



**CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION AND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE**

VICE MAYOR DEVEREUX, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

APRIL 3, 2019

1:00 PM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay. Good afternoon everyone. We're gonna get started in a minute, so. Okay. Good afternoon everyone. I'm Vice Mayor Devereux and-- and I welcome you to this, uh, public hearing of the Transportation and Public Utilities Committee. Um, first I'm going to read the call of the meeting, which is that the Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will conduct a public hearing to discuss application and petition number 4 received by the city council on March 4, 2019 at our meeting then submitted by the Cambridge Taxi Drivers and Owners Association and to discuss whether additional regulations on the Transit Network Companies, TNCs could be implemented in Cambridge. Um, I wanna say, first of all, that this meeting is being televised and recorded and also privately recorded by a member of the press. Um, and you should have an agenda, uh, before you there ones on the table. If any, uh, one wishes to speak during the public comment period, please make sure that you've signed in with your name. I have a couple of the signup sheets here, but if you came in later go

ahead and sign up there and we'll get those.

Um, so, um, we will also in a minute go around the table and, uh, introduce each other. Um, I just wanted to say, uh, for sort of to set the stage that when, um, the taxi association gave us this petition in early March it did, um, prompt, you know, I think in my own and my colleagues minds, um, that we haven't really had a public conversation about where we stand with the taxi industry in Cambridge, um, what is going on with regulations with TNCs and the fees that the state is collecting. Um, some of which can help us as a city and also some of which are reserved to help the taxi industry. So I felt it would be a good idea to have a public hearing to give the taxi owners and drivers an opportunity to update us on their situation and to discuss with our staff, um, sort of what the available options are. Um, this-- I believe not to speak for the taxi owners, but I think, um, that their petition was triggered in part by, um, a report that we had on one of our agendas in February which indicated that, um, because of continual competition for curb space,

um, you know, between bike lanes, loading zones, truck deliveries, any number of things, we are recognizing that we need to rethink sort of how we're reallocating curb space so that we can meet our vision zero goals so that people can do pickups, drop-offs, and deliveries in a safe predictable manner, um, and so on that awaiting report which I think is among the various papers in front of you. Um, we did say that we were working with the TNCs to try to designate some pick up and drop off zones, um, that would be integrated into their various mobile apps in part to help manage where they stop so that they're now not stopping in the middle of the street in Harvard Square blocking traffic, putting cyclists at risk, and generally creating the chaotic environment that characterizes many of our streets today. So I think that's in part what triggered the petition. Um, and, you know, there have also been, um, changes in state law relatively recently that make it a violation to block a bike lane, um, so it's now a ticket to the operator. Um, and we just-- last Monday's meeting discussed, uh,

whether we would want to submit a home rule petition to the state legislature to increase the fines for blocking bike lanes and loading zones. That's something we can't do as a city without the state's permission.

Um, you know, we have fees from, uh, the 2016 state law for the TNCs, um, which are, you know, a portion of which are dedicated to helping the taxi industry but I don't know that those fees have actually been paid out yet. I believe there's a study underway to see the best way to do that. Um, and I think all of us have become, um, more and more aware with the benefit of hindsight and the benefit of what's happening on the streets that you know the TNCs do pose some fairly substantial externalities, um, that we are now coming to grips with in terms of the number of vehicles on the streets and-- and so forth. So, um, you know, I think it's-- I think it's a good moment to actually stand back and say what do we want to see? Um, one of the TNCs just at its initial public offering and there's been a lot of commentary on-- you know, on its stock price and

whether there's a road to profitability and-- and how that looks.

So it's a-- it's a really interesting moment in the transportation industry and I want to give everybody an opportunity to sort of share, um, their perspective. So, um, in terms of the agenda, I think the first person we'll hear from is from the Taxi Drivers Association. But before we start with that, why don't we just go around the table and make sure that we all know who's here? So again, I'm Vice Mayor Devereaux.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Hello, my name is Dennis Carlone. I'm a city councillor.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Allana Mallon, city council.

MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI: Sumbul Siddiqui, city council.

