

## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

IN RE: LICENSE COMMISSION GENERAL HEARINGS  
SPECIAL - TAXI SCHOOL

LICENSE COMMISSION BOARD MEMBERS:

Richard V. Scali, Chairman  
Robert C. Haas, Police Commissioner  
Daniel Turner, Deputy Chief

STAFF:

Elizabeth Y. Lint, Executive Officer

- held at -

Michael J. Lombardi Municipal Building  
831 Massachusetts Avenue  
Basement Conference Room  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139  
Wednesday, January 20, 2010  
11:15 a.m.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. LINT: License Commission General Hearing, Wednesday, January 20, 2010. It's 11:15 a.m. We're in the Michael J. Lombardi Municipal Building, 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Basement Conference Room. Before you the Commissioners: Chairman Richard Scali, Deputy Chief Dan Turner, and Commissioner Robert Haas.

MR. SCALI: Good morning, everyone. I see a lot of familiar faces. The School Board people are here, some drivers, some owners, departments in the City. I thank you all for being here.

We took our time deliberating on this decision seeing as it was a very important one after 15 years of the school curriculum being the same. We needed some time to digest and think about things and compare.

So the purpose of this meeting today really is to -- I'm not sure if we'll completely decide everything but to give some direction to the

School Board and to decide what direction we want to go in, in terms of how we are going to teach new cab drivers in the City.

A curriculum was presented to us. Mr. Ewing is here, and along with the School Board did a very -- the School Board and Mr. Ewing did a very fine job in presenting to us a draft of the changes in the curriculum. I know that each teacher, the dedicated volunteer teachers have done a great job in amending their curriculum in their sections, and there has been quite a few changes in the curriculum from what we had back in 1994, much more condensed and complete.

I think we wanted to think about changes that would occur in that curriculum and that may be even different from what we have. We're going to discuss that today. This is really not going to be about additional testimony because we took the testimony a month ago, but we will take comments for clarification of any items that we're talking about if someone misunderstands it or doesn't understand what we're talking about in

terms of our suggestions.

So first, comments from either of the Commissioners on the curriculum as presented.

MR. HAAS: I guess I'll start. I think at the last meeting and this meeting, I just want to make sure that the classroom training is adequate with respect to making sure people are sufficiently prepared to go out on the street and understand what the role and responsibilities are of the taxicab drivers in the industry.

One of the things that we are particularly concerned about and I think the industry needs to be concerned about is that if people are not prepared or adequately prepared that's a reflection on the entire industry. So how do we make sure people have enough information and really are sensitive to the issues within Cambridge in terms of how we expect them to treat customers, what the rules and regulations are with respect to customers so that we minimize the number of complaints that result from drivers who probably aren't aware of the fact that there's certain

things that they have to do, or also understand that there are consequences if they act inappropriately. I think forewarned is probably foretold in terms of the kinds of problems having to do with taxicab drivers.

My bigger concern outside of the curriculum, and we have had this discussion as well, is the school can only do so much. I think there is a general agreement that there has to be some kind of practical application, because there are certain things you can do in a classroom and there are certain things you can't do in a classroom. Or, you can't make your point with respect to what happens in the classroom, and really somebody needs to get a sense of what it's like to be out in the City of Cambridge.

It's challenging to drive through the City. There are a variety of different ways you have to negotiate taxicab stands depending on what part of the city you're in. And quite honestly one of the things we're concerned about is making sure that drivers understand that they have to drive in

a certain fashion, a courteous fashion with respect to the field.

So the question is, how much can you do in a classroom, and then what responsibility do the owners have with respect to making sure that they have drivers that they're satisfied with in terms of the quality of service, because it is a reflection upon them and their medallion. If they have drivers that are being less than courteous, if they have drivers that are not being sensitive to the needs of this community in terms of them depending on the taxicab industry, then they have a vested interest in terms of it coming back on them as well.

My conversation primarily with Deputy Chief Turner and Chairman Scali was how does that kind of dovetail into one another. Obviously the school can only do so much, but then shouldn't there be a follow-up on it with respect to as far as licensing somebody so that the license does in fact indicate something to the public; that if I have a license, I can be sure there's going to be a

certain quality of service I'm going to receive, and I'm reasonably sure that I'm going to get to where I need to get to in a safe, clean, and friendly atmosphere. So I think that's part of my dilemma with respect to how we go forward.

One of the things I'm particularly sensitive to is the defensive driving side of the thing. Is there enough time being devoted to that? Do we need to expand that a little bit so people clearly understand that when they're getting into a cab they're driving defensively? Because they are basically transporting people, they have an obligation to make sure those people get to where they need to get to in a safe condition. So I think that's where I would stop at that point.

MR. SCALI: Deputy Chief, any comments?

MR. TURNER: The only thing I would like to say is that I think this is a very important school. It's kind of a learning experience for me. I haven't been familiar with the taxi industry at all, and certainly the school



and the roles that everyone has that's involved in the school. I think it's a great concept.

There's a lot of work that's been done to this point. I think it's also going to be a work in progress. I think we have some decisions that have to be made and I don't think everyone is going to be satisfied 100 percent with those decisions, but again, it's a work in progress. We all just need to work in the best interest of the community and taxi industry, and hopefully we can continue to move forward with this.

MR. SCALI: In order to give this some kind of direction and some kind of format, in a letter that went out on December 29, there were eight subject matters that were brought up at the hearing back in December, on December 16, when we had our last hearing on the subject matter. There were items that were, I won't say controversial, but items that were for discussion, which we have laid out.

I think first we probably should talk about the curriculum itself, right now. Do we feel

it's satisfactory in terms of how it was presented and what do we want to see changed?

So the first item on there had to do with the length of the school, the nights that we were doing it, and do we need to add more time to present the material.

MR. HAAS: I guess I would ask, and I don't know if it's appropriate at this point, Mr. Chairman, to kind of get some feedback in terms of what are some of the observations we've made with respect to the drivers coming from the school, and where do we need to kind of beef up some of our concerns so that we adequately prepare potential drivers to make sure that they don't fall into those pitfalls or find themselves in a situation where they're going to be subject to those kinds of complaints.

Obviously I think defensive driving is an important curriculum. I think we need to spend a little bit more time on that than what's been devoted. That's not a criticism of the school. I understand that we're trying to stay within the

three night timeframe but I'm really questioning whether or not that's sufficient.

Mr. Ewing talked about the fact that the school that's being given in the western part of the state -- I'm not saying we replicate that in its entirety, but I think there are probably some more components that need to be incorporated into the lesson plan.

I am concerned about drivers being sufficiently versed in terms of where they're going. One of the biggest issues we kept on hearing is once they go over the bridge, do they know where they're going? Or are they getting disoriented? Because they are in fact taking passengers over into Boston, and are they getting enough information relative to the geographics of not only the City, but if they're going to leave the City, what are the main principle roads they need to go. I haven't been in the class so I'm really kind of asking, what are the areas that really need some more focus and attention.

We are still getting complaints with

respect to short fares. We're still getting complaints about folks who are basically requiring specially equipped vans and them being sensitive to the needs of folks who need some additional attention and care with respect to transportation.

I think there are still some concerns about courtesy in the cabs. By and large, the majority of the drivers are professional. They do a great job here, but it's that small fraction of drivers that can really hurt the industry. And how do we make sure that we offset that to some degree?

MR. SCALI: I think from the information that was presented to us and just from my knowledge of what the School Board has been working on is that defensive driving, geography, and professionalism are the key items that need expansion from what we talked about. I know that we have talked about adding another night just to defensive driving; another hour or another night onto geography; cab stands have always been a big issues; location of certain major attractions and major sites in the City and outside the City have

been an issue, too.

