

Refining Qualifications for Taxi Natural Gas Extension

(City Council on April 11, 12 and 13, 2000, amended this Clause by adding thereto the following:

“It is further recommended that natural gas fuel taxis be required to maintain acceptable emission standards throughout their tenure as taxis and to provide evidence of emission testing, annually, to the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division of the Urban Development Services Department, during the two-year extension period.”)

The Planning and Transportation Committee recommends the adoption of the report (March 1, 2000) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services subject to adding the words “or within 6 months of approval of this By-law”, so as to read:

“It is recommended that By-law 20-85 be amended to only allow a two-year extension to natural gas fuelled vehicles which are Originally Equipped Manufactured (OEM) vehicles or are converted to natural gas within six months of first being registered as a taxicab, or within 6 months of approval of this by-law”.

The Planning and Transportation Committee reports having requested the Commissioner of Urban Development Services to report to the next meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee:

- (1) on the various incentives available to the natural gas industry and the safety issues involved in propane fuelled vehicles and outline any history of offences and/or safety violations occurring from the use of propane gas and natural gas;
- (2) with an update on the pros and cons of using propane only in taxicabs; and
- (3) what terms and conditions should be applied if the City chooses to treat propane or other alternate fuels in taxicab on a par with natural gas.

The Planning and Transportation Committee submits the following report (March 1, 2000) from the Commissioner, Urban Development Services:

Purpose:

To report, as directed by the Licensing Sub-Committee on February 14, 2000, on a mechanism for closing the loophole which allows taxicab owners to convert their vehicles to natural gas in the final year of the vehicle’s life as a taxicab simply to qualify for the two-year extension.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement :

There are no financial implications arising.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that By-law 20-85 be amended to only allow a two-year extension to natural gas fuelled vehicles which are Originally Equipped Manufactured (OEM) vehicles or are converted to natural gas within six months of first being registered as a taxicab.

Comments:

Section 48, (8), paragraph (b) of Schedule 8 of By-law 20-85 provides that vehicles fuelled by natural gas may be granted a two-year extension to their use as taxicabs in Toronto. This provision was enacted in direct response to a recommendation contained in the October, 1998 Report to Review the Taxi Industry. The Task Force recommendation was based on environmental concerns surrounding the size of Toronto's taxi fleet and the twenty four hour-a-day operation of many of the taxis.

The situation that the current legislation creates is that a gasoline fuelled vehicle could be registered as a taxicab and operate for five years in this fashion before converting to natural gas to gain another two years' life as a taxicab. This situation is inconsistent with the intent of the Task Force recommendation which was to add incentive for an owner who elects to operate a more environmentally friendly vehicle.

OEM vehicles are available in today's marketplace but not all vehicle manufacturers provide them. It would be necessary for some owners who wished to purchase a particular type of vehicle to convert to a natural gas burning engine after purchasing the vehicle. It is anticipated that this conversion could be completed within six months of purchase.

Conclusions :

The recommendation to amend the by-law to only allow for the extension for factory installed natural gas vehicles or vehicles converted within six months of registration as taxicabs will effectively close the loophole which exists in the current legislation.

Contact:

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Municipal Licensing and Standards, Urban Development Services
Telephone: 392-3070; Fax: 392-3102

(Transmittal letter dated February 17, 2000,
titled "Propane Gas/Alternate Fuels", from the
City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee)

At its meeting on February 14, 2000, the Licensing Sub-Committee received the following submissions regarding propane gas/alternate fuels:

- (February 9, 2000) from Stan Steiner, Taxicab Consulting Services, forwarding comments respecting jurisdiction over fuel safety standards;
- (February 11, 2000) from Brian Maher, NGV Business Development, Enbridge Consumers Gas, forwarding a summary of their current commitments to the City and Industry Stakeholders in terms of Taxi Reform;
- (February 10, 2000) from Jeff Passmore, IOGEN Corporation, forwarding comments to the Fuel Safety Network Inc. respecting By-law 20-85 and suggesting that the City of Toronto adjust its by-law to stipulate that all "alternative fuels" are to be encouraged for use in taxis;
- (February 7, 2000) from Baljit Sikand, BEST-TECH Auto Repair, forwarding comments respecting the current by-law and suggesting that it is discriminatory;
- (undated) from Wali's Gas Bar requesting that the Sub-Committee take a fuel neutral approach;
- (February 10, 2000) from Rachhpal Singh, Bellamy Auto Garage & Barnala-Transportation Ontario Inc., requesting that the Sub-Committee take a fuel neutral approach;
- (February 14, 2000) from Tom Corrigan, Superior Propane Inc., requesting the Sub-Committee to reconsider By-law 20-85;
- (February 14, 2000) from Alex Goerk, Carling Propane Inc., submitting marketers' view of the recent by-law change relative to the fuel use issue for Toronto taxi operators;
- (February 14, 2000) from John E. Ammar, P.C.I. Propane Conversions Inc., respecting the unfairness of the two-year extension to Natural Gas fueled cars; and
- (February 10, 2000) Ford News Release, submitted by Tony O'Donohue, titled "Ford Expands Alternative Fuel Lineup with Propane-Powered Super Duty F-Series".