MR. BALWINDER GILL: Balwinder Singh Gill, um, owner and operator in Cambridge, taxi operator.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: Nelson Hernandez, President of CTDOA and owner operator.

MS. NICOLE MURATI: Nicole Murati Ferrer,

License Chair Commission.

POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:

Branville Bard, Police Commissioner.

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT JACK ALBERT: Deputy Jack Albert, Cambridge Police.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Joe Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation.

MS. NANCY GLOWA: Nancy Glowa, city solicitor.

COUNCILLOR CRAIG A. KELLEY: Craig Kelley, city council.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Quinton Zondervan, city council.

CITY CLERK DONNA P. LOPEZ: Donna Lopez, city clerk.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay, thank you all. So I will turn it over to, um, Mr. Hernandez for his-- his comments. Thank you.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: I'm sorry, it's gonna be probably a little long. Good afternoon. My name is Nelson Hernandez. I'm the president of the CTDOA. We are honored to be invited here to address the committee about the state tax-- Cambridge taxi

industry. Taxi licensed by the city of Cambridge has served residents and visitors of the city for over a half a century. Taxis have to continue to provide safe and efficient transportation based on our meters, fares set by the city of Cambridge. This is a regulation industry. Historic has proven of its ways for driven-- drivers and small businesses medallion, a little nervous, order to fulfill the American dream of work is hard to earn a decent living to provide for their families. Today, the small business medallion owner driver are facing an American nightmare. Upon the arrival of TNCs the regular-- the regulated Cambridge taxi industry started to crumble when it could not fairly compete with the unlevel playing field between taxis and TNCs.

Today the Cambridge taxi industry is in crisis. Cambridge taxi medallion that over fetched over-- over 600,000 are now scheduled for auction for minimum bid of 13,000 with a literal interest even at that price. And nobody wants to buy these. Many medallion owners strapped with large bank loans,

with personal guarantees have lost their medallions at foreclosures and at risk of losing their homes and other assets that have worked hard for and their lives to acquire. Today there is 257 licensed medallions, which a third of it is working right now. There's approximately over 180,000 TNC registered in the commonwealth, with approximately 70,000 of them are out of state. This is uncontrollable number. If it continues like this, we possibly will lose everything. Today we're on life support. So we could this-- this demand of the technology is growing. We urge the city to not discount the importance of their hired rules and regulator-- regulations that would create years ago to address the congestion and safety in the city. Regulation that should not be replaced in order to allow an unlimited amount of TNC on the city roads and the lack of appropriate market vehicle safety, inspection, and insurance. And then basically we need to take the taxi stands that we had to, um, re-enforce all the laws and we need support of the industry. That's basically it. Thank you.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. Did-- Mr. Gill, did you want to say something too?

MR. BALWINDER GILL: Yes.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Just go ahead and reintroduce yourself just a little.

MR. BALWINDER GILL: Sure. Good afternoon. My name is Balwinder Gill and I'm owner operator and I also drop my wife. My wife works at 1 Bow Street in Harvard Square. So every morning, you know, I come and drop her off. It's very hard to go through it. It is everywhere --you know, in One Square, Porter Square, Harvard Square, Center Square is all you see, Uber and Lyft cars are lining up and, uh, a couple of months ago-- not a couple of months ago, I think a month ago, there was an article in the newspaper. The survey said 43 percent the traffic has been increased by TNC. So they are disrupting the people's life and a professional job is to have to be controlled by the city. It should be kept off Boston and Cambridge population is-- I think is less than-- over a million. New York city has more population, more than six million and they allow

only 80,000 TNCs vehicles work on the roads. But Massachusetts is more than 180,000 unlimited and it could be more is cruising around on the streets. If you go anywhere is gridlocks, morning, evening. It should be capped. Should not be unleashed them so they can, you know, cause everyday problem.

