

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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DEPARTMENT OF FOR-HIRE VEHICLES

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FOR-HIRE VEHICLE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

+ + + + +

The Council met in Suite 2032, 2235
Shannon Place, S.E., Washington, D.C., at 11:10
a.m., Linwood Jolly, Chairperson, presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

LINWOOD JOLLY, Chairperson
JASON ARVANITES, Member
HANA BEKELE, Member
ERNEST CHRAPPAH, Member
ELLIOTT FERGUSON, II, Member
ERIK MOSES, Member
EVIAN PATTERSON, Member
JEFFREY SCHAEFFER, Member
ANTHONY THOMAS, Member
DOTTI LOVE WADE, Member
ANTHONY (TONY) WASH, Member

STAFF PRESENT:

JUANDA MIXON, SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL
MONIQUE BOCOCK, ESQ., ASSISTANT GENERAL
COUNSEL

JACQUES P. LERNER, ESQ. GENERAL COUNSEL

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (11:09 a.m.)

3 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Good morning.

4 GROUP: Good morning.

5 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Welcome to the
6 For-Hire Vehicle Advisory Council Meeting. My
7 name is Ernest Chrappah, Director of the
8 Department of For-Hire Vehicles. We're located
9 in Public Hearing, Room 2032 at 2235 Shannon
10 Place SE, Washington, D.C. Today's February 8th,
11 2017 and the time is 11:10. I'll be running
12 today's meeting until a Chairperson is chosen.
13 Today's a particularly historic day being the
14 first meeting for the For-Hire Vehicle Advisory
15 Council and as most of you, or some of you know,
16 the DC Taxicab Commission was abolished last year
17 and the For-Hire Department was established along
18 with the For-Hire Vehicle Advisory Council
19 members who provided recommendations to the
20 Department.

21 But it is usually customary for our
22 meetings to start by observing a moment of

1 silence for those who departed.

2 MOMENT OF SILENCE

3 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: The first order of
4 business is to swear in our new committee members
5 and we will ask Director Steve Walker, from the
6 Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments, to
7 conduct the ceremony.

8 MR. WALKER: Okay thanks Director.
9 First of all, congratulations and welcome to the
10 first meeting of the For-Hire Vehicle Advisory
11 Council. I'm really glad to see all of you here
12 today. And I'd really to say thanks to the
13 public who've come help with the District of
14 Columbia do this important business. And
15 actually the Director actually would like to have
16 everyone be sworn. Some of you, it may have
17 happened already but we're just going to do it
18 again and make sure you're all covered.

19 MEMBERS SWORN

20 So if all members, public and
21 government, if you could all please stand. And
22 raise your right hand. And repeat after me. I,

1 state your name --

2 MEMBERS: I, (name stated).

3 MR. WALKER: -- having been appointed
4 as a member of --

5 MEMBERS: -- having been appointed as
6 a member of --

7 MR. WALKER: -- The For-Hire Vehicle
8 Advisory Committee --

9 MEMBERS: -- the For-Hire Vehicle
10 Advisory Committee --

11 MR. WALKER: -- of the District of
12 Columbia --

13 MEMBERS: --of the District of
14 Columbia --

15 MR. WALKER: -- do solemnly swear or
16 affirm that --

17 MEMBERS: -- do solemnly swear or
18 affirm that --

19 MR. WALKER: -- I, state your name --

20 MEMBERS: --I, (names stated) --

21 MR. WALKER: -- will support and
22 defend the Constitution of the United States --

1 MEMBERS: -- will support and defend
2 the Constitution of the United States --

3 MR. WALKER: -- and the laws of the
4 District of Columbia --

5 MEMBERS: -- and the laws of the
6 District of Columbia --

7 MR. WALKER: -- and I will perform
8 such duties --

9 MEMBERS: -- and I will perform such
10 duties --

11 MR. WALKER: -- that may be assigned
12 to me as a member of this Board --

13 MEMBERS: -- that may be assigned to
14 me as a member of this Board --

15 MR. WALKER: -- to the best of my
16 ability --

17 MEMBERS: -- to the best of my ability
18 --

19 MR. WALKER: without fear or favor --

20 MEMBERS: -- without fear or favor --

21 MR. WALKER: -- and I will exercise my
22 best judgment --

1 MEMBERS: -- and I will exercise my
2 best judgment --

3 MR. WALKER: -- to consider all
4 matters before me --

5 MEMBERS: -- to consider all matters
6 before me --

7 MR. WALKER: -- from the viewpoint of
8 the best interests --

9 MEMBERS: -- from the viewpoint of the
10 best interests --

11 MR. WALKER: -- of the District of
12 Columbia --

13 MEMBERS: -- of the District of
14 Columbia --

15 MR. WALKER: as a whole --

16 MEMBERS: -- as a whole --

17 MR. WALKER: -- and I'll faithfully
18 discharge these duties.

19 MEMBERS: -- and I'll faithfully
20 discharge these duties.

21 MR. WALKER: Congratulations. Thank
22 you.

1 DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

2 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: The second order
3 of business is to determine if we have the
4 quorum. I'll ask Ms. Mixon to lead us through
5 that process.