I know that the School Board also wants to add on videotapes and DVDs, and they want to add on more audiovisual type materials. Mr. Ewing has been talking to CCTV about doing some filming, and they're willing to do that for us and for him as well.

I do think it probably is warranted to add on a night or two. If you look at Boston's curriculum, what they have is a six night curriculum. They teach three nights one week and three nights the next week, although the last night is the exam itself. So they do the exam actually in the school the very last evening and hold a big exam on the sixth night.

I don't know if I'd model it exactly after Boston, but I think a fourth or fifth night would give more time to the teachers. I think it probably would also help in your suggestion, Commissioner, about change of location in terms of making it more professional having it at the Safety Building, because all the amenities are here in the

Safety Building. There's every technology you have available and I know that you have also offered some police officers that are Academy trained that would be an additional benefit as well.

My suggestion, and I think maybe you had suggested this before too, is we add one or two more nights on to that to expand on the geography and the cab stands and the defensive driving sections in particular. Comments?

MR. TURNER: No comments.

MR. SCALI: So the direction we're leaning in is that we -- we're trying to give direction to Mr. Ewing and the School Board in terms of what we want to see happen, and it's being suggested that perhaps what we do is add on I would suggest probably two more nights, Commissioner? Is that what you're looking for?

MR. HAAS: I think unless we kind of -- I think we have to go back to the Committee and say to them, if you're going to expand in certain areas, what does that mean in terms of time commitment? So for me to sit there and say I think

it's two nights or one night, I'm not really clear.

MR. SCALI: It may take one, it may take two, maybe you have enough time to do it in three-and-a-half. I don't know. I'm just trying to figure out what that would mean. Do you want to say anything about that Mr. Ewing in terms of what we discussed?

MR. EWING: There are some things in the curriculum now that were not there before so we actually have expanded some areas. Mr. Prift, a longtime driver and Board member put together a nice piece that tells you where all the different bridges lead to and what's in those areas so that's material that was not there before. We are looking to expand the amount of effort that's put into the geography piece.

Also, the defensive driving part was not in there at all. So when you say it needs to be expanded, it is expanded just by the mere fact that it now exists and that time will be spent there.

We also mentioned that we spent quite

a bit of time with the drivers just working on the meter and doing math because the exam was in two parts. One part just had to do with the math on the meter and if they failed that part, they failed the entire test. So by taking that out and not testing that, that would allow us some additional time in the training to do some of the other things that we're talking about.

The idea of adding another day and then doing the test on the next day is something that the Board certainly needs to look at. I would certainly take your suggestion under advisement. We do have a Board meeting scheduled for next week and we would certainly present that, and based on the decision of the Board I would go with that.

MR. SCALI: I think what we are looking at is maybe a recommendation. I guess I'm trying to figure out what our scheduling should be in terms of what we are looking to give you direction on in terms of adding another night or two with the exam being taken at the school; changing location to the police academy; adding



teachers on, the teachers you have now, plus adding on teachers that we have from the police academy; and also including the audiovisuals that we talked about doing, and that that be phased in as well.

My feeling is that we should focus more on the geography, the defensive driving, and on the professional courteousness of the driver as being your major focuses. I know that many of the Board members have said to me, what do you want to see happen? I guess this is where we're going to tell you what we want to see happen.

I see hands. If this is about clarification and not testimony that would be great. So Mr. Gervais.

MR. GERVAIS: Michael Gervais. I have dedicated this year -- well, Happy New Year to everybody. I've dedicated this year to clarification.

I think one thing has to come up that I really hope comes out of this meeting, and that's to define what this school is supposed to do and whether it's just going to be an orientation like

Mr. Ewing proposes for it to be, and many of the Board members, and perhaps the Chairman. Or, is it actually going to be training.

If it's going to be an intensive orientation, fine, keep it under the boundaries there, but create an intensive training somewhere else whether it be through internship, whether it be for separate classes. You can't retrain people under an orientation that they've already gone through.

Another thing is -- the three things that were mentioned before a long time ago: the professionalism, the geography, the rules and regulations. These are the three main stays of all taxi schools and they involve some type of training.

Defensive driving is not a question of whether or not we talk about it or whether or not we do it. We've got people -- we need to have defensive driving the safety of the public. We're not entertaining people, were not sitting down making them a hamburger or something like that.

Their lives are at stake and it's very important that we have to go through.

The other issue that we have to look at is, and I've been one of the people that have been complaining because I care about this school. I helped start this school, and I was involved with this school. It means something to me that this school stay productive. I believe that when we get to the point of it's nice to talk about all these ideas about the videos, and it's nice to talk about all the different things we're going to have, all the technology involved. But you know what, who's going to monitor this? Is this Board going to monitor this? I want to know when these things are going to be, where are the projections that these things are going to happen? Where are the internships and such that are going to be involved?

For the past few years, Cambridge drivers aren't even well-equipped enough to be able to find things in Boston because they don't have the guides for it.

MR. SCALI: Mr. Gervais, this is

everything you testified to on December 16, so is there a clarification on something we've already talked about? We don't want to rehash.

MR. GERVAIS: One of the clarifications was, number one, to be able to monitor these changes and supposed changes, and to-do lists about the school. And the second is, as Mr. Ewing has just alluded to, the License Commission has to be on board with this too, because what kind of a test are we going to have, and that's got to be reflected by this Board about what we feel cab drivers should know.

Myself personally, I brought it up before and I'll bring it up one more time, and that is that drivers' rights have to be there. The inclusion of what Commissioner Haas said about giving owners of drivers involved and lessors. The problem that has been created and hasn't been kept up on time, and there's enough blame to go around for everyone, is simply that many of the lessors that are leasing these cabs are not well-versed or articulate. That's another problem

within the problem. So these are all things.

Like I said, the teachers, all these things they talked about before, and I think that if they want to make it an orientation, fine, but think of the other things that need to happen also and bring those together, whether it be for a separate training with separate instructors, et cetera. That's all. Happy New Year. And I think we've come a long way just to come here.

MR. SCALI: Mr. Muehe.

MR. MUEHE: Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, my name is Michael Muehe. I'm the Executive Director of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. I would just like to clarify and reiterate the support that the Commission for Persons with Disabilities would like to offer to the taxi school, generally, and to this new curriculum.

We have been very actively involved, as you know, for at least 15 years, in the delivery of this curriculum, and we think it is an essential component not only for public safety but for

ensuring people with disabilities and elderly folks get good customer service from the Cambridge taxicab industry. We would welcome the idea of expanding the length of the taxi school to include a more expanded curriculum and to include the items that were mentioned earlier in this hearing.

Frankly, we struggle a bit with our 60 minute time slot. The Council on Aging represented by Susan Pacheco and the Disabilities Commission curriculum, we've had a one-hour time segment and we've got a lot of content in that one hour. While we do our best to try to include all the essential components in that, we have always struggled a bit with that and sometimes we run over our 60 minute allotted time. So we would welcome an opportunity to have a little more time to expand upon some of the real essential components of our curriculum on providing good customer service to passengers who are elderly or disabled.

Lastly, I want to point out that Commission Haas and Chairman Scali are both in receipt of a letter that our commission chair,

Rachel Tannenbaum had submitted last week. I'll just leave copies of that here.

We continue to get complaints from people with disabilities about taxicab service in Cambridge. The two biggest areas of concern are people who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices having difficulty getting accessible cabs. As you know, we have eight accessible cabs out of 256 in Cambridge.

The other area of concern is we get complaints from people with disabilities who use service animals and being refused service, or being frankly harassed by taxicab drivers who are unwilling or unaware of their obligation to accommodate people with disabilities who use service animals.