Their vehicle for safety region should be marked, should be numbers on it. So it will be easy to recognize. I think probably everyone-- everyone know March 30, such-- Saturday 1:30 p.m. one girl is get raped by Uber driver right on Storrow Drive. March 31, North Carolina, another girl got raped and murdered by Uber drivers. So I think here everybody is sitting here should be concerned about that. It could be happened. It could be my daughter, could be your daughters could face a similar, um, problem. So you have to be taken very seriously to regulate them properly. They should have limited numbers, cannot be over 180,000. And there is another-- we are requesting-- Cambridge's medallion honors they are facing tough problem. I mean, if it's a situation and continue like this, I don't think so they can

survive more than a year, maybe less than a year. All the taxi will be disappeared from the city of Cambridge states. We need immediate help financially and on the rule regulation. Please do not let them-- do not let them use the taxi stand. Otherwise, we will be face more harder time to pick up our customers. That's all mostly, I say and we need, you know, help immediately, financially and tough on TNC. Thank you.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. Um, would we want to, uh, hear from the-- the license commission first in terms of, uh, comments about, uh, elements of the petition that was submitted, um, aspects of the work that you're doing. I know it's-- I know it's renewal season for-- for medallions.

MS. NICOLE MURATI: Yeah, I think-- uh, I think generally and I think everyone around the table sort of, uh, understands this in terms of the city side. Uh, TNC law is state level. So it's very hard for us to do anything about it. And I think what you'll probably be hearing from the taxi industry is US legislators, uh, and assistance with maybe pushing

through with the state something different. Uh, we can't control the number of TNCs like New York because we don't have the authority. I know that the license commission, um, prior to the state enacting the law attempted to fine TNC drivers for not using meters. Uh that case, although originally one was then overturned. Um, and now we're here with this law that we can't really do anything about in terms of TNCs.

In terms of Hackney, uh, what the license commission has tried to do. Uh, first of all we changed the rules which were 63 pages long, we dwindled down to 13 pages if you include the cover sheet. Um, and what we tried to do when we change them in 2017 was to get rid of a lot of archaic regulations and a lot of regulations that we thought quite frankly we're limiting the medallion holders and the-- um, the drivers to try and attempt to run their business in a better way for them so that they could have flexibility like join TNCs if they wanted to, to join, uh, apps that allow them to hail through-- through the app like CabFare and whatnot.

Unfortunately, a lot of the stuff we can't get rid of. Our ordinance is pretty strict in certain things like drivers must be able to, um, read English. I'll just leave you with that one. Um, but, you know, we do have 257 issued medallions out of those right now we are in renewal's, 143 have submitted themselves to the renewal. We do estimate-- we had estimated that 95 were off the road. We're learning that more are off the road. Um, we won't know for sure how many are on the road until we end renewals which is next Friday. Um, and I think that's basically it. In terms of the cab stands, I think that's a-- that's with traffic and parking. So I'll-- I'll let Mr. Barr, uh, talk about that.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay, thank you. Joe, do you want to go next.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Sure. So, um, again, Joe Barr, director of traffic, parking, and transportation. So we handed out, um, at least as of right now, what we have is our best map of, um, taxi stands in the city. Um, so you can see they're mostly, um, either in the squares, uh, or located

adjacent to or near hotels. Um, there's one, uh, near the Cambridge Hospital in-- inside their loop, um, and then there's a few other kind of random locations, but it just kinda gives you an idea that they are fairly geographically concentrated. Um, as, uh, Nicole said, we're-- you know, they're-- there are street regulation that we implement. Um, and I think, you know, obviously, there's a huge demand on curb space in the city and it's ever increasing because of things like TNCs but also deliveries. Um, you know, an online commerce and other-- just the busyness of the city. Um, and our-- our traditional models for curb regulation and enforcement aren't necessarily either legally or operationally able to keep up with, um, the demand.

So we are certainly looking at how do we allocate our curb space in the future. Um, but I think that, you know, it's-- it's-- it's clear that at least certainly for the-- for the foreseeable future there's-- you know, there's a need for space for taxis both in terms of, you know, being able to have locations, which I think is where-- most of our

cab stands are intended to be where people can just, you know, go and find a taxi fairly easily. Um, and I think there are certainly, you know, equity issues associated with making sure that taxis are available given the TNCs are not necessarily serving every user's needs. Uh, I think one of the things we've heard more recently from the taxi industry, um, is the sort of need for areas for them to kind of stand, not necessarily as much for immediate pickups, but just as a place to be because, you know, for better for worse as the industry has changed, they may have more time when they're laying over or waiting. Um, and I know in New York city there's-- there's a concept of what they call a for-hire vehicles, um, waiting area that's not necessarily intended to be a, um, active pickup area, not that you can't get a taxi there but-- or-- or some other vehicle there but just more of maybe a little bit far-- a little bit farther out of the way where people can know that they can go to wait and then maybe advance up to a more prominent taxi stand if they're called or if there's a need.