6 SECRETARY MIXON: And I want to
7 pronounce every name right, I hope. Jason
8 Arvanites.

9 MEMBER ARVANITES: Yes, present.

10 SECRETARY MIXON: Hana Bekele.

11 MEMBER BEKELE: Present.

12 SECRETARY MIXON: Ernest Chrappah.

13 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Present.

14 SECRETARY MIXON: Elliott Ferguson.

15 MEMBER FERGUSON: Present.

16 SECRETARY MIXON: Linwood Jolly.

17 MEMBER JOLLY: Present.

18 SECRETARY MIXON: Erik Moses.

19 MEMBER MOSES: Present.

20 SECRETARY MIXON: Evian Patterson.

21 MEMBER PATTERSON: Present.

22 SECRETARY MIXON: Jeffrey Schaeffer.

1 MEMBER SCHAEFFER: Present.

2 SECRETARY MIXON: Anthony Thomas.

3 MEMBER THOMAS: Present.

4 SECRETARY MIXON: Dotti Wade.

5 MEMBER LOVE-WADE: Present.

6 SECRETARY MIXON: Anthony Wash.

7 MEMBER WASH: Present.

8 SECRETARY MIXON: I have determined
9 that there is a quorum so we may proceed with the
10 meeting.

11 INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

12 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Excellent, thank
13 you. I would like to ask each member of the
14 For-Hire Vehicle Advisory Council to introduce
15 themselves to the public and share a little bit
16 about their background, if they wish, starting
17 from left.

18 MEMBER WASH: I'm Anthony Wash. I'm
19 a fourth generation Washingtonian, a business
20 owner in the District of Columbia for 20 years
21 and I am anxious to just move forward with
22 improving and making needed changes, necessary

1 changes and listening to the comments from
2 vehicle-for-hire operators to see how we can make
3 this a better experience for all.

4 MEMBER WADE: Hello. I'm Dotti Love
5 Wade. I'm also a native Washingtonian. I
6 represent six generations of Washingtonians,
7 including my four. I have two great
8 grandchildren. So I'm also a retired Public
9 Administrator. I am the current 10-term ANC
10 Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner and a former
11 State Board of Education representative for Ward
12 1. And I have a lifetime of service to the
13 District of Columbia and to the residents. I am
14 also a member of the past Taxicab Commission, so
15 I've been working with you guys for a while now,
16 trying to understand and mitigate some of the
17 problems that you're experiencing and trying to
18 improve your overall career options.

19 MEMBER ANTHONY: Good morning
20 everyone. My name is Anthony Thomas. I'm a 5th
21 generation Washingtonian. I currently work as a
22 full time driver with Lyft and I'm also an

1 advisor and a consultant to the rideshare
2 service. I've been with Lyft - I just celebrated
3 two year anniversary. I'm going into my third
4 year and I'm really excited to be here with you
5 all today. I also operate for-hire
6 transportation in the District of Columbia as
7 well, so I thank you all.

8 MEMBER SCHAEFFER: Good morning.
9 Jeffrey Schaeffer. I'm the owner of 19 public
10 vehicles for hire companies in the District. I'm
11 honored to be here representing my fellow fleet
12 owners and the drivers we represent. I will
13 bring input to DFHV in an effort to increase taxi
14 trips for drivers and help save the taxis. .

15 MEMBER PATTERSON: Good morning, Evian
16 Patterson, representing the District Department
17 of Transportation, as a member of this Committee.
18 I'm the Citywide Parking Manager and responsible
19 for access to our public space, curbside,
20 curbside management and ground transportation.
21 We've been building a partnership with the
22 Department of For-Hire Vehicles and I'm

1 particularly interested in learning the
2 operations of this agency and its members so that
3 we are working in consort to ensure that we have
4 more service on our District streets.

5 MEMBER MOSES: Good morning. My name
6 is Eric Moses. I'm Senior Vice President,
7 Managing Director of the Sports, Entertainment
8 and Special Events at Events D.C., which is the
9 Washington Convention and Sports Authority. I am
10 happy to serve on this body as someone who is
11 interested in continuing to make Washington, D.C.
12 the premier destination in the world for visitors
13 and guests.

14 So anything that I can do to help
15 represent the hospitality industry and the events
16 industry to make it easier and more enjoyable for
17 our residents and our visitors to access our city
18 and to get around our city, is essentially what
19 I'm interested in doing.

20 A lawyer by training, and former
21 Director of the Department of SECRETARY MIXONall
22 and Local Business Development, so I appreciate

1 what these organizations and these bodies do for
2 our public and our constituents, so thank you.

3 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Ernest Chrappah.

4 I would like to think most of you know me by now.
5 I'm the Director of the Department. My interest
6 with this procedure and also this Advisory
7 Council membership rallies around the idea that
8 having diverse perspectives can only contribute
9 in making informed decisions.