So again, I just wanted to reiterate those points and I thank you for this opportunity to clarify. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

MR. HAAS: So Michael, I know that both you and Susan are challenged with the 60

minutes. I think the part of this discussion that's going to be helpful to Mr. Ewing is to sit down with the major constituent groups that teach blocks of training and really kind of sort out what is the appropriate amount of time that should be devoted to those areas.

I think this is also an opportunity to kind of reflect upon what are the things we're seeing over and over again, so that we can impress upon the drivers that these are issues you need to avoid or need to be sensitive to, so you need that time.

I think that would be extremely helpful in terms of if we're going to talk about defensive driving, what's the appropriate amount of time, what's the content? If we're going to talk about people with special needs, what do we need to make sure we cover in terms of professional service and customer service so people feel like that they have a right to have a cab and the drivers are respectful of that, and that we're not having situations where people are either not getting



access to cabs because -- I mean this is a population of people that really depend upon that cab service.

What I would suggest, and I guess I wouldn't ask you at this point in time, but I would like to examine what is the duration, what is the content, and what do you actually need? I think that's what should be driving the length of the school. As we decide what those blocks of training are, whether it's 10 or 15 blocks of training, what's the adequate amount of time to make sure that we truly in fact cover the material we need to cover, and it's not just simply furnishing the information but making sure we're getting some feedback that people understand and acknowledge that this is their responsibility when they take on their taxicab license.

MR. MUEHE: Absolutely. I'm just speaking off the top of my head. I haven't really had much of an opportunity to discuss it with my colleagues but I think any increase in time would be helpful to us. If we were to go from 60 to 90

minutes, I think that would be great. If we were to go to 120 minutes, I think it would be even better. I don't think we'd need a whole lot more time than that. I think somewhere in the 90 to 120 range would be superb in terms of really being able to focus in on the issues that are of greatest concern.

I mentioned Rachel Tannenbaum. She's currently the chair of our Board and she has been a tremendous help to the taxi school. She started about a year or two ago. She is a woman who is blind and who uses a service animal, a guide dog, and she's been coming in. Just judging by the faces of the students in the class, she really opens people's eyes up to the issues and you can really see them mulling this over when she talks about the problems that she's had with trying to get just basic service for her and her guide dog.

I don't want to speak for Rachel, but I'm sure that given her dedication to the issue and having an opportunity -- she's already coming to the taxi school and we're sort of squeezing her in

to our 60 minutes timeframe. I think just having some additional time, even an additional 15 minutes to really focus in on some of those significant points I think would be great. So somewhere in that 90 to 120 minute range I think would be wonderful.

MR. SCALI: Thanks, Mr. Muehe.

I appreciate your comments.

MR. MUEHE: Any questions?

MR. HAAS: No questions.

MR. TURNER: No. Thank you.

MR. SCALI: Councilor, we should have asked you first.

MR. REEVES: What did you say; it's not a time for one thing but another thing? I wanted to hear that again.

MR. SCALI: It's more about clarifications than testimony. I know you've submitted a letter and Mr. Clifford came and spoke to us, but your viewpoint is always important.

MR. REEVES: I'll come here more often.

The clarifications I would try to add -- it was interesting Deputy Turner to learn that you're new to this industry because this is a very complex industry and I have been familiar with it for the last 20 years, and I'm going to say that I pre-date the school, and that I had a little bit to do with having it come to be. There was a lot of excitement that we were going to have the school.

So my clarifying comments would be really these: I think it's an excellent suggestion, and I know our police commission brought this in his bag of goodies that we move the school to the new facility. I think that would give it a gravitas and an importance to all.

I think more focus should be made on the point of evaluating the outcome of the training. It seems to me we're training people, and it's been explained to me that then they go to work for whatever owners and those owners are not necessarily further coaching or have any connection whatsoever. It's also been suggested to me that unlike with our liquor licensees, we don't sort of

have an annual check-in with all of the owners, which seems to me that for this industry it would help it measurably, because communication and what's actually going on seems to be a question.

I would also strongly encourage you to think about how to better connect with the large majority of drivers, be it focus groups periodically, be it other kinds of check-ins. But I myself have just experienced that there seems to be too many people out there who never come in here who have another thing in mind and have their own issues, and I would like the regulated to be touched more in some way. I'll just put it that way.

I realize it's not perfect. There are a number of people I encouraged to come today or even yesterday, and I had a lot of no-shows. I don't know what that's about. I'm a Jeff Canada guy, as the Commission knows, so whatever it takes to make this happen, the non-show I kind of take it as the challenge to make show, because people definitely have opinions.

I think the school is a good thing. I think the school should really produce something. I also would just clarifyingly[sic] give this notion: for some reason, the taxi industry and particularly taxi drivers have become a kind of hobby-like interaction for me. So if I go to Washington, DC, or I was recently in San Francisco, it's fun to check in with the cab driver about how the mayor's doing, or not. In San Francisco, the former mayor, Willy Brown, and the current mayor who's having some problems.

You will find that taxi drivers are often not only very intelligent and have a lot of information, they're really ambassadors. I think we should be trying to connect with and shape that ambassadorial -- I think that's a thing we should let them know that they are.

It just happens that both in San Francisco and Washington, not only are people very knowledgeable but it seems a different experience than I have in Cambridge cabs, and I take a lot of cabs because I don't own a car. In Cambridge cabs

to a great extent now when you get in the cab whoever is driving the cab is on the phone, and this phone conversation does not end. It may be minimally interrupted to find out where you're going. Is there a way to impact that? That does not happen in San Francisco or in DC in cabs that I've gotten into, but it is more the rule than the exception in Cambridge.

The other two points I would make: when we finish fixing the school, if we could fix the fact that you can call all of the Cambridge cab companies and get no answer at any of them. It seems to me that we should be able to regulate an industry that has to respond to after all, the consumer, who is the end-user. You should be able to get a cab in 21st century Cambridge.

There is also this unplugged hole where you cannot get a cab in Cambridge at shift change, which is around 3:00 or 4:00. In fact, you can sometimes get one that won't take you because they have to turn the cab back in. But I've never been anywhere that you couldn't get a cab in the

middle of the day due to a known switchover.

I think that's enough. I do think it's a new year and I hope we bring some new energy and some new voices and some new solutions to what have been some recurrent problems. But I believe if I had to send a team to address it, I see the team I would send before me. So I am hopeful that we will -- and I'm going to continue just because I am interested in the industry and I think we should have at least what I see in DC and San Francisco as a -- ours shouldn't be so distinctly different. Thank you. If you have any questions?

MR. HAAS: One of the things, Councilor Reeves, we're really contemplating is shifting some of the responsibility back to the owners in terms of taking that obligation to make sure that the drivers are operating at a standard that they find acceptable, and that they should have some responsibility and accountability that if they're not, either send them back for retraining or decide that they're not appropriate for this industry, because I think it does in fact have an



impact. And if you have one bad experience, it shadows everything.

So one of the things we talked about, and again, it's kind of outside the realm of the school but I think we attach it to the license. So we say to you, you've got to complete the school. You've got to complete some probationary period, and in that probationary period you've got to do so many hours of practical training with a checklist. And before we will issue you a license for one year, those three components have to be satisfied.

And again, I think to your point, we have to do a better job in terms of kind of evaluating the outcome of the schools. Are the schools really getting to a point that it's being internalized? In other words, if I'm teaching you something, do you understand, and do we affect your behavior in a way that you're going to reflect what we kind of taught you.

I think during that 60-day -- I'm using 60 days because some of the other communities are using 60 days as a probationary period -- we

kind of check in with them and make sure that in fact they are demonstrating the things they should be doing, and again, within that 60 days, completing a checklist with a coach.

In other words, put you in a cab with somebody else who's an experienced driver, and say if you work for Company XYZ, this is what our expectations are, this is how we expect you to behave, and then have them kind of watch and role model the kinds of behavior you want as an employee to do.