So I think we-- we definitely want to work with the industry, with the license commission, with the police on, you know, how we continue to support the taxi industry. But at the same time as I think Vice Mayor you alluded to, um, at the beginning, you know, there's a lot going on and, you know, we need to be keeping our streets safe and so we also need-- you know, being-- being cognizant of the impact this is having on, you know, this industry, we, you know the reality is that the TNCs do exist and so we-- and they do have impacts and some of those impacts we-- we can manage and some of them we can't. And so I think we-- we're trying to find that balance with, like I said, TNCs loading and variety of other curb uses and figuring out the right way to manage all that. But again, I think it's, it's clear for a variety of reasons that we want to continue to, you know, um, have the taxi stands we have and-- and then look at other ways that we can try to support the industry going forward. Um, I guess the other thing I'll just say preemptively and you kind of alluded to it, um, is the-- and this was covered

quite helpfully by the globe earlier this week, that, you know, there's over \$3 million that Mass Development has collected, um, through the-- their five cents of the TNCs surcharge that's intended to be aimed at helping the taxi delivery and for-hire vehicle industry, uh, which-- which none of it has been spent specifically on that purpose, um, and I think that as we look to-- towards what types of assistance or solutions are available that some it's beyond the city's control. But I do think that there's a role, you know, perhaps for the council to help and-- and others. Just put it on the council to help lobby for some of that money to be spent in a more, um, effective way. Not that I have any problem with MAPC doing a study, but obviously, that doesn't actually help the taxi industry to, um, you know, survive and thrive.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Um, thank you. Just to follow on to that for those who didn't read the Globe article. It was by Scott Kirsner who follows the innovation economy and he pointed out that of the 20 cent fee that the state law requires be paid

for each, uh, TNC ride five cents is earmarked for help to the taxi industry, but none of it has been actually distributed because the first thing that Mass Development, which collects the fee, did was to commission a study from MAPC that is about \$49,000. And I don't know what, what stage that study is at. So they're-- they're studying how to spend the money.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: I don't either, but we can certainly, um, find out-- try to find out more about that.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay, thank you. Um, Commissioner Bart, would you like an opportunity or-

MS. NICOLE MURATI: Yes. I'm sorry. I just wanted to add something else, um, you know, because Mr. Singh did mention in terms of limiting, uh, TNCs, which we can't do. But one of the things that, um, that we did that the license commission did when we changed the taxi rules, um, we met with the stakeholders various times. And one of the things we got rid of was the rule two, uh, the lapse rule and,

um, the process for unused medallions and that was to make sure, one, we said we weren't gonna be issuing any new medallions at that time, but that we were also not going to be taking away medallions because we knew a lot of medallion holders were trying to negotiate, um, with their banks and, uh, trying to get those medallions back on the road. So we did do that. I did want to mention that, and we have been waiving all renewal fees in terms of renewals of medallions and driver's licenses, um, so that, you know, in an attempt, and I know it's not a big thing in terms of the grand scheme of thing of what the taxi industry is looking for. But it's the-- it's the one way that we know immediately we can help them.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. And-- and just one other clarifying question and then I'll let some other people speak. Um, I think I also noticed that you eliminated the requirement that the-- the actual vehicle be five years old or younger. Is that-- is that correct?

MS. NICOLE MURATI: Yeah, the-- before the-- the

vehicles-- if you-- if your vehicle became five years old, uh, it was already vintage and so you needed some special, um, approval from the license commission to be able to keep it on the road. We did get rid of that, um, in terms of the vehicles. We also-- in terms of the drivers, um, driving history it used to be four moving violations in seven years. We reduced that to four moving violations in four years.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay. Thank you. Um, any other? Yes.