10 We have a very fragmented taxi market
11 and we have a growing private vehicle-for-hire
12 market but if you look at the transportation
13 ecosystem overall, we have to be forward thinking
14 to make sure that we create economic
15 opportunities for people, people can have access
16 to safe, affordable and accessible transportation
17 options.

18 So I'm particularly excited to be
19 working with a large group, members of different
20 interest groups, who bring different perspectives
21 that will also help the Department in moving
22 forward with regulations -- not to add burdens to

1 drivers, but to actually reduce the cost of doing
2 business in the District and to enhance their
3 livelihoods. Thank you.

4 MEMBER JOLLY: Good morning. My
5 name's Linwood Jolly. I am President of a
6 DC-based information technology firm, former
7 Taxicab Commissioner with the old Commission. My
8 interest is in utilizing technology to look at
9 innovative ways to not only level the playing
10 field, but look for opportunities in this new
11 environment that we all find ourselves in.

12 I'm always interested in talking about
13 other technology solutions that other
14 municipalities have tried, some that have worked,
15 some that have not, but remain interested in
16 talking with taxi drivers, as well as operators
17 of vehicles-for-hire. Thank you.

18 MEMBER FERGUSON: Good morning.
19 Elliott Ferguson with Destination DC, a private
20 organization focusing on promoting DC as a
21 convention and tourism destination. I was a
22 former DC Taxicab Commissioner for about five

1 years. My primary goal, in this capacity, is
2 still focusing on 1) Increasing the number of
3 visitors that come to Washington and 2) Making
4 sure that they have a great experience be it for
5 a convention, leisure travel, and, well whatever
6 the reason, as well as making sure they have
7 options in terms of getting around the city.

8 One of our goals is to try to
9 encourage visitors to not rent cars and to take
10 public transportation and/or have access to
11 vehicles or services that are offered by
12 Washingtonians' programs, so happy to serve
13 again.

14 MEMBER BEKELE: Good morning. My name
15 is Hana Bekele. I am a DC resident. I operate
16 limo and taxi.

17 MEMBER ARVANITES: Hi, my name is
18 Jason Arvanites. I'm the General Manager of Via,
19 here in Washington, DC which is a TNC or PSV
20 platform. As a company, we are totally focused
21 on a true ride-sharing platform and we are
22 excited to be part of the conversation to help

1 the public transportation evolve as it moves
2 forward and provide safe, reliable and efficient
3 transport template.

4 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you very
5 much. Now we'll proceed to the Action Items for
6 today's meeting, starting with the election of a
7 Chairperson, which may be any member other than
8 myself, or DDOT's representative. Members may
9 nominate themselves. The secretary for today's
10 session could also recall or recount, if there
11 are any people who've expressed an interest.

12 So let's start with that. Do you have
13 any nominations yet before I ask the members if
14 they want to nominate anybody? .

15 SECRETARY MIXON: I have the
16 nomination on an interest of Dotti Love Wade.

17 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Okay. Do we have
18 any of our members who want to be considered for
19 the Chairperson? We have another nomination?

20 MEMBER SCHAEFFER: Linwood Jolly.

21 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: All right. For
22 the record, we have two nominations. Linwood

1 Jolly and Dotti Love Wade. Any other
2 nominations? All right. So we'll give each one
3 a few minutes to make their speech to the public
4 and also the voting members. Going in alphabetic
5 order, starting with Dotti.

6 MEMBER WADE: Alphabetic.

7 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: I just went with
8 the D, yes. Ladies first.

9 MEMBER WADE: Good morning everyone.
10 As you know, I'm a life-long Washingtonian and
11 I'm a committed public servant. I've served this
12 board faithfully since nominated and appointed by
13 our Mayor. I have attended every meeting. I
14 have a strong commitment for the taxicab and
15 vehicle-for-hire industry. My whole family, in
16 fact, were cab drivers. All of my uncles on both
17 sides of my family, except my father, drove
18 taxicabs. And I rode with them. I also am a
19 user of the cabs in the streets. But what I
20 bring mostly to this body, is my administrative
21 leadership. I have been Chairman of the Advisory
22 Neighborhood Commission for five different terms

1 at 1A and one term as Chairman for 1B. I've
2 served 18 years in total on the Advisory
3 Neighborhood Commission and I'm into my 19th and
4 20th year of this term I was just elected to.

5 Also, I'm a member of the State Board
6 of Education, where I served our city and our
7 country on the Congressional Education Committee
8 where we met with Congress to try to work with
9 them with the No Child Left Behind Act and
10 several other major acts that were, in fact,
11 amended to reflect the input from the State Board
12 of Education. I'd like to have kind of influence
13 with the Council to help make sure that the needs
14 of our drivers and our riding public are met and
15 that we have a coordinated effort in this city
16 with transportation, not just with the drivers
17 but with the street, with access, with parking
18 lanes for cabs, with wait stands. There are a
19 number of things that I know are very important
20 to you. But, again, what I bring is
21 administrative leadership and promulgating rules
22 and regulations and setting up standards for

1 operations.