I think it's part and parcel to a larger piece. I think the school by itself is not going to get us to that endpoint.

MR. REEVES: I'm glad you brought that up because it's the last point I had hoped to make. We should realize that long ago when there was a new driver, that driver drove with an experienced person for a while to learn the ropes.

I have within the last six months called a Cambridge cab to go to a Red Sox. My niece was singing the National Anthem and we didn't

want to get caught up in the traffic. The driver had no idea where Fenway Park was, which was just astounding that you could be driving a cab in Greater Boston and not know where that is. I don't know who didn't train him or why he was even driving the cab, but I do know that we could do better than that. I bet in San Francisco I wouldn't find somebody who didn't know where City Hall was. Maybe we should rethink that piece and ask the owners to provide that.

I don't want to go on and on. I do want to say that I do think that Mr. Cabone is an invaluable asset in our steps forward and being in touch with the hotels. There are so many sub issues, Deputy Turner, from doormen and black cars and livery, and we're operating more than one system even if we don't know it. The drivers are under many pressures and stressors in addition to -- the school is the nice part. So I hope we can get this solved and get some of these other pieces because there are a number of issues that could have better resolution.

MR. SCALI: One thing I wanted to mention, Councilor, that you mentioned, which has been frustrating for me being here for so many years, you and I, we've seen so many changes over the years. One of the pieces I think the school has found frustrating too, is representation of the proper people at the table. For years I've said there should be some way that these drivers can organize themselves or have representatives. It's been very difficult for them to do that. There's so many different factions of drivers that you know, I agree with him but I don't agree with him.

I know that the School Board has talked about expanding and changing and having different representation, which I think is on the table for discussion at our next meeting to bring the people who really need a voice to the table.

MR. REEVES: It's a little like yesterday's election. What can happen is that there can be a change of opinion out there that if you're not in touch with it, you know. And ultimately in a democracy it seems to me that the

large number of drivers, their opinions are important. It may also have something to do with many drivers -- one of the works I have been involved in is men and health. And men don't go to meetings. It's sort of not that male culture. So maybe some of that is in why people don't show up.

I definitely know that fluency in English is a much bigger issue than I previously thought. I'm talking to drivers who I think understand what I'm saying, and I'm not sure that they do. So a multilingual facility in the meetings might have a usefulness.

I do think it's excellent -- someone reported to me that since you've come Commissioner Haas -- there have been two Hackney officers where there was one, and there is an actual interest in helping the drivers with these fares that go away, et cetera. So those are the good things and I hope we continue those, because the enforcement is another big issue. If our drivers know we're enforcing, I think they're happier.

MR. HAAS: We have made a concerted

effort because we have heard the taxi industry talk about the fact that Boston has been kind of heavy-handed with respect to our cab drivers going over there, and that they don't see the same type of enforcement here. So part of the driving force was to get both of those officers, and now we're actually bringing most of our Traffic Unit in to do more of what we call sting operations. You know, see if in fact we have out-of-town cabs that are picking up fares in the City that shouldn't be.

By and large, I think we've seen a significant increase in terms of -- it's not the revenue but I think we need to get the message out that Cambridge is not going to stand by and allow people to poach in the City. We have our cab drivers here, we have an industry here, they're professional and we don't want people coming in from the outside the city and taking our fares away. We're going to continue that effort.

I actually talked to both officers again today and said I need you to keep that pressure up because the word has got to get out.

We've got to reach that point of saturation where people understand if you pick somebody up here in the City that you weren't called for, there's a good chance you're going to be penalized for it.

MR. REEVES: I really look forward. We have airport fare issues, we have many other interesting topics in this. Better tomorrow, though, is somebody from over here should be brave enough to go and see Mayor Menino and talk about a more metropolitan force. Believe it or not, in normal places the cab is for the consumers, so if it's going by you, you shouldn't have to read where it's from and all that. They've worked this out in Washington. From Virginia to Maryland they have a system. Our system is very balkanized. We can't pick up at the airport.

So I won't take all of them out of Pandora's Box, but we have a lot of work we could do, and I'm glad we will be able to do it together. Thank you.

MR. SCALI: We'll take a break.

(Short recess taken.)

MR. SCALI: Mr. Ewing, do you want to come up? Points you want to make for us?

MR. EWING: Yes. I just want to mention that currently we have approximately 1,300 licensed drivers. They're not all actively driving at this time. Even over the next 12 months we open the school, we'll probably be training somewhere between 150 to 200 new drivers entering into the field. So we can put together this new curriculum and changes, but we also have people already out there driving, which was one of the concerns.

This process has been very interesting because it really allows us to look at the whole industry. I looked at the complaints that we've gotten formally over the last three years. That's something that we really need to pay attention to. There has to be a process for closing the loop so we know what those are every month when they're coming in so there's more visibility to them because those are the things that let us know how we're doing.

Maybe we need something in the cab



that says, "How was your ride?" People can take one of those and fill it out later or mail it into the License Commission so we know whether they're saying it was a good experience or a bad experience. But it's something so we know what's going on and we can close the loop, because we don't want to wait years and then say we need to change the whole curriculum. We need to know all the time what's working and what isn't. Then we can make small changes as we need to make them. So we know whether we're being effective because we have the results.

So I think we need to have some way of monitoring exactly what's going on out there instead of just anecdotal information and people's stories around what worked and what didn't. We don't know whether the complaints are coming from people who just came out of the school, or people who've been out there driving for a number of years.

Also, I know even when you have a season ticket to the Patriots that person that owns

it is responsible. If they give their tickets to someone and they go there and they act up, they're responsible. Well, it's the same thing. We have to have the owners more responsible for what goes on with their business, with their cabs. No matter who they have driving it, they need to be responsible and they need to be involved in the complaint process. If there are complaints coming in from someone who is driving that cab, they need to be involved in that. It's not just the driver out there by themselves.

Again, I think we do have a lot of work to do. I'm excited about the changes we want to bring to the industry; that we make it modern and that we have a new training facility so we can bring in all the bells and whistles. We will be anxiously looking to make those improvements.

MR. SCALI: Mr. Ewing, you've done a really wonderful job over the past 12 years, and I want you to know that -- at least I feel that way. And I know you've worked very very hard over the past six months to make the changes with the School

Board. I know you've met with them individually, you've have different meetings, different sessions with them, and so you've really tried very hard to accommodate everyone's opinions. And we're almost there. We're not quite there.

If we were to vote and give you a direction in terms of expansion on the nights, and on the curriculum, and change of location, and the addition of different teachers -- I know we've been close for what, eight months now?

MR. EWING: Since August.

MR. SCALI: People have said we'd want to reopen sooner than later because there are a number of people looking for jobs out there, and we want to make sure people can get out there and get trained. And you cannot drive unless you've gone to the school in Cambridge. So I'm wondering how much time it would take in order -- do you think we could open -- I'm hoping we could open by March if we can get to where we want to get to, maybe with a phase-in period of certain elements over a period of time.

There are a number of people who have come to our window saying they'd really like to go to the school, I really want a job, I need to get a license. I know you're going to have huge classes initially when people start signing up. I think you've got quite a large classroom but I'm not sure how many people we want to accommodate in each class. What is your sense of how much time you think you would need to do the additional pieces we're talking about?

MR. EWING: Again, if you wish us to be open in March, we could certainly work towards those dates to move towards then. We do have a Board meeting as I mentioned, next week, so I certainly need to get some direction from the Board, but we can certainly work to those dates and put the changes in that we need.

I want to look at how we can expand. I want to speak with Commissioner Haas and Superintendent Williams around their instructors that might be available to help with some of the components, such as defensive driving, some of the

geography. They may want to be involved in those components. So I'd like to pursue that quickly and certainly work towards getting the school back up and running by March.