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT JACK ALBERT: Jack Albert. Uh, I've been involved in this, uh, topic for a long time, uh, just before the TNCs actually hit the streets of Cambridge. And we've seen on our end, uh, very frustrating behavior by TNCs of blocking bike lanes, uh, blocking streets, uh, parking and cab stands. But thankfully between traffic and parking and license commission and the state legislature we now have tools where we can enforce bike lanes with the citation, we're finding particularly with commercial vehicles, uh, that they will park in the

bike lane and take a parking ticket as their course of business and they pass that cost on. Well, um, our traffic officers in particular are now issuing citations to the driver. That's something that we don't like to do. But unfortunately, the situation we're in now, we're not seeing an improvement in the situation, so we are issuing citations and that will go against the driver. And so now we have that-- that, uh, point of parking when they make a decision where they want to park their vehicle, they're gonna think about it twice and we're also, um, putting a lot of effort. Uh, one of the things the commissioner did is reinforce our number of people in Central Square and Harvard Square and we now have sufficient bodies to pay attention to the-- to the cab stands and to make sure they're clear that I know that's a frustrating point for the cab industry. So we do have the tools that we need, uh, to move forward and do what we can to improve the situation for the cab industry.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. Um, do any of my colleagues have-- Oh, and welcome to Mayor

McGovern, who snuck in behind me. Um, uh, any of you have, uh, sort of questions before we go to public comment and then bring it back. Councillor Carlone.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Um, Mr. Albert, how many staff members do we have working the streets, uh, regulating all the issues that have been brought up on a daily basis on an average?

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT JACK ALBERT: Most of our police officers have been trained in the-- the laws, particularly the new laws that we have. We have an officer that is particularly assigned to the license commission and we work with that officer and their staff to address any issues that come their way. And if they don't have the ability to deal with it, then we most certainly have enough staffing through our traffic unit and the officers working on the street to address those issues.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Let me change the way I asked the question. How many police are in the traffic unit?

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT JACK ALBERT: We have 21

officers that are in the traffic unit and, uh, two supervisors. And there are-- there are point of the spear I guess if you want to call it, they're the ones that are out there every day going after it, particularly on, uh, tour busses blocking lanes, uh, TNCs, uh, and were able to use some of the, uh, the traffic grant funding that we have now that the council has approved. We use a lot of that to go after those issues.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: So I know we never have enough people. City can't. Um, and there are other issues in the city that we wish were enforced stronger but, um, is 21-- does that seem like still the optimal number given? And I realize you have a budget too, but we want to learn about priorities. Is that an optimal number? Realistic? Is that a realistic number? I'll take optimal away, nothing's optimal.

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT JACK ALBERT: It's a good number. Uh, it gives us the flexibility to do a lot of things. Um, but I think we all understand that when somebody reports the situation of a car parked

in the bike lane, sometimes by the time we get there it's not there. Or we have an officer that will go through Harvard Square or Central Square to clear the bike lanes to clear the taxi stands and once they go around, uh, this car is pulling right back in again and it's not just the TNCs, there's people going into the small businesses, there's a lot of issues, uh, just on that one topic.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Thank you. Please.

POLICE COMMISSIONER BRADVILLE G. BARD: And that-- that 21 officers and two supervisors represent-- represents, uh, high water mark and staffing level in recent years, so--

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. Councillor Mallon.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Um, I'm actually really glad that we're having this conversation today and I look forward to public comment and hearing more from the taxi

drivers. I think this is two separate conversations. We're having a conversation about curb allocation but the bigger conversation is really about TNCs and their role here in the city, um, in both creating what I would consider just a tremendous amount of traffic and havoc and also creating a crisis, as you mentioned earlier within our taxi, uh, drivers associations and these are families here. Um, and this is their livelihood, their small businesses and I think I'm glad we're having this conversation finally, um, because it's-- it's reached that point. I do have a question around-- I know we talked about the state level funding of \$6 million dollars not being expended, there's doing a study, but the city gets some part of that money. Um, and I think we talked about it being \$680,000 for 2018. Do we know what-- does anyone at the table know what the city of Cambridge has done with that \$680,000?

