



Taxicab Services Commission

Tuesday September 29, 2020

6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

MCDOT Staff:

Fred Lees, Michael Pollard, Denise James, Walton Harris

Commission members Present:

Francis Creighton, Chair

Robert Alexander, Afework Kidane, David Mohebbi, Nelson Biama, Belay Teklehayimanot, Elizabeth Ellis, Joyce Plaxen, Becaye Traore and Charles Kauffman

Commission members Absent:

Christopher Conklin, Director, Department of Transportation

Tom Hucker, Councilmember – Chair of the Transportation and Environment Committee

Guests:

Judith Stephenson, Montgomery County Small Business Navigator

Reemberto Rodriguez, Director, Silver Spring Regional Services Center

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Action Items:

Minutes from the February 29, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.



Discussion Items:

Discussion with Judith Stephenson regarding the current business and accessing grant funding through the Federal Cares Act

- Commission members heard from Judith Stephenson, the Montgomery County Small Business Navigator, regarding eligibility requirements and allowable expenses under the Montgomery County ReOpen grant program.
- Commission member Traore inquired about a redesign to the ReOpen Montgomery Grant application to ensure clarity for sole proprietors.
- Commission member Biana inquired if the grants could be prioritized for the taxicab industry, due to the industry providing essential services.
- Staff was asked to assemble and distribute information regarding additional resources available to assist applicants in applying for grants.

Discussion with Reemberto Rodriguez regarding the Retail and Restaurant Work Group for Montgomery County's Re-Opening Efforts

- Commission members heard from Reemberto Rodriguez, Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center, regarding his role as the chair of the county's Retail and Restaurant Work Group.
- Commission member Traore requested additional information regarding residential rental assistance.

Discussion of the resolution to lower certain taxicab fees

MCDOT Staff member Harris provided an overview and tentative timeline regarding a resolution to reduce and simplify certain fees MCDOT collects from fleet owners, passenger vehicle license holders and drivers.

Discussion of mental health services for drivers

MCDOT staff discussed the effect that the pandemic, declining revenue, and declining ridership may have on the mental health of drivers. Staff indicated that information will be provided for those interested in obtaining mental health services from the county.

General Questions/Comments

- Commission member Kauffman posed questions regarding the availability of funds from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund and the status of the FLEX program.
- Commission member Mohebbi inquired about the potential of using the Transportation Services Improvement Fund in an emergency capacity to address the decline in driver revenue.
- Commission member Teklehaymanot inquired about drivers being in arrears regarding lot fees.

- Commission member Mohebbi indicated that he is willing to meet with drivers regarding back-balances of lot fees. Commission member Moehebbi also indicated that his company is willing to waive any back-balance lot fees.

Meeting adjourned: 7:48 p.m.