The other piece of that is obviously some of these changes will need to be phased-in over time. Even if we went to four nights of instruction with another night for testing, and had it in one week, the thing is that as we develop some of the videos, tapes, it may be that we need to go that extra day. And I will be talking with all the instructors around what they feel they need for time to do the components that they have. And again, I don't know all that until I see the new instructors that we'd have involved and what they feel they need to adequately -- what time they need to adequately present the information.

MR. HAAS: What I would like to do because I don't want to see you running around and -- I mean you've done a lot of work already on the curriculum and what I would like to do is minimize the number of meetings you have to have. So it

would seem to me that if we could bring some folks in like Michael Muehe and Susan Pacheco, and some of the people that are really kind of looking to start to tweak that curriculum, and sit together at a roundtable to help you think about what does that look like in terms of duration.

To me it's like throwing a dart at a wall. I'm not sure if I'm going to hit the target or not, but I really need to know from the people who really have concerns about the various constituents and the service, and talk about that issue.

One of the things I want to share with you is actually something that came out of Boston with respect to a film that they developed because I guess they were starting to experience gender bias with some of their cab drivers and they actually developed a film. So I think there are other resources out there we can actually replicate and make Cambridge-specific, but I'm just wondering if there are things that we could be using to help you so you don't have to try to develop things from

scratch. So I wanted to share this with you.

MR. EWING: I appreciate that offer.

MR. HAAS: I have Boston's curriculum, and again, they have interjected a number of those things that you're talking about in terms of the movies and in terms of trying to make points to people that these are the things you need to be attentive to. Because I think pictures are worth a thousand words. We're really sensitive to the fact that for a number of the drivers, English is a second language for them. So how do we get them to understand and internalize the points you're trying to make, and I think sometimes if they can see it --

MR. EWING: Visuals is helpful.

MR. HAAS: -- it's going to be extremely helpful for them.

I'm also willing to offer, again, so we have a predominant language in the school, or bilingual, who can actually speak and help with some of the translation as well. I don't want to make it too complicated, but I really clearly want

people to get something out of the school and not just kind of go through it to get through the school and get their license. So to Councilor Reeves' point, how do we make sure that the school in fact has an impact?

MR. EWING: Exactly. That was one of my concerns around closing the loop so we're getting feedback so we know what needs to be changed, what needs to be addressed, what needs to be expanded, and where we need to spend more time by the results that we're getting in the City.

MR. SCALI: I guess we need to give them some direction in terms of what we want to see happen. From my point of view, the expanded items should include the defensive driving, particularly the geography piece, particularly the cab stand issue, and now you're talking about English language issues, which is something we had talked about basically but had never really gotten to at the School Board level.

MR. HAAS: I think a lot of these aids are going to help with that.



MR. SCALI: You think the visuals will take care of the language issue?

MR. HAAS: I'm hoping it's going to buttress, so instead of just lecturing people but they can actually see the scenarios of what to do and what not to do. Some of the things like the Bicycle Committee has done is actually shown pictures of this is the way to navigate on a bicycle through the city. These are the things you should be doing and also with a car.

I think there's a way of blending those things together and kind of get over that hump. I'm always concerned that folks are sitting in class and they're totally lost, and I don't want to see that happen. I want them to feel like they're getting an appreciation of what our expectations are with respect to operating a cab here in the City of Cambridge.

MR. EWING: And that's one of the concerns. Obviously the larger we make the class the harder it is to see that thousand-mile stare in someone and you know they don't get it and you can

spend a little bit more time and repeat it.

MR. HAAS: I'm willing to help support running concurrent classes. So if you decide the class size is 15 or 20, and you want to run two of those, or start one a couple nights ahead of time, or run them back-to-back, I'd like to do that as well. So to your point, we're not packing the classroom and people are in this big room of people and they're really getting lost in the process.

MR. EWING: We have never advertised for people and the industry has slowed. It couldn't take all these people coming in. You know, running a class of 50 people and there's no cabs for them to drive. There's only a limited number of cabs.

Again, we can look at all those things, see how many people we need to be training at a time, so that we can spend time with them to make sure they understand what it is that we're teaching them so that we're coming out with better quality instead of just quantity in terms of drivers, too.

MR. SCALI: I think that the issue really is the phase-in. It sounds like the audiovisual issue may take you longer than March I'm sure to film and get things going.

MR. EWING: Yes.

MR. SCALI: That may be the issue of phase-in in terms of visuals for each section of the class so each teacher could have some kind of audiovisual section or film. Maybe a section of each portion can be a filmed portion and some can be a spoken portion.

MR. EWING: We want to be sure that each component has visuals attached to it and different things, whether it's videos or a PowerPoint, and various things. Then we can start off with a PowerPoint and then move towards getting some videos that are done by Cable TV.

MR. SCALI: I realize that under your contract there are certain limitations that are under your contract. The School Board would have to talk to you about your duties and how that would work, and that is something that has not gone

unnoticed. I realize that there may be some additional duties that are not in your contract so we'll have to talk about that with the School Board.

MR. EWING: I'm sure all those can be worked out.

MR. GERVAIS: Chairman Scali, can we ask Al a question? I was wondering about when it comes to the books that people are going to have, have they found any books for them; atlases, and things like that, or Fast-Lane pass issue?

MR. SCALI: I think the question from Mr. Gervais has to do with what kind of books are we going to use. I know we talked a little bit about adding books on. I know you've come across some new maps and things for us. Have you nailed down that source?

MR. EWING: We have some map books available, and again, the Board will be making a vote that they'll make all those things available to the students as part of the curriculum. We do have map books that we have identified.

MR. SCALI: I think it's a matter of money in terms of whether we have the money to buy those particular books

MR. EWING: Finances, yes.

MR. SCALI: I see Councilor Reeves raising his hand.

MR. REEVES: This is a very inexpensive thing, and it's a stolen idea from Jeff Canada, but they run this thing called "Baby College," where they teach parents from zero to three how to parent, 10 Saturdays. You put your name in a hat and if they draw your name, they'll pay your rent, so people come.

What they did for each class in Baby College is they make a CD where they interview the people who went through about what did you learn. It kind of solidifies the class but also you will hear what they felt they did or didn't learn, and it's cheap. So if that's an idea that's usable, I would use it. But it's a very interesting thing they do. And they have a DVD of each and every class so I can ask for Class 32, and you would have

a record.

MR. SCALI: We did actually talk about filming the class in some way and your facilities would allow for that to happen.

MR. HAAS: Right.

MR. SCALI: That would give us another tool as well. I think that would go toward the evaluation piece Councilor Reeves was talking about as well in terms of evaluating what that means, follow up with the students.

MR. HAAS: Maybe that last night when you're doing the testing that's part of the interview process. You know, tell us what did you learn, what things do you wish you had more information about, and things like that.

MR. SCALI: Like a sheet that they fill out at the end, at the last class.

I do think it would be a good idea for that Hackney officers to give the exam the last evening of the class. I think that would be a much easier way of handling it as opposed to them coming to our window and signing up. It eliminates one

whole process for the Hackney officers to do that.

I did want to talk a little bit about the evaluation because I want to make sure that there is a way that we follow up with students in terms of making sure that -- I think the Commissioner suggested that perhaps we change our ruling to allow for a 60-day probationary period for our licenses. Then see after 60 days whether they have complied with the check-off list that we could come up with. That would be something the License Commission could handle which wouldn't affect the school so much but would affect us.

The Commissioner already has the checklist. There you go. He's done a lot of research.

Anything else you want to say,  
Mr. Ewing?

MR. EWING: No. I just want to thank the Commissioners.