The following persons addressed the Licensing Sub-Committee respecting Propane Gas/Alternate Fuels:

- (1) Brian Maher, General Supervisor, NGV Business Development, Enbridge Consumers Gas;

- (2) Greg Zilbersard, National Account Manager for Alternative Fuel Vehicles, Ford, U.S.A.;
- (3) René Mallais, Technical Sales Representative, Enbridge Consumers Gas;
- (4) Dave Kennedy, Propane Gas Association of Canada;
- (5) Alex L. Goerk, President, Carling Propane Inc.;
- (6) John Ammar, PCI Propane Conversions Inc.;
- (7) Peter Zahakos, Co-op Taxi;
- (8) Randy Burkett, RNG Interquip;
- (9) Tony O'Donohue, P.Eng., Environmental Probe Ltd.; and
- (10) E.W. Meikle, President, Toronto Taxi Drivers Association.

Committee Action:

The Licensing Sub-Committee requested the Commissioner, Urban Development Services, to report to the Planning and Transportation Committee on the pros and cons of eliminating or retaining the provision in the Licensing By-law 20-85, Section 48, that allows a two-year extension of the use of motor vehicles which are fuelled by natural gas and used as standard taxicabs, and on ways by which the five-year loophole can be closed.

The Planning and Transportation Committee also had before it the following communications, which were forwarded to all Members of Council with the agenda of the Planning and Transportation Committee for its meeting of March 21, 2000, and copies thereof are on file in the office of the City Clerk:

- communication (February 9, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Stan Steiner, Taxicab Consulting Services, forwarding comments respecting jurisdiction over fuel safety standards;
- communication (February 11, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Brian Maher, NGV Business Development, Enbridge Consumers Gas, forwarding a summary of their current commitments to the City and Industry Stakeholders in terms of Taxi Reform;
- communication (February 10, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Jeff Passmore, IOGEN Corporation, forwarding comments to the Fuel Safety Network Inc. respecting By-law 20-85 and suggesting that the City of Toronto adjust its by-law to stipulate that all "alternative fuels" are to be encouraged for use in taxis;
- communication (February 7, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Baljit Sikand, BEST-TECH Auto Repair, forwarding comments respecting the current by-law and suggesting that it is discriminatory;
- communication (undated), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Wali's Gas Bar requesting that the Sub-Committee take a fuel neutral approach;

- communication (February 10, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Rachhpal Singh, Bellamy Auto Garage & Barnala-Transportation Ontario Inc., requesting that the Sub-Committee take a fuel neutral approach;
- communication (February 14, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Tom Corrigan, Superior Propane Inc., requesting the Sub-Committee to reconsider By-law 20-85;
- communication (January 26, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from D. Paradis, General Manager – Ontario Region, ICG Propane, respecting legislation to limit life expectancy of Propane Powered Taxi Cabs;
- communication (February 7, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Yvon H. Mayrand, Director, Risk and Facilities Management, Pioneer, supporting the use of alternative fuels and encouraging the Committee to amend the by-law so that all alternative fuels are treated in the same manner;
- communication (undated), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Tom Longland, President, Can Am Propane Ltd., requesting that propane be allowed all the advantages afforded Natural Gas;
- communication (February 11, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from James S. Taylor, President, Primemax Energy Inc., requesting that propane taxis be allowed the same rules as natural gas (7-year life span);
- communication (February 14, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from Alex Goerk, Carling Propane Inc., submitting marketers' view of the recent by-law change relative to the fuel use issue for Toronto taxi operators;
- communication (February 14, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, from John E. Ammar, P.C.I. Propane Conversions Inc., respecting the unfairness of the two-year extension to Natural Gas fueled cars; and
- Ford News Release (February 10, 2000), appended to the transmittal letter (February 17, 2000) from the City Clerk, Licensing Sub-Committee, submitted by Tony O'Donohue, titled "Ford Expands Alternative Fuel Lineup with Propane-Powered Super Duty-F Series".

The following persons addressed the Committee with regard to this matter:

- Tony O'Donohue, Environmental Probe Ltd.; and
- Peter Zahakos, Co-op Cabs.