2 So I would love to serve our community
3 further by helping to develop this Board, this
4 Council, which is a very new Council and we're
5 looking at what the legislation says and what we
6 must then do. So I think I bring that type of
7 experience and commitment to this body.

8 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Member Jolly.

9 MEMBER JOLLY: Hi. I'd like to --

10 MEMBER WADE: And I'd appreciate your
11 vote.

12 MEMBER JOLLY: I'd like to just recap
13 my role -- position here as a former
14 Commissioner. This industry is in a challenging
15 position right now. We've got a lot of tough
16 questions to ask. And I joined this Commission
17 at a time when taxicab drivers were at the height
18 of frustration. A lot of good ideas but not a
19 lot of means to implement them. I've ridden with
20 the enforcement team. I've ridden with taxi
21 drivers. I've ridden with Uber, Lyft all of
22 them. And I've heard the concerns -- many. I

1 think going forward, where we are today is we
2 really do have to let the data that the former
3 Taxicab Commission and the current public
4 vehicle-for-hire organization has generated. We
5 have to let that data tell us what we need to do
6 in the future. That's part of the equation.

7 And the other part of the equation is
8 you have to continue to listen to drivers who, by
9 the way, are business owners, independent
10 business owners, and have their input, and need
11 to continue to provide their input. But we have
12 to put all that together and come up with a
13 roadmap of how we're going to move this industry
14 forward.

15 There are many drivers now who do two
16 trips a day. They sit and they do two trips a
17 day, whereas maybe five years ago, they did 15
18 trips, 20 trips. There are many drivers who sign
19 up for Uber and they think they're going to make
20 a lot of money, and they don't. Some of them who
21 crossed over from being taxi drivers and now they
22 want to go back. And many drivers who were taxi

1 driver businesses for years who may have had a
2 death in the family, had to go back to their own
3 country, and now can't get their H-tag back.

4 So there are a lot of concerns but,
5 look, a lot of that is where the industry has
6 been up to this time. We've got to figure out
7 where we're going. And we've got to do that
8 together. And that's what I see as our biggest
9 challenge. Thank you.

10 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Thank you, now we
11 will vote for the Chairperson. Each
12 For-Hire-Vehicle Advisory member shall have only
13 one vote. You have index cards, where you write
14 the name of the person you want to vote for as
15 Chairperson. And Juanda Mixon will come around
16 to collect them and tally up the vote.

17 ELECTION FOR CHAIRPERSON

18 SECRETARY MIXON: The Chairperson of
19 the FHVAC is Linwood Jolly, by vote of 8 to 3.
20 So, Mr. Jolly, if you would please swap seats
21 with Director Chrappah.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: First let me thank

1 my fellow advisors and, of course, thank Dotti
2 Love Wade. Dotti and I came in here together and
3 we're going to leave here together. And both of
4 us are going to be active in our roles together,
5 along with our new advisors. So with this
6 transition, I think the first thing we should
7 look for today, is having the assistance of the
8 General Counsel as we move through a lot of these
9 administrative issues. So if you would just kind
10 of wing us, wing it today, I would appreciate
11 that.

12 And if we continue with the agenda,
13 the election of the Secretary, the advisors met
14 earlier and I think the consensus of all of us
15 was that we would retain Ms. Nixon as the
16 Secretary, who's been doing an outstanding job
17 over the past few years. And we would ask that
18 she be nominated as our Secretary. Is there a
19 procedure that we should be aware of So I'd like
20 to call for a motion that Ms. Nixon be our
21 Secretary.

22 MEMBER FERGUSON: So moved.

1 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Is there a second?

2 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: I second.

3 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay, you --

4 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Accepted by
5 unanimous consensus.

6 ELECTION OF SECRETARY

7 SECRETARY MIXON: Accepted by
8 unanimous consensus, Ms. Mixon will be Secretary.

9 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you Ms.
10 Mixon. So Jacques, if you could walk us through
11 the determination of Chairperson's term.

12 GENERAL COUNSEL LERNER: The next item
13 on the agenda is to determine the Chairperson's
14 term. The term that the Chairperson's serves for
15 -- it's a two year term for service as
16 Chairperson and then, since there are a number of
17 terms available to all the community members, and
18 the Chairperson is one of those members, he, in
19 this case, would serve either two or three and
20 that'll be determined by lot, by the Secretary
21 now. So will you call for that?

22 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay. I'll draw

1 from Envelope A. The one number that I have
2 pulled out is three. So a term of three years.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: All right. So
4 next we're going to move to the determination on
5 the community members. We're going to follow the
6 same process?

7 DETERMINATION OF TERM LENGTH

8 GENERAL COUNSEL LERNER: Other than
9 the chair. Other than the chairperson. And
10 these -- actually, I'll abstain. These are the
11 assignment of the remaining terms. The terms are
12 one, two or three years. One of the three-year
13 terms has now been set aside for the Chairperson.
14 So now the remaining terms to be assigned again
15 by the Secretary, are three one-year terms, three
16 two-year terms and two three-year terms. Those
17 are the possibilities and they will now be
18 assigned at random by the Secretary.