MR. SCALI: Thank you very much for your input and your time on this.

Mr. Prift?

MR. PRIFT: I'm Lawrence Prift. I'll be very brief. I think that the last time we met I mentioned the idea of mentoring; that an experienced driver, not necessarily the owner, the experienced driver can be available as the person to talk to for information about how things are done in that particular company, because each company does things differently from other companies.

This probationary period would allow that to happen. And built into that probationary period is a requirement that someone in that organization, another driver, a volunteer, whatever, be brought forward to be available to that person as needed. It's not just probationary for the school but orientation into training. That probationary period can fulfill what we talked about last and was mentioned earlier, orientation into training. I think that just to have a probationary period is underutilizing it. Let's make it a teaching, on-site, hands-on experience. Thank you.



MR. HAAS: To kind of amplify Mr. Prift's comments, we're looking for the owners to understand that they need to make an investment into the drivers. I think by taking the time to have who they consider their better drivers to take out a new driver and demonstrate to them what their expectations are -- and you're right, each cab company has its own little differences and nuances, so I think it's important that they get that exposure, but I think that's got to be part of the licensing process.

As was said before, you can only teach so much in a classroom, then really practical experience and especially somebody showing you I think has much more of an impact in terms of internalizing the kind of behavior we want to see among the drivers in Cambridge.

MR. GERVAIS: Commissioner, who's going to teach the owners and these lessors that don't know what they're doing. I'm asking a serious question.

MR. SCALI: Actually it brings me to

another point that we were already --

MR. GERVAIS: It's become very complex now and that's something the License Commission has got to deal with.

MR. SCALI: It brings me to the other part of the piece we were talking about in terms of owner's responsibilities. Because I think the Commissioner's idea, and we've been talking about this for a while, too, in terms of having an annual meeting of owners, managers, and it might be beneficial to include some other people that are involved in that too. It would be a very good tool in terms of presenting on a yearly basis what their responsibilities are, how things have changed, what they need to do to keep their drivers informed and responsible out there on the road.

That's something that our office will have to do. I know that's going to be a huge project but we'll add that onto our checklist and our Hackney officers can help us arrange that.

Our hotels have been very generous in giving us space over the years for our alcohol

licensees, and I'm sure they wouldn't hesitate to give us a room for our cab owners and managers. So I think we'll put that into place and that will give us an opportunity to teach them what they have to do, how they have to train their drivers, what items are the new hot issues of the day. It'll give us a good tool for keeping in touch with each owner or manager.

Mr. Lom? You have to come up.

MR. LOM: Just a few words. It's already been mentioned, but Benny's complaint book is a great teaching tool. We talk about it at the committee meetings but I don't think we've ever talked about it at the school. That would show us exactly where we're going with this.

One other thing, by the way, all these visual aids you're going to have at the school, you'll not have in a cab. So a guy needs to know how to communicate verbally without pictures.

Thank you.

MR. SCALI: Yes.

MS. COOPER: May I come up?

MR. SCALI: Please. Are you Ms. Tannenbaum?

MS. COOPER: I'm not Ms. Tannenbaum. Ms. Tannenbaum is a good friend of mine.

MR. SCALI: Tell us who you are.

MS. COOPER: My name Merriam Cooper. I am a resident of Cambridge and I take cabs quite a bit. I actually found out about this meeting at the very last second. It was extremely important to me so I hurried here.

My experience with Cambridge cabs has been not great. When I call a cab, and especially if I'm approaching one on the street the first decision I make is do I have the fortitude for a possible access challenge. If I decide I don't have the fortitude, if it's been too stressful a day, I will not take a cab. I've made decisions to walk alone at night rather than approach a cab and risk a problem with the driver.

I get a lot of I can refuse you if I want to. I can refuse anyone if I want to. I'm allergic. Well, no, I don't have documentation but

I'm allergic. I don't want to take the dog. You should have told the dispatcher you had a dog. I just don't want the dog in my car. Even if I got somebody who had said to me I'm really sorry, I'm extremely dog phobic and I understand I have to take you, but if you wouldn't mind, can I just stand here while I call another cab? I get that, no problem. That's never anything I receive. It's always a conflict. It's always yelling. It's always, how dare you try and bring this dog into my cab?

I find it hard to believe that all these drivers are going through Cambridge taxi school and are completely understanding the material that is thorough material, and they're completely understanding it and they're just jerks who are disregarding it. There must be a communication problem. I think there must be a way to make that information more clear so that it is understood. I have to believe that. You know, obviously one to two percent of everybody are jerks who just want to do what they want but I really

have trouble believing that there's not some systemic problem that's just leading to a lot of misunderstanding.

I can give you an example very recently of a cab driver who was just -- and the thing is, he was willing to transport me but he felt the need to harass and harangue me first. He was absolutely convinced that it was a requirement that I tell dispatch that I have a guide dog, which it isn't. And absolutely convinced, like no doubt about it.

I tried to explain the law to him. He said he'd call dispatch and tell them what you told me. I said go ahead. He called the dispatch, the dispatcher spoke to me. The dispatcher said, no, he's absolutely right. You absolutely have to tell us if you have a guide dog. It doesn't matter if it's a seeing-eye-dog or a regular animal, it makes no difference. Every time I would start to say the law says this, he would interrupt me and say, "Ma'am, I'm not going to argue with you. This is the way it is. This is the way it's always been."

So this is the dispatcher. So we're talking about educating cab drivers, but if the information doesn't get to the dispatchers and the drivers are making mistakes, where are they getting their back up and where are they getting their information for the mistakes that they're making? They're getting it from the dispatchers that are sending them out.

So I feel like whatever education needs to be done in this regard also needs to get to the people sending out the cabs.

I don't know if I'm accurate in this. It's my understanding that you need to go to taxi school once, and then do you ever need to go through retraining again?

MR. SCALI: Well, there was a presentation last year to us, and it was my recommendation that we do retraining of existing drivers. That did not pass our decision process here. I still feel that existing drivers should somehow be retrained over some period of time. I'm not saying every year or every -- but that did not

come to pass here through our process of decision making here.

MS. COOPER: I feel like some of the problem might be happening in class where there's somehow miscommunication, language barrier, and/or as Michael suggested, just not enough time. So you're going guide dogs, wheelchairs, people with 85,000 disabilities, and it's just getting too packed in. So more time really might help in the current classes.

But some of the other problems it's been suggested to me might be with older drivers who maybe went to the taxi school 10 or 15 years ago when there wasn't this focus on access for people with disabilities, and they honestly don't know. The dispatchers I don't really think have an excuse and they should know better, but I think that could be some of the problem as well.

So making sure that even if it's not the kind of thing like you said where you have to go back every year or every two years, at least making sure every year that there is a reminder of



some of these core issues in some respect or another. Whether it's just something like a reminder in writing every year that they should be reading, and then every how ever many years to go back to the basic courses. And certainly if there is a violation, I think there should be a requirement for taxi drivers to go back to the training program and re-learn these things.

I know Rachel does a lot of excellent work for the taxi school, and I have certainly done education around guide dog training before. If some of your ideas pan out about running say concurrent classes where you need a second trainer, I have experience in that and I would be happy to help facilitate the education process in any way I can. I really just want to be able to take a cab without an anxiety attack. That's really my goal.

MR. SCALI: Most understandable,

MS. COOPER: Thank you very much for your time.

MR. SCALI: Thank you very much for coming in.

Questions, Commissioner?

MR. HAAS: I think one of the things that's -- again, it makes me really more committed to the annual meetings. I think we've done this with the CV licenses in terms of doing legal updates for the owners, but then I think also use that as an opportunity to disseminate --

I never heard about Benny's complaint book before but I think that's commendable in terms of sharing the kinds of complaints we're encountering, and making sure the owners understand what the complaints are that are reoccurring so that we get that information pushed down again. And actually have hand-out material for the owners that require the owners to distribute to the drivers. That's one way of getting information out. I think it's going to be difficult to bring 1,300 drivers in.

