

11-12-13

To: Honorable William D. Euille, Mayor, City of Alexandria
Cc: Allison Silberberg, Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria
Members of City Council
Rashad M. Young, City Manager
Date: November 12, 2013
From: Alexandria Taxi Workers Alliance/Tenants and Workers United
Re: **Recommendations of Taxicab Task Force**



The Alexandria Taxi Workers Alliance/Tenants and Workers United submit this memorandum in response to the Taxicab Task Force recommendations slated for consideration by the Council this evening. During the course of the Task Force we grew deeply concerned with the approach and direction the group was taking as the meetings were clearly more about identifying the many ways in which the Task Force disliked our proposal rather than examining it carefully to identify the portions of it that could be moved forward and how, if need be, other portions could be amended. We however, went into the Task Force believing it would be a great opportunity for the team to identify how our proposal could be improved so as to create an industry that better balances all parties' interests.

State law

The Task Force took the position that it could not discuss nor debate ATWA/TWU's alternative interpretation of the state law provision as it relates to 'backfill' because the differences are a matter of legal interpretation. Ironically however, the Task Force also grounded a part of its opposition to our proposal in the state law and its alleged backfill mandate in effect making up its mind to oppose us without receiving any real debate on the matter.

Backfill

The recommendations point out the City experienced a 19% increase in cabs even before the state law was revised to include the 'backfill' language the City attorney claims it has (page 4). This increase was a direct result of the City's choice to add 'backfill' language into the City ordinance. That language however, was wholly unnecessary to the industry changes cabdrivers sought during the 2003 – 2005 struggle. Rather, once cabdrivers succeeded in securing the opportunity to transfer between cab companies the City elected to add in the 'backfill' provision whose only purpose was to insulate Yellow Cab from losing workers to its competitors. To the extent the Task Force report identifies backfill as having put too many cabs on the city's streets, it should also have sought to remedy that problem (at least in part) by recommending that the backfill provision in the taxicab ordinance be eliminated altogether. This makes practical sense especially since, as compared to the City Attorney's interpretation of the State Code, the local 'backfill' language is now redundant.

Eliminating freedom of movement altogether

We are alarmed by the Task Force's recommendation that the taxicab code be stripped of all language giving current and future cabdrivers the opportunity to select the company with

Tenants and Workers United ♦ Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos

3801 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22305 phone 703.684.5697 fax 703.684.5714 www.twsc.org

which they will affiliate. While we are not at all happy with the fact that the City has limited cabdrivers to choosing who they will work for to once every two years, we nevertheless see that as a starting point and know from experience, that an annual movement period is possible. Should the recommendation to eliminate freedom of movement be accepted, it will only ensure that cabdrivers continue to struggle against the City as the 2003 – 2005 struggle was (as is ours) based on the very idea that quality service for riders and economic opportunity for cabdrivers can co-exist. In turn, real economic opportunity for cabdrivers must include the freedom for cabdrivers to select who they will work for.

Stifling Solutions

We are deeply disappointed that the Task Force chose to spend a great deal of its time identifying all the ways in which it was opposed to our proposal rather than taking the opportunity to identify how it could be improved upon for the sake of all interested parties. In its recommendations the Task Force points out that its mandate was not to identify alternatives to the ATWA/TWU proposal however, when electing to consider the utility of reverting to a pre-2005 taxicab code for instance it most certainly put an alternative to our proposal on the table. We however, went to the table in good faith to try to identify the best path to making the changes that would best improve the industry and that is why, after listening to the Task Force's long list of what was wrong with our initial proposal we opted to submit a revised proposal; one that took those concerns into consideration. Our ideas however, were only considered to the extent the Task Force said it would not take them up.

In closing, ATWA/TWU cannot in good faith, support the Task Force process and procedures and thereby, its recommendations. We are however, still interested in having good faith conversations with the City as to the future of the industry and firmly believe that there is a middle ground which balances quality service to riders with cabdrivers' interest in obtaining *real* economic opportunity and cab companies' interests in maintaining control over a taxicab fleet. Moreover, we feel that with the ever increasing intrusion of highly unregulated black sedan service and private cars masking as for-hire vehicles, the need to think creatively and progressively about the future of the industry is upon us. To us however, eliminating freedom of movement is neither sound for the industry nor just for cabdrivers and we will continue to push for and work with the City to identify a solution which fully protects cabdrivers' economic rights while providing the quality service riders expect and the City demands.

Gloria Sitton

From: Jackie Henderson
Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2013 7:53 AM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: FW: Call.Click.Connect. #42342: Mayor, Vice Mayor City Council Legislative mtg 11-12-2013File# 14-203

From: alsdmf@earthlink.net [mailto:alsdmf@earthlink.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 4:59 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Community Relations
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #42342: Mayor, Vice Mayor City Council Legislative mtg 11-12-2013File# 14-203

Dear **Call.Click.Connect.** User

A request was just created using **Call.Click.Connect.** The request ID is 42342.

Request Details:

- Name: Amy Slack
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: No Phone
- Email: alsdmf@earthlink.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor City Council
- Request Description: Legislative mtg 11-12-2013
File# 14-2036 Taxicab Task Force recommendations

Mr. Mayor, Ms. Vice Mayor and, Honorable Members of City Council,

I write in support of recommendations from the 2013 Taxicab Task Force to reject the request from Tenants & Workers United and to adopt a pre-2005 type of code which maintains a dispatch requirement but does not allow driver transfers.

I have no strong opinion regarding the Task Force recommendations concerning Grandfathered Certificates, other than to note that in 2010 we considered allowing certificates to expire, albeit minor, an aid to reducing the exploding number of driver authorizations.

Having served on a similar Taxicab Task Force between 2009 and 2010 while a member of the Traffic & Parking Board, and having seen those attempts to agreeably modify the 2005 Ordinance fail to achieve stability in the taxicab industry, and in light of changes to the State regulations, I believe a better course is to undo the damaging impact of the driver transfer period. It is a failed experiment that has done little to quiet those whose true objective it return to a time period when companies failed to serve the City adequately and the Traffic & Parking Board spent much time providing Human Relations dispute resolution between drivers and drivers and companies.

Attached is a letter written in 2010 when Council last considered changes to the Taxicab Ordinance. Much of what I'd written then is still valid.

Sincerely,
Amy Slack

- Attachment: <http://request.alexandriava.gov/GeoReport/UploadedFile.ashx/doc/36caa25b-5258-4fe7-96b2-e7212e74384c>
- Expected Response Date: Tuesday, November 19

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the **Call.Click.Connect. staff interface.**

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CommunityRelations@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

This is an automated email notification of a ***Call.Click.Connect.*** request. Please do not reply to this email.