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Yes. Uh, through Madam Chair, so the-- the 2017 funds which were received in June-ish of last year, um, which was about-- approximately \$680,000 those were put towards the,

UM, Inman Square intersection project, um which, you know, we view the safety improvements, the separated bike lanes, other elements as addressing the impacts of TNCs on safety. And if you-- if you read the-- the language in the state law, it really talks. The-- the city's funding, although I think there are ways to-- to construct an argument that certain parts of it could be spent on direct support or-- or support the taxi industry, it's really about addressing the impact on our transportation infrastructure of TNC. So whether that's additional wear and tear on roads or, you know, people, um, you know, as you-- as many have referred to stopping illegally and bike lanes or things like that. And so again, putting in separated bike lanes and other safety enhancements review as a, you know, uh, appropriate use of the funding. Um, going forward, we haven't decided-- we have not-- we don't know yet for 2018 how much money we're going to get, um, despite the fact that it was reported to DPU in February, but, um, they were-- they had a flood in their office and we believe that's delaying their

ability to get through everything. Um, in any case, we don't expect it to be any lower, presumably would be maybe slightly higher and it's hard to tell, but presumably get a similar allocation. We have not yet decided how that fund-- how those funds will be expended, um, for this year or future years.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: So theoretically we might know in June, it might be a little bit later based on the flood. Would it be possible-- I mean, I-- there's a list here that the taxi drivers have-- have indicated they could use our help with and part of it has to do with funding, right? So, um supporting the rollout of a universal citywide e-hailing booking-- booking application. Um, there's an app approved in New York city that's looking to expand to the city of Cambridge. That could be something that we could support perhaps out of that funding and we should if we can, um, develop a new logo to be added to the exterior. There's-- there's a number of ways in here that we can financially, as a city support the taxi industry so that they feel supported and we can do something. Um, I'm just

wondering if that's something that we can do here, um, as this body or if there's something that we need to do at a policy order level or-- I'm not even sure how we would do that at this point. Um, but I think it's something that we should strongly consider.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Yes, through you Madam Chair, um, I think it's important, uh, as a-- as I regularly say, I'm not a lawyer and so I'm not the right person to interpret what the state law does and doesn't allow, but I think it's important-- will be important to get guidance from the city solicitor, not necessarily at this exact moment, but perhaps at this exact moment, uh, as to what, you know, what-- how that money can and should be spent. Um, we have not received any feedback from DPU on our expenditure from last year and they were supposed to post all of the-- every-- every-- every municipality that receives funding is required by law to submit a report by the end of the calendar year. We submitted ours. They were supposed to-- they're also required by law to post them on their

website, which has not happened. So it's a lot to tell exactly the range of things that this money has been used for across the commonwealth. Um, but again, I think there's-- there's a little bit of uncertainty about exactly what-- what can and cannot be used for in terms of the 10 cents that we receive at the municipal level.

MS. NICOLE MURATI: I'm sorry. If-- if we may councillor. Do you wanna start or should I? Um, and just, um-- and I think the vice mayor already knows this, but the city manager and some of us at this table have been meeting with some of the, uh, taxi owners in terms of the list and we have gotten other types of list. Uh, I know that the city solicitor is looking at certain ways that we can help them. Um, whether it's with this, uh, five cents or I'm sorry, 10 cents or-- or whatnot. In terms of the app that you mentioned, I do want to say the app has not yet been-- it's being used as a pilot program in New York city, only 7 percent of the New York city fleet is actually using it. Um, the app has not been approved for use by New York city. I know that they

went to Boston, uh, to talk about it. It doesn't seem like it's gonna be approved here. There's, uh, a lot of hurdles in terms of the app owner and tying it to the meters and whatnot. But it's certainly something, um, that if it does become available in terms of, um, whether there's an app that can tie to meters and that's approved by the weights and measures of Massachusetts, uh, to be used. I know that the board had mentioned when we did change our rules that that would be something we would support. Um, and then in terms of the logo, we have been talking to the drivers about what exactly that logo would be, um, and that's certainly something that is doable. So yes, so-- we have been-- the answer is yes. We have been looking at these things, we have been talking to the industry about these things and I know that in terms of whether or not we can do certain stuff legally, I know that the law department has been looking into it.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Thank you. Through you Madam Chair, I'm glad to hear that this is being worked on, um, and perhaps out of this hearing could

be a request from the law department about whether or not we can be using those funds. And as far as an app, if that one doesn't work, we're in Cambridge, Massachusetts, there's plenty of people here that could create an app that would work for us. So I think that's something that we could definitely put out there.

