

[FORWARDED TO TPC 02.10.15]

TPC 02.11.15
ITEM F.2.
HANDOUT

Benishek Clark, Anne

Subject: FW: Taxi Regulations

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

From: fred schepartz
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 1:07 AM
To: Kamp, Charles
Subject: Taxi Regulations

Mr. Kamp,

I'm not sure that I will be able to attend this week's Transit and Parking Commission meeting, but I would like to put in my two cents about the proposed amendment to the City taxi regulations. I'd be very grateful if you shared my email with other members of the Commission. Thanks.

fred

On Sunday, February 1, the day of the largest snowfall of the season, I came in to work my usual driving shift for Union Cab. I worked a solid 10 hours. It was a busy shift with the snow and the Super Bowl, but really, it was all in a day's work because that's what I do as a cab driver in this city. I work when I'm scheduled to work. As they say in the post office, neither rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night shall keep me from my appointed rounds. And the same is true of snow.

I had an interesting conversation with a passenger that day. He told me that he likes riding with Union Cab but occasionally will ride with Uber. He said he checked the Uber app several times that day and never saw any vehicles available for service.

I guess it makes sense that the Uber drivers would not want to drive in stressful and potentially dangerous conditions. I don't get to make that choice myself because I work for a company that obeys the City's taxicab regulations. And that's fine by me. Not only do I not mind working in a regulated industry, but I am proud to work in the public trust. On a snowy day, there's people who have places they need to get to, and I'm very happy to be able to make that possible. It is worth noting that despite the greater call volume and the inability to get anywhere quickly, we still gave pretty good service.

The heart of the matter here is whether the City of Madison will continue to regulate taxicabs. That's a serious question that should not be taken lightly. And certainly, the City should not be coerced into deregulating because some deep pocketed outsider comes in and refuses to comply with the rules.

Mandating that taxis operate 24/7, that they cover the whole city, these regulations exist because we as a city believe that this service is a right for ALL citizens. Mandating that fares be approved by the City means that it is everyone's right to know what to expect when they take a cab. Mandating insurance minimums means that it is everyone's right to be safe whether they are riding in a cab, driving in another vehicle, riding a bike or walking.

The implication of our regulations is that we are saying that all citizens have a right to safe, affordable transportation, whenever and wherever they need it.

These mandates mean that cab companies must operate when it's not profitable, and drivers have to be on the road at times when they may not make as much money. That is the price of operating in the public trust. A company that refuses to abide by these rules is cherry-picking, flooding the streets when it is profitable without taking responsibility during less profitable times. This is unfair to the drivers and companies who make a good faith effort to provide service to everyone.

Thank you for listening to what all of us have to say on this issue, and thank you for your effort to strengthen our regulations.

For the record, I have lived in Madison since 1979 and have driven for Union Cab since 1988.

Fred Schepartz

Madison, WI 53704