19 SECRETARY MIXON: All right. Just one
20 moment while I draw from Envelope B. And I will
21 go in the same order as we did before, starting
22 on the left, so this is for Anthony Wash. His

1 term of service is one year. Next, Dotti Love
2 Wade, term of service, two years. Next, Anthony
3 Thomas, term of service, one year. Next, Jeffrey
4 Schaeffer, term of service, one year. Next, I
5 have Erik Moses, term of service, two years. We
6 already have three for Linwood Jolly, our new
7 Chairperson. Next, Elliott Ferguson, two years.
8 Next, Hana Bekele, term of service, three years.
9 And next, we have Jason Arvanites, term of
10 service, three years.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you, Ms.

12 Mixon.

SECRETARY MIXON: You're

13 welcome.

14 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL'S SCHEDULE

15 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Next item on the
16 agenda is the determination of the Council's
17 schedule for future meetings. We also met
18 earlier and we had some consensus around that.
19 And why don't you, Jacques, why don't you review
20 that.

21 GENERAL COUNSEL LERNER: Sure. I

22 believe the consensus was that there would be

1 three more meetings for the balance of calendar
2 year 2017 in order to have quarterly meetings, as
3 required by the statute and fulfill the
4 requirement of scheduling in a basic sense.
5 There would be a meeting in June, a meeting in
6 September and then, to avoid the holiday rush, a
7 meeting in November. Is that correct? Believe
8 so. So then, with respect to the specific days,
9 given the large number of folks here, and the
10 many things that they do in the District, the
11 specific days would actually be determined and
12 put in the public notice but those are the months
13 when the meetings will be held for the balance of
14 2017.

15 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So now we go to
16 our public comment period. But let me take a
17 minute to just lay out where we are or where I
18 think we are. And I'm going to be just a little
19 presumptuous and speak on behalf of my
20 colleagues here on the dais. This is a new
21 organization. This Advisory Board is new, as
22 you've seen today, so we will need some time to

1 meet together and come up with some slight
2 changes that I believe a lot of people want to
3 see.

4 As a Commission, the administrative
5 structure is obviously different. In some ways,
6 it was very good, because we had to move along
7 rulemakings. We had to have public comment,
8 discussion and we had to do all of that in a bit
9 of a constrained time period.

10 Now we mainly are here to listen to
11 you. And I think what you'll see is some changes
12 in terms of the time allotted for speeches or for
13 discussions or for presentations. More
14 interactivity from the members of the panel here,
15 my colleagues, with you on topics. And also,
16 some of the changes that you'll see is Dotti Love
17 Wade wants to see us establish some
18 subcommittees, which we attempted to do under the
19 Commission structure, but we just ran out of time
20 with legislation which reorganized the Commission
21 into this agency, so you'll see some changes in
22 that way.

1 I think, also, we'll have to determine
2 communications, how we continue to communicate
3 with you. Now that this is a separate agency, I
4 think we also, you will see us still rely on
5 Director Chrappah and his able colleagues and his
6 staff, to help us.

7 Now -- okay, got it. Yes. Okay. So
8 as we move into the public comment period, all of
9 my colleagues here will also provide their input
10 on some of the topics here. Right now I only see
11 one, and I don't even see Larry Frankel here. Is
12 he here?

13 Mr. Frankel's the only person that's
14 registered to speak. So, with that being said,
15 are there any persons who wish to speak at this
16 moment?

17 MR. BUTT: I can say something.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Okay, Ms. Nixon.
19 Will you handle?

20 PUBLIC COMMENT

21 SECRETARY MIXON: Yes sir. Would you
22 please approach the podium, state your name,

1 spell your name for the Court Reporter and you
2 will have, how many minutes, Mr. Chairperson?

3 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Let's go with
4 three minutes today.

5 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay. Three minutes
6 so say your name, spell it and then we'll start
7 the time.

8 MR. BUTT: Thank you very much.
9 Congratulations to our new Chairperson for this
10 organization. We always love Mr. Ernest Chrappah
11 as the Director of our industry. Good to see
12 everyone at the Board. My name is Mohammad Butt,
13 M-O-H-A-M-M-A-D. Last name B-U-T-T and I
14 represent one of the cab companies in DC. It's
15 called Democracy Cab and DC Connect Cab.

16 My concern to speak to you guys about,
17 not many things, so I just catch the opportunity
18 to speak because we do have some issues in taxi
19 companies. So there's just one of the issues I
20 wanted to talk about it, and just try to suggest
21 or request about wheelchair trips that we run in
22 the industry. I think people know here and there

1 that it's very hard for drivers in the company to
2 keep up with the wheelchairs right now.

3 As a taxi company, I have 14
4 wheelchairs in my fleet and each of them cost
5 around \$33,000 approximately. And the monthly
6 payment I pay, almost \$700 some dollars a month,
7 along with insurance. And out of those 14 cabs,
8 I have almost 10 sitting in my parking lot. So
9 the reason I wanted to talk about wheelchairs is
10 this, that I know it's running, sometime they're
11 on the road, they are not.

