

Subject: [Fwd: Re: North Shore Taxi]
Date: Fri, 21 Nov 2003 14:13:28 -0800
From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>
To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: RE: North Shore Taxi
Date: Fri, 21 Nov 2003 00:27:11 -0800
From: Mayor Bell <mayorbell@dnv.org>
To: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>
CC: fonvca@fonvca.org, James Ridge <James_Ridge@dnv.org>

Dear Ms. James,

Thank you for your e-mail regarding the recent publicity about the poor safety and maintenance levels relating to some of the North Shore Taxi fleet of cabs. For your information and for that of Council I would like to advise you that I have met yesterday and today with the CAO and DNV staff to determine what prompt and appropriate steps can be taken to respond to this serious matter.

We have been in touch with the West Van Police, who work with the Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Inspectors on a regular basis inspecting truck safety on the Upper Levels Hwy and steep routes into West Vancouver, and with the North Van R.C.M.P. The issue of the safety of taxis came up during recent discussions of truck safety. North Shore Taxi was given notice to have their cabs inspected. Twenty nine were inspected resulting in 8 Notices to Repair; one was immobilized, 17 were towed and 3 were considered OK. Deficiencies noted included brakes, propane tank safety, and steering column problems. My office was in touch with North Shore Taxi today and we were advised they have now replaced 10 taxis and had 16 repaired.

DNV Council began discussions in 1999 about drafting a "bylaw to regulate the issuance of chauffeur permits for all carriers, including provisions for minimum driver standards in conjunction with other North Shore municipalities." Bylaws were considered in March 2000, and further amendments were considered in July 2000, including reference to a maximum allowable vehicle age of 10 years for taxis. A Public Meeting was held in December 2000 with input from persons in the taxi industry and from the public. The focus of the discussions and the proposed bylaws related more to the qualifications of drivers, cleanliness of taxis, and availability of wheelchair accessible taxis, than major safety issues, other than the proposed age limit restrictions on taxis, as we understood that regular safety inspections were required. No further action was taken by Council since that time.

I have asked staff to further contact the other government and regulatory agencies that should be involved in responding to the most recent serious issues raised about taxi safety on the North Shore, and to prepare a report for Council indicating steps Council can take within our authority, and demands we can make on the Provincial Government and other Agencies for immediate action. As we are moving into the Christmas season with less daylight and the possibility of poorer driving conditions, and a time when more people should be taking a taxi rather than driving home from parties, I have asked that this report be a priority in the interests of public safety. I will also be speaking directly with the R.C.M.P. and the Provincial Government about the seriousness and urgency of this matter.

Mayor Don Bell

-----Original Message-----

From: Elizabeth James [mailto:cagebc@yahoo.com]
Sent: November 20, 2003 6:16 PM
To: Mayor and Council - DNV
Cc: fonvca@fonvca.org
Subject: North Shore Taxi

20 November 2003

Mayor and Council,
DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER
355 West Queens
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.

RE: NORTH SHORE TAXI: UNSAFE TAXICABS

Members of Council will have seen recent TV and press coverage regarding the serious defects found in 8 or more taxicabs owned and operated by North Shore Taxi. This is a company operating as a District business out of 250 Pemberton Avenue, North Vancouver, BC.

The defects were discovered during inspections conducted by West Vancouver Police and ranged from exposed and unprotected propane gas tanks, broken steering wheels held together with duct tape, malfunctioning brakes, and a range of other defects.

It is felt that taxpayers should have **very** serious concerns arising out of the information provided in the newscasts:

1. Even though the company draws its business from across the North Shore, since operations are based in the District of North Vancouver, could Council and Staff assure taxpayers that the North Vancouver RCMP also conduct regular safety checks on these high-use vehicles.

Council will recall that it was also the West Vancouver police who discovered major defects in dump trucks traveling at the north end of the Second Narrows bridge earlier this year. Right or wrong, this gives the impression that West Van officers are a good deal more active in this type of enforcement than their RCMP counterparts.

2. The next major concern involves vehicle maintenance schedules. Company personnel assured TV reporters that their vehicles go in for regular mechanical checks and that the cabs pulled off the road this week had been passed by the mechanics - some as recently as last week and two weeks ago. In fact, one TV camera shot took a picture of the "passed" stamp on one of the vehicles. This happened to be a vehicle with a badly-corroded undercarriage exposing the propane gas tank.

This raises several issues: Firstly, the company doing the mechanical work and "regular safety checks" was displaying a sign which showed it to have Provincial Certification from Victoria. Minister Rich Coleman stated on camera that he would be looking into this.

The second issue relates to conflict of interest, since some of the personnel from North Shore Taxi are said to own the mechanical shop which does the maintenance and "passes" the taxis to go back on the road.

The last major item - there may well be others - relates to provincial regulations and standards, as they are applied to high-mileage vehicles operating in an area of extremely steep terrain such as the North Shore. It is suggested it might be appropriate for mileage and vehicle-age limits to be different for the North Shore than they might be for vehicles which operate in, say, on the flats in Vancouver, Richmond and/or Delta.

It seems obvious that this company has been putting the lives of its passengers at **serious** risk for some time. In fact, when I mentioned this email to Dr. Kost, he reminded me that issues of District taxi operations - safety, training and language - have appeared on Council's horizon for three years or more. Most recently, one recalls the matter being discussed when Bonnie's Taxi was protesting that it was not to be allowed a licence to operate mini-buses in the Region.

In view of the foregoing information, it would be appreciated if Council would ask Staff to immediately liaise with the RCMP, Minister Rich Coleman and with T-PAC on these and **all** related issues and report back to Council.

Once the Staff Report is to hand, it is suggested that Council consider calling the owner(s) of North Shore Taxi to appear before Council to show why it should be allowed to continue to hold a Business Licence in the District. In fact, this is such an urgent matter as to suggest that, as an interim safety measure for the upcoming holiday season, that step should be taken at the first available opportunity on Council's Agenda.

Your early response would be appreciated.

Yours truly,

Liz James,
[604] 988-2066
cagebc@yahoo.com

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