use of the two-way radios found in all taxi cabs. In addition, it deals with customer and driver safety, driver appearance, vehicle care and tourism in the City of Vaughan, as well as different forms of legislation that regulates the taxi industry at the Municipal, Provincial and Federal levels.

Sensitivity training deals with a wide variety of issues related to the needs of disabled persons who require the service of taxi cabs. This includes not only disabled persons involving mobility that may require the use of a wheelchair but also psychological disabilities, vision or learning impairment etc. There is a reasonable expectation that drivers operating any vehicle for hire will at various times be expected to service the needs of the disabled populace and therefore specific training would be an asset.

While the industry may feel that the program is without warrant it must be weighted against the need to provide the public safe transportation and a highly trained, knowledgeable taxi driver.

To date orientation and sensitivity training has been provided to approximately 25 students, both existing drivers and new applicants. The course has been well received. Evaluation forms completed by class participants produced the following comments:

- "I found that this course will help taxi drivers a lot to do this job in appropriate way and stress free, also to make good money by following right procedures."
- " we feel comfortable in this training and learn very much about how to get more money in this business and instructor Judy was very helping person."
- " this course is going to prove very valuable in taxi business also very useful in every day life and I recommend that it should be taught to taxi drivers every 4 years so it becomes part of the person."
- "I like this course, good for taxi business."
- "training was very knowledgeable and helpful for our profession."

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with Section 1.0 – Service Delivery Excellence, Sub-section 1.1- community safety through design, presentation, enforcement and education.

Conclusion

It is appropriate that all taxi-drivers in the City of Vaughan be required to complete orientation and sensitivity training.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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City Clerk