12 So my request is to, Mr., new Chairman
13 but I really wanted to request Mr. Director, Mr.
14 Chrappah about this. Dispatch for wheelchairs --
15 it's really costing the drivers and the company
16 at the moment. As we all know, we only have two
17 dispatch companies in the DC, Transport DC and
18 the Yellow Cab, so they all cost to have your
19 vehicles in their dispatch fleet for whatever
20 business they have.

21 But my concern is, this wheelchair we
22 are providing for the wheelchairs -- I mean

1 handicapped people, the government plans for
2 Transport DC. So can I just request Mr.
3 Director, to you especially, can you just please
4 do something about it, that drivers or company
5 does not have to pay weekly dispatch fees for
6 Transport DC, you know?

7 I mean, it's hard, you find the
8 drivers for those cabs and on top of that when
9 you have drivers, you have so many expense on
10 that. So you have to pay a wheelchair car, so my
11 request is if you can just look for this, that --
12 drivers should not pay or companies should not
13 pay for Transport DC. We are spending money and
14 spending time. We are suffering to compete with
15 this compliance and compete with all these rules
16 and regulations.

17 So if you can just free this, there's
18 only, not many wheelchair cabs in the town, maybe
19 a few hundred, and those dispatch company has
20 many cars. One company charged \$45 a week, the
21 other one does \$75 a week and when drivers pay
22 \$200 for rent and \$75 dispatch fees, that's \$275.

1 And I think you know more than me how much the
2 drivers make these days. If they are making \$300
3 or \$400 a week, they are paying \$275 for the cab
4 companies.

5 They don't want to even see my face.
6 They don't want to even rent my car for \$100.
7 No. And I have to pay \$700 to \$800 to \$900 a
8 month from my pocket, which is very hard for me.
9 So, please, if you can consider that, free the
10 wheelchair rents for Transport DC, please.

11 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you very
12 much for your testimony and at this time, I'm
13 going to pass the mike to the Director to
14 respond.

15 MR. BUTT: I appreciate that, sir.
16 Thank you very much.

17 DIRECTOR CHRAPPRAH: Mr. Butt, it's
18 very nice to see you. It's been a while. How
19 are you doing?

20 MR. BUTT: I'm doing okay, sir. Thank
21 you.

22 DIRECTOR CHRAPPRAH: I'm very

1 sympathetic to the economic conditions, not only
2 on the driver perspective but also the company
3 perspective. The wheelchair mandate is not
4 something that was adopted by regulation for the
5 purpose of just putting that requirement out
6 there. It is something that is a statutory
7 requirement. City Council passed law requiring
8 6 percent, 12 percent and 20 percent, so that is
9 something that we all have to live by.

10 If there are some concerns around that
11 legislation, there's a process to get that
12 addressed and we are working with the Mayor's
13 office to rationalize the wheelchair
14 accessibility requirement.

15 However, on the dispatching
16 requirement, that is purely a marketplace
17 dynamic. Our position in terms of the
18 Department, is not to interfere in private
19 contracts and to encourage the private sector to
20 find ways to make things work. However, if you
21 are facing some economic hardship or you know
22 specific drivers who are facing some economic

1 hardship because of the cost associated with a
2 dispatch, we can take a closer look at it and ask
3 the dispatching companies what they can
4 collectively do in this challenging environment.

5 But the solution really comes down to
6 economics. By having a vehicle that is
7 dispatchable, the driver can now have access to
8 fare opportunities and Transport DC has been a
9 savior to the industry.

10 So while I cannot unilaterally say we
11 should ask people to, you know, get away from
12 their contracts, what we will pay attention to
13 will be the economic conditions that exist and
14 find ways to increase fare opportunities for
15 drivers, so that the cost of dispatching becomes
16 something that is more palatable or something
17 that it can absorb.

18 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So before we wrap
19 up, are there any other folks that wish to speak?
20 Ms. Nixon, there's one more.

21 SECRETARY MIXON: All right.

22 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Two more. And

1 we'll continue with the three minutes.

2 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay. So, again, if
3 you would state and spell your name for the Court
4 Reporter. You have three minutes. I'm going to
5 stick to that three minutes time.

6 MR. RAIDA: Thank you. Good morning.
7 My name Gamal Raida, G-A-M-A-L, Raida, R-A-I-D-A.
8 I'm representing, as I am with Georgetown Cab.
9 First of all, I congratulate Mr. Chairman and
10 having made the opportunity to be dynamic in the
11 engagement and concisely, I just would like to
12 see two things.

13 One of them is just the fairness, the
14 justice and kind of logic and laws, and as you
15 initiated that is, you were going to apply this
16 kind of studies. Because, I would like to see
17 something that is very convincing by logic, when
18 you are applying laws, regulations.

19 The other side of that, also, Mr.
20 Chairman, earlier, when he came to the office, he
21 came with the idea to revamp the regulation. We
22 didn't see a significant impact to the moment

1 when the environment became unpleasant. And even
2 everybody noticed that. That the environment is
3 not a pleasant environment for the driver, even
4 for the company. Thank you sir.