MS. NICOLE MURATI: With all due respect, this is something that has been looked at for a long time and the problem is not developing the app. There's plenty of apps out there that are already, um, built for it is who will be implementing it and who will be maintaining it. The city can't-- doesn't have the resources to do that.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Um, yes.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: Could I speak? Um, so what I'm hearing is that 2017 funds are already spent on Union Square? So what--

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Inman Square.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Inman Square, sorry. Inman Square. So how does that help the taxi industry? When there was a cab stand there before,

which is not there now, which is metered parking.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Um, well, I'll let Mr. Barr answer in a minute. But one of the things is we have two different pots of money, right? So the funds that went to Inman Square are out of that-- so there's a total 20 cent fee, 10 cents goes to the city. The city is allowed to use that on the kinds of improvements for safety that Mr. Barr was describing. Then there's an, the other five cents-- there's another five cents which is supposed to be directed to help the taxi industry. And that is the amount of money that is under study. So I don't know, not--

MS. NANCY GLOWA: Through you Madam Chair--

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: You been shaking your head. That's what-- that was the way I read the law. I'm sorry if that's wrong.

MS. NANCY GLOWA: -- the money that that the statute clearly provides can be used to support the taxi industry, um, can be used by the state to support the taxi industry. The money that the city has control over we are still looking into whether

we can use it. Uh, I would note however that even if we could use money to support the taxi industry, it would have to be for a public purpose and it would not be, um, something where we would just be able to provide funds or cars or things like that to, um, businesses-- small businesses. So that's all-- those are all issues that we're still looking at. Okay.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Did that answer your question?

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: Well-- well, I'm still hasn't answered if the 2017 funds were already spent.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Uh, the-- well, 2017 funds have been appropriated for the Inman Square project. And again, it's-- it's based on our understanding of the law is fully-- fully in line with what the expected use of those funds is.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: So basically you use the funds to-- for the city, not for the cab industry?

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Through you Madam Chair, again, the-- the money that the city receives is intended to address the impacts of the TNC

industry on the city's infrastructure. Um, the money-- the five cents that the Mass Development finance agency receives is specifically intended to address the impact of the TNC industry on the taxi and the broader for hire vehicle industry. So, I mean, again, we-- as the city solicitor said, we are looking into if there are ways the city's money can be used to support the taxi industry, but the way the law is written, that's not the direct intent, although it's certainly, I think potentially an allowable use of-- of some amount of the funds.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: So basically what I'm hearing is that the city can do whatever they want with the money, if it's good for the city doesn't matter for the cab industry because the TNC is going to do whatever they want anyway. So you can see because we got traffic all over the place and we didn't create that traffic. So you're using our money to fix the traffic for-- for the city of Cambridge is not for the taxi industry. So I believe the money should be used in a different way. I don't know.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. I think-- I think the Mayor would like a chance to say something and then Councillor Zondervan, so-- oh, you need a microphone.

MAYOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Thanks. I'll just be brief. But I did want to follow up on something that Councillor Mallon was talking about in terms of, you know, the app and, um, you know, we can talk about taxi stands all day long. I see people calling-- getting into Uber's and left right in front of taxi stands with taxis right there. So it's about convenience, right? It's convenient to get on an app and charge something directly to your credit card and have them come get you and, um, and because there are so many more TNCs on the road than taxis I can get-- I can get an Uber at my house in two minutes where it might take 15 minutes, you know, to-- to get a taxi or 20 minutes to get a taxi. So I really think we need to move more quickly. Um, I-- I'm not a world traveler. Okay.