I think the other thing we talked a lot about and I think we've all agreed upon is as we encounter bad behavior that remedial training has to be a component. If somebody is not doing

what they're supposed to be doing, then our only opportunity to correct that behavior is to kind of make them come back and reorient them to the areas that we think they need some improvement on. If they don't want to do that then I think that should jeopardize their license.

MR. SCALI: Just for clarification, Benny's complaint book is nothing new. It's something every Hackney officer has tallied up and kept on a monthly/annual basis.

MR. HAAS: It's the first time I've heard about it.

MR. SCALI: It's been going on for years and years and years.

MR. LOM: Sorry if I let out any secret.

MR. SCALI: It's not a secret. It's not Benny's in particular, it's just a complaint log book. Thank you, Ms. Cooper.

I guess we've come to the point where we need to give them some final votes. I'm just going to try to outline some things and you all can

tell me if I'm going in the right direction.

Just in terms of direction to the School Board, my suggestion is that we vote to look at expanding the school, and I think Mr. Ewing's suggestion that we start with a fourth night and the fifth night be the exam would be a great suggestion. So let's start with four nights, and the fifth being the test.

My next suggestion would be that we expand the geography portion, the defensive driving portion, which includes cab stands, and that we phase-in the audiovisual portions in each section, if we can.

My third point is that we move the location of the school to the police station at the generous suggestion of the Commissioner to use their facilities there.

Fourth, that we add to the teachers that we have already, amend and adjust as needed using police officers as needed and as available.

MR. TURNER: The date to reopen?

MR. SCALI: My hope is that we would

be able to open in March. The 16th Anniversary of the opening of the school is March 1. They opened on March 1, 1994. So I'm hoping to use that as a reopening suggestion. Whether Mr. Ewing needs more time to phase-in certain sections I think would be acceptable, but if we can use our March 1.

MR. HAAS: Is that a Saturday?

MR. SCALI: Well, when do you usually have it; like the second or third week of the month, Mr. Ewing?

MR. EWING: It varies. Because we were at the school we were always working around different holidays and things like that, so those are things --

MR. SCALI: So during the month of March then I guess.

MR. HAAS: We're open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

MR. EWING: We have some instructors who are City employees, and if it's a holiday, we wouldn't want to --

MR. SCALI: So at the scheduling of

the police department's availability and the teachers' availability for re-opening during the month of March 2010.

The other thing is kind of related to the school but not. For duty of the school that the Commission here vote in an annual meeting of all owners, managers, and I guess there was a suggestion that we do lessors as well, but I don't know whether that's going to be possible.

MR. HAAS: One of the things we talked about is do we just stop at the owners of the medallion and make them responsible for the people they lease their medallions to. And I forget who made the comment, but at some point in time, somebody has to be ultimately responsible for the medallion. I think the owners do have an obligation to make sure that if they're leasing their medallions to some other party that they in fact are as scrupulous with respect to who they're hiring as drivers, even if the owner is somewhat removed from the actual operation of the cab.

One of the things we talked about and

the Chairman was very clear about, I think there are about 125 owners in the City. I'm not sure how many lessors are in the City because that gets distilled. Philosophically I think we're trying to struggle with where does the buck stop. Does it stop with the owners, the lessors? I think that is something we need to think about and I would love to have the school kind of talk to us about that and give us their idea about where does that make sense. I don't want it to be too big because like in the classroom if it gets too big, you lose content. I want to make sure that we have a manageable size of folks we can talk to who will ultimately take responsibility for the medallion and everybody else who's using that medallion.

MR. SCALI: I'm going to suggest we include lessors at this point and see if we can manage that in some way. I'm not sure how many there are actually in number. I'm guessing probably double what we have in owners but that could be wrong.

Mr. Carbone?

MR. CARBONE: To Ms. Cooper's point, could the dispatchers be included in that annual meeting?

MR. SCALI: That's not a huge group. That's a small group.

MR. CARBONE: The dispatching rules and regulations of what she's referring to are important for the elderly, for all need people.

MR. SCALI: We might have to do -- we can't bring all dispatcher in at the same time because that would shut down all the radio services. I guess we could kind of phase-in different people at different times so that wouldn't be a problem. Dispatchers and operators would be the terminology. And at that meeting we would talk about responsibilities, rule changes, and items of interest.

The seventh item is the Commissioner's suggestion that we impose a new rule with a 60-day probationary period. Do you want to deal with that now at this point in time?

MS. LINT: Wouldn't that go in the



Rules and Regs?

MR. HAAS: Wouldn't you have to do a rule change; right?

MR. SCALI: We'd have to have another hearing.

MR. HAAS: Maybe there's an opportunity to really get some of the drivers and the owners coming into the room and giving some input with respect to the notion that if you're going to get your license, there's more of a requirement than just attending the four or five nights of school. That in fact, we are going to impose a 60-day probationary period and within those 60 days, eight hours has to be a one-on-one mentoring, and then have a checklist that they need to make sure they cover and go through; that we think it's appropriate that they get that kind of orientation.

MR. SCALI: I'm not sure we have to have a rule change.

MR. HAAS: If you're changing the condition of the issuance of the license, I think

we're going to have to.

MR. SCALI: So the check-off list and the 60-day probationary period, we probably need to have a special hearing on that; right?

MS. LINT: I think you can do that when we finish amending the Rules and Regs, and vote on the new Rules and Regs like we did for the License Commission rules.

MR. LOM: Excuse me. Don't you have to have a different license issued if you're going to have a 60-day period?

MR. SCALI: Yes. It will probably look different or have a sticker on it or something that would be different.

MR. LOM: Maybe a temporary license.

MR. SCALI: We'll put that on the back burner then.

MR. HAAS: It would be helpful for us to identify -- if we stop a cab driver and he's presenting me a permit, I know first of all, he's in a 60-day probationary period. That's someone we need to pay attention to. Then once they get past

the 60 days then we issue the hard license, which is good for a year.

So I think that's how we kind of separate the population. Is this a new driver? Or, is this a driver that basically is an experienced driver? Because it affects how Officer Arcos and Szeto would respond. If you've got a seasoned driver who commits a minor infraction, you might just feel it's okay to give a warning. If you've got a brand-new driver that's starting to commit a series of infractions, then that should be an indication to us that there's a problem.

MR. PRIFT: That's a very good point.

MR. SCALI: Having spoken to the officers recently and in the past, the majority of infractions are usually not brand-new drivers. It's people who are -- if I'm not incorrect, Officers. Correct me if I'm wrong. It's usually someone who's been driving three or four years in the general majority of people who have been out there on the road for three or four years, but I could be wrong about that.

MR. HAAS: But if we're going to try to catch those probationary drivers, I think we're going to need to be able to distinguish them very clearly. So if I've got a sector car that's stopping a cab, he's producing a paper license or permit, that officer knows that he's a probationary driver as opposed to a --

MS. LINT: Like a learner's permit.

MR. HAAS: Right.

MR. SCALI: We can put that on for discussion at another time.

The other issue has to do with evaluation of people passing the school. Do we wish to have Mr. Ewing do an evaluation at the end of the class, or do we wish to do our own evaluation of a new driver?

MR. HAAS: I like the suggestion about doing an exit interview, if you will, you know as people are completing the examination. Run through maybe five or ten questions, and then kind of get input back from the drivers in terms of what their take-aways are. Did they capture the key points?