5 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you. Mr.
6 Chairman, would you like to -- oh, Mr. Director?

7 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Gamal, it's nice
8 to see you too. As far as the environment we are
9 in, I didn't get a specific question, but I think
10 your comment asks for things that the Department,
11 perhaps, has done to help the industry, if I'm
12 sort of like, interpreting it correctly.

13 While there's been significant
14 investments made by the Department to the
15 industry, a few come to mind.

16 One is we've spent over a million
17 dollars providing grant opportunities with no
18 interest, no repayment requirements and the
19 grants have gone towards acquisition of
20 wheelchair accessible vehicles, acquisition of
21 electric vehicles. There are several individuals
22 who have been able to get into the for-hire

1 industries and start their own business as a
2 result of those grant programs.

3 Grant programs range from \$5,000,
4 \$10,000 and it's been quite significant. The
5 report we get from the public and the driver
6 community and the company community is that that
7 million dollar investment helped. Without that,
8 they would soon been gone. Some of the
9 investments also went towards reducing the cost
10 of renting the vehicle and while there's a fixed
11 amount of grants in business we can make, we also
12 recognize that, it's not just about putting money
13 to the industry.

14 But an equally important component is
15 creating opportunities for drivers to make more
16 money. Last year we did a number of pilot
17 projects. We did a pilot project that allowed
18 the average driver to be an on-demand driver, be
19 it scheduled deliveries or on-demand delivery.
20 We also made investments in technology that
21 enabled the DC Taxi App to go to beta mode and we
22 moved for that with our government by giving that

1 technology for free to the taxi industry
2 cooperative.

3 We have also looked at ways to reduce
4 the cost for drivers in terms of operating. So
5 you will recall that prior, a driver had to go
6 for inspection twice a year. While that process
7 started before my time, it was during our time
8 together, that that became final. So instead of
9 having to go to DMV for inspection twice a year,
10 it's only once.

11 And an additional area where the
12 Department has helped the industry is around the
13 vehicle age limits. Prior to final regulation of
14 vehicle age limits, if you go buy a brand new
15 Toyota Camry, standard gasoline, you get only
16 four years, when most people pay off their car in
17 5, 6, sometimes 7 years. So the Department
18 adopted a regulation that actually gives four
19 more years to a vehicle.

20 And I would like to think if you are
21 an investor, getting four more years to pay off
22 something, helps compared to the status quo.

1 There have been other initiatives to help the
2 industry that are subliminal but very
3 consequential.

4 For example, we've adopted a
5 regulation that says it is okay to have
6 electronic proof of insurance. Instead of
7 struggling to pay tickets that you would get if
8 you cannot show proof of insurance. Same with
9 electronic manifest. So the thing here is that
10 the Department is committed to leveraging
11 technology to not only reduce the cost of being
12 in service, but also to expand economic
13 opportunities. And that treatment is not going
14 to change.

15 What we do recognize, though, is that
16 there's an uneven playing field as a result of
17 years of legislations and years of regulations.
18 So it becomes very important for us to work
19 collaboratively to figure out what should be the
20 right regulatory environment. And that's why I'm
21 very excited about the new body we have, to get
22 different viewpoints and to make sure that

1 working in the for-hire industry as a way of
2 making it to the middle class.

3 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Okay, I think we
4 have one more person that indicated they want to
5 speak. Ms. Nixon?

6 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay. I didn't see
7 the person.

8 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Okay. We'll take
9 you and that will be our last one.

10 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Thank you.

11 SECRETARY MIXON: Okay. So again,
12 state and spell your name. You will have three
13 minutes.

14 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Okay, ma'am. Good
15 morning everybody. My name is Haimanot
16 Bizuayehu. H-A-I-M-A-N-O-T B-I-Z-U-A-Y-E-H-U.
17 For a start I would like to say congratulations
18 to all of you here. Since this is a newly formed
19 body, I don't have much to say, other than
20 saying, other than reminding you that today, when
21 I see the notice, the meeting notice here today,
22 I came here to attend this meeting because I know

1 that, you are, all of you are going to swear in
2 today.

3 So, as I heard the words by the
4 Director, when each of you was swearing in, I ask
5 you to keep that promise to do a fair and
6 constructive job for the vehicle hire, for-hire
7 industry.

8 I know that, I've been a former
9 company representative of one of the leading
10 companies in Washington, DC and I've also been a
11 cab driver for 20 years. And I've been
12 participating all of the previous meetings with
13 the previous body. They did a lot of things. I
14 don't want to blame anything. But there are a
15 lot of things that were just time-wasting,
16 resource-wasting and all of that. Because now
17 this body's poised to do or to remove, relieve
18 the burden with the vehicle for-hire industry is
19 experiencing today, these days. But in the past,
20 the governing document which regulates, which
21 used to regulate the taxi industry, has been
22 rewritten, I don't know, a number of times. That

1 is waste of resource, waste of time and a burden
2 to the taxi industry in general.

3 So when you do business - I'm not
4 telling you what to do, how to do your job, but
5 I just want to keep this, you to keep this in
6 mind. When you do that, please, think thoroughly
7 before -- writing a regulation is a very simple
8 thing. Putting in a book, a governing document
9 is a very simple thing, but you have to also
10 realize the consequence to the driver, the
11 industry and the city that wastes the money for
12 rewriting and rewriting over and over again.

13 I would like to thank the, I don't
14 want to say, I don't want to leave this podium
15 before saying that the Chairman, the former
16 Chairman or the Director, as he said, he did a
17 lot of things for this industry. For instance,
18 changing the vehicle age for the drivers, the
19 inspection requirements and all that, but here
20 what we have to see is there is a taxi industry
21 which is heavily, heavily regulated and there are
22 other competitors with no regulation, or just a

1 little regulation.

2 We are competing for the same customer
3 base. It's just like putting two boxers in the
4 ring, one tied, his hand tied behind him, one
5 without, free. If you put me in the ring with
6 Tyson I can't knock the hell out of him. So
7 that's what we have to see here. There is the
8 heavily regulated industry and there is one
9 without regulation or with little regulation. We
10 are competing with the same customer base. Thank
11 you sir.

12 The new Chairman, you mentioned a very
13 difficult, a very important point. There are cab
14 drivers out there. They pick only two, three
15 fares a day.

16 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Yes.

17 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Okay?

18 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Thank you for your
19 comments. So in your comment, I'm going to ask
20 the Director to just give us an update on where
21 we are with the rewriting of Title 31, because
22 you've mentioned that so many times.

1 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Thank you very much.

2 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Good to see you,
3 hello. Thank you Chairman.

4 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Thank you.

5 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: The Title 31
6 rewrite is pending publication in the DC
7 Register. A copy has also been posted on our
8 website. By going beyond just revision or a
9 rewrite, what we've done is consolidate all the
10 rulemakings into one single document so that
11 there will be transparency. We can know what is
12 pending, what has been finalized, so that when
13 you are making comments it can be germane to a
14 specific item.

15 But rewriting of Title 31 is not by
16 itself going to solve the industry woes. There
17 are fundamental problems with how we govern the
18 for-hire industry that you've alluded to --
19 having a different set of rules for one segment
20 and a different set of rules for another segment.
21 And the opportunity that we all face today, not
22 just as members of the For-Hire Advisory Council,

1 but also stakeholders who are regulated by the
2 general public, is to provide constructive and
3 direct recommendations about how to achieve that
4 parity or how to achieve that level playing
5 field.

6 And any idea that has merit will be
7 considered and any idea that can lead to a better
8 outcome is likely to be implemented, so we want
9 to go beyond just that Title 31 rewrite and look
10 at the overall ecosystem and say what we want the
11 vehicle for-hire industry to look like two years
12 from now, ten years from now.

13 If you've been following the media,
14 there's been talk of automated vehicles. There's
15 also talk about managing the congestion. There's
16 also talk about ensuring that people with a
17 disability can participate in the for-hire
18 industry. We have to weigh all these issues and
19 balance that with how much the average driver, if
20 such a thing even exists, makes. Because if
21 minimum wage is going to get to \$15 an hour at
22 some point, people in the for-hire industry

1 should not need to go on minimum wage. It's a
2 very interesting job and you have to earn a fair
3 return on your labor hours.

4 And the only way we can move forward,
5 really, is through having these sort of
6 conversations and now partnering with all
7 stakeholders to move the industry in the
8 direction it needs to be.

9 MR. BIZUAYEHU: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So that being
11 said, I'm going to ask my fellow advisory members
12 if they have any final comments and we'll start
13 with Mr. Wash, then on down. Ms. Wade?

14 MS. WADE: I'd just like to thank you
15 for coming out and for your continued support.
16 Hope to see you in June.

17 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Any comments down
18 here? So finally, I'd like to thank Director
19 Chrappah for his work. He is always on point for
20 everything and you catch a lot of flack, but you
21 do love him. You really do profess very well.
22 But thank you and to your team and your

1 colleagues and we look forward to continuing to
2 work with you.

3 Even though they changed the
4 structure, as all of you all know, Director
5 Chrappah is a wealth of knowledge and a lot of
6 the questions that you do have will inevitably be
7 related to projects that he's currently underway
8 working on. And I just would say, personally,
9 that this structure here probably will now allow
10 us to move faster on responding directly to what
11 we hear, versus the administrivia of the old
12 Commission. So, that's good --and you look a
13 little more relaxed sitting there as well.

14 DIRECTOR CHRAPPAH: Yes.

15 ADJOURNMENT

16 CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: With that being
17 said, it is 12:03 and this meeting is adjourned.
18 Thank you.

19 (Whereupon, the above -entitled matter
20 went off the record at 12:03 p.m.)
21
22

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Advisory Council Meeting

Before: DC Dept. of For-Hire Vehicles

Date: 02-08-17

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under
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