It's one thing to test them with a paper and pencil test but also get some feedback in terms of was the school helpful to you, would it have been helpful if you had more content? Again, that's kind of an ongoing evaluative process in terms of tweaking the school as we go forward.

If Mr. Ewing is right, you're talking about getting 150 to 200 new drivers. That's a series of classes you're going to be running during the course of the year.

MR. SCALI: You would prefer to see an exit interview done on the last of the school from the students.

MR. HAAS: Yes.

MR. CARBONE: That could be reviewed at the Board meeting, what those take-aways are and how are we doing.

MR. SCALI: I also just want to make it clear that in terms of who is going to be at the classes. In the past, Mr. Ewing had attended some and not others. I think we would prefer that you be at all of those classes, Mr. Ewing, and that you

be monitoring those and making sure that those go forward in the proper fashion.

MR. PRIFT: Lawrence Prift, again. I'll be brief. I think the exit interview at the end of the training session is far too soon, because they've not had an ability and the experience of going out there to see how in fact this all works. So perhaps at the end of the probationary period or at some point in the future when they have some seasoning and experience to reflect back on what they learned and how it actually applies in practice.

MR. SCALI: I think if we change our rule on the 60-day.

MR. PRIFT: It's kind of flexible in time is what I'm saying.

MR. SCALI: I'm thinking maybe give every driver now a one-year license and perhaps before the end of that year, we do some kind of evaluation as to how they're doing and what's been going on. That we would need a rule change for. Before we issue another license to them at the end

of that year, we do an evaluation as to how they've done. Does that make -- no, you don't like that idea?

MR. HAAS: I think it's a bad idea.

MR. SCALI: Anything else, Commissioners? We certainly don't want to come back for another hearing if we don't have to.

MR. CARBONE: Mr. Commissioner?

MR. SCALI: Yes.

MR. CARBONE: It was discussed that there's 1,300 drivers, and to Ms. Cooper's point again, there's a lot of people that have never gone through the school. At some point is there a re-certification, say every five years you must attend the school piece to look at? Just to include that in the notes moving forward. Because a lot of drivers may have never gone through it, so to her point, they may not know the rules around these things.

MR. SCALI: I agree with you 100 percent.

MS. LINT: Can I make a suggestion?

MR. SCALI: Yes.

MS. LINT: When we redo the Rules and Regs that we can include in the rules in the part of the disciplinary process that as part of an outcome for if you're found in violation of doing something, say it's not taking someone with a guide dog, that you have to go back for that portion of the training.

MR. SCALI: That's actually already part of the rules. There was a hearing we held last year to recertify all drivers, and there was a great upheaval in the taxicab community and it didn't pass here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't try it again?

MR. SCALI: You certainly can. We can try as many times as you'd like, as I would like, as you would like, whatever we would like to do. It's back on the table again, I guess.

MR. HAAS: I think the other thing it helps us do too is kind of really get a sense of who are still active drivers. We have 1,300



licenses out there. I'm not sure what the status of all of them are. I don't know if they're all driving or some are hanging onto it just for the sake of having a license.

If there's a commitment, then I don't know if too burdensome to come back for one night every five years just to get updated in terms of what the changes are in the taxi industry, what some of the current issues are that we're facing, what are the things you need to be attentive to when you are driving, and again, just to be able to kind of go through that population every so often.

MR. SCALI: So we want to put that back on the table at a later time.

MR. HAAS: We'll try it again.

MR. SCALI: Yes, Ms. Cooper.

MS. COOPER: Can I ask for a clarification, please?

MR. SCALI: Yes.

MS. COOPER: Did you say that it's already in the rules that if there is an infraction that the driver is supposed to attend training

again?

MR. SCALI: It is at the option of the Hackney officers that if there is an infraction, a violation, they're found guilty of that, that the officers have the opportunity or can order them to go back to school. If they appeal, they appeal to Mrs. Lint, and she has the opportunity to do that as well, including revocation, suspension, fines, as well. All of that is part of the package.

MR. CARBONE: The population may not know, as a hotel operator, I can complain to the Hackney officer in a written form: Medallion No. 20 refused to pick up a guest and take them to Harvard Law School, a short fare. You have the same right as a citizen to report it to the Hackney that this is what I saw Medallion No. 26. I don't think you're called forward to put her on the spot. They handle it in their own investigation. So you as a citizen may not be aware of your way to bring a complaint to the police officer.

MS. COOPER: My question for the clarification comes because I had made a complaint

and a driver was fined, but the notion of retraining was never mentioned to me, which was my confusion. I did know about the complaint process, but thank you very much. I had not known about the option to retrain since it wasn't something that was mentioned in a couple of the complaints that I made.

MR. HAAS: That's a relatively new phenomenon that we've -- in fact, we did get some push back from the taxi industry initially when we proposed it, but I think it's only appropriate that simply giving a fine might not be enough. It might be to your point that they're just not aware what the rules are. It's evident from your experience that you've got a dispatcher saying no, you have to tell us ahead of time that you have a service animal and things like that, and that's not the case at all.

MR. SCALI: I think we're nearing the end here. One of the points that we wanted to make I think, and in terms of the School Board has a meeting on the 28th, I think from my point of view,

and the other Commissioners can voice their opinion as well, I think the Board needs to look at the makeup of the Board, the expansion of the Board, and including a cross-section of drivers, not just maybe one or two drivers, but maybe three or four or five drivers, and two or three or four owners, and that may mean expanding the Board to 11 or 13, I don't know, whatever that number may be.

I think it's also been suggested, and by no means are my feelings hurt by this at all, that perhaps as Chairman I shouldn't be on the School Board. That is something that I've always thought as being a possibility, and it may mean that Officer Arcos or Officer Szeto goes to the School Board meetings, or Mrs. Lint. That's fine too. It makes me in a better position as Chairman to look at it more objectively and that is exactly what I would want to happen.

I think the Board can look at it in terms of what the representation should be, who the appropriate people are. And no offense to Mr. Prift or Mr. Lom, or Mr. Nacoul (phonetic) or

anybody else, but perhaps we need to reach out to people who are different drivers and different owners, including yourselves being on there, but adding other drivers and owners.

MR. PRIFT: I'm all for it. Many voices in the chorus.

MR. EWING: Just a correction: You mentioned the meeting was on the 28th. It's actually on the 26th.

MR. SCALI: Tuesday morning the 26th, at 10:00 a.m.; right?

MR. EWING: Yes.

MR. SCALI: At the Inn at Harvard.

MR. EWING: Yes.

MR. SCALI: Am I forgetting anything else? Mr. Ewing, am I forgetting anything? Anything else you need clarification on?

MR. EWING: No.

MR. SCALI: So that's a motion with all of those items.

MR. HAAS: I make a motion that the Commission adopt those items.

MR. TURNER: Seconded.

MR. SCALI: Moved and seconded. All  
in favor?

MR. HAAS: Aye.

MR. TURNER: Aye.

MR. SCALI: Thank you all for your  
input. You've done a tremendous job. Mr. Carbone  
in particular, Mr. Ewing in particular, thank you  
so much for your input and your time commitment to  
this.

MR. SCALI: Motion to adjourn.

MR. HAAS: Motion.

MR. TURNER: Seconded.

MR. SCALI: All in favor?

MR. TURNER: Aye.

MR. HAAS: Aye.

(Whereupon, the proceeding was  
concluded at 12:44 p.m.)

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
BRISTOL COUNTY, SS

I, Anne Ouellette, a Professional Court Reporter, the undersigned Notary Public certify that:

I am not related to any of the parties in this matter by blood or marriage and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of these matters.

I further certify that the proceedings hereinbefore set forth is a true and accurate transcription of my record to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 5th day of February, 2010.





ANNE OUELLETTE  
Notary Public  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
My Commission Expires  
March 16, 2012

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