We all know that, but in the last year I've been to Philly and San Antonio and DC. They all have apps

on their cabs to say call this number, you know, to do this. So clearly it's being done in a lot of places, um, and they have figured out how to do it. Um, but really what-- I mean, it's-- it's-- this is an issue of-- um, that I think could be the biggest thing we could do to support the taxi industry is to make it more convenient, uh, for people to use taxis as opposed to using TNCs. And so I think we should be focusing on that. And I think the enforcement-- you know, the enforcement is tough, right? Because, you know, how-- how many seconds does it take for someone to jump out of a TNC and then move on. And-- and it's even different than-- than a taxi too, right? Because if-- I took a taxi home from the airport the other day, Monday and taxi stops in front of my house, I pay with a credit card. I'm in the taxi for a good minute or so, you know, doing that transaction. If you were-- if they were parked in a double parked in a bike lane that gives a little more time for the police if they see them.

TNCs people are in and out within seconds. So it makes enforcement really difficult, but enforcement

is what's going to get people's attention and you give somebody a \$500 fine or \$250 fine maybe they think twice about doing it next time. Um, but I do think the app piece-- I mean, this is-- whether you like TNCs or not, they're incredibly convenient for people to use and that's why people use them. Um, and we need to help the taxi industry in that way so people start seeing and-- and promoting it as-- as-- as well. Um, and I had-- I had this conversation with many folks from the taxi industry a couple of years ago and I-- you know, and I'm gonna share the responsibility. I think we all have a piece in this. I think the taxi industry too has a responsibility, um, in-- in this. You know, it's not-- the city is not going to do everything for the taxi industry. There were battles for years about taxicabs taking credit cards in Cambridge, a complaint I heard all the time.

Um, and then in comes the TNC that's-- that's very convenient and now people turn to that. So we need the taxi industry help in-- in this too in being innovative and coming together. And I know

that there wasn't always agreement in the industry about that, but the city is not gonna be able to just do everything to help us but we need to be doing more. Um, but, you know, I-- I encourage the taxi industry too to-- to be part of that and-- and be willing to make, uh, investments in innovation, uh, for your own survival. And that hasn't always been the case. And so, um, I think we need to really come together around this because I think it is important and as Councillor Mallon said, you know, people are losing their homes over this and nobody wants to see that. Um, and-- but it's gonna take a team effort to do this and that's gonna mean some flexibility on-- from the industry as well.

MS. NICOLE MURATI: Through you, if I may clarify something, there is an app already available here in Cambridge. It's called Cab Fare and it's an app, uh, that we brought to Cambridge when we went to a symposium of different places. Cab Fare came to us, they wanted to present to us, they presented to the license commission their-- their hailing app. Uh, we said that we were fine with it. We brought

all the medallion owners-- we invited all of the medallion owners to come. We introduced them and I know some of them have taken it and some of them have not, we provided information to all the hotels in the city of Cambridge in terms of the cap-- uh, the Cab Fare app and basically, you can use the app to hail the cab, what you can't do right now and what doesn't appear to be out there yet is an app that does with the Uber app or the Lyft or the TNC app does, which is one give you price, um, prediction. Uh you know, sort of like this will be what you're ride is that. You know, you can hail the cab, you can get in the cab, you can pay through the app, uh, that we have right now. But what you won't probably get is sort of, you know, your trip would be \$30 or something like that.

MAYOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: So that-- I mean, that's something that I-- then I think we need to publicize that more. I noticed in the other cities, um, just in Philly this weekend that had-- that painted on the side-- I mean, every cab had, you know, the app logo or the app, you know, address or

phone number or whatever-- whatever it was, um, which I don't see on-- on taxis here. Um, so again-- and again this is sort of, uh, uh-- this has to be a partnership, right? So we have this app, who's promoting it? Is it the city's job to promote it or is it the cab industry's job to promote it? You know, um, you know, I suggested a couple of years ago why, you know, there should be-- the cab industry should take out an ad or an article in the-- in the local paper or something to say we have this app come, you know, this is why taxis are important. So again it-- there has to be-- it has-- this has to go in both directions too. And I think if we do have this app and it's an app that's gonna be helpful to taxis, which sounds like maybe it will, um, we need to promote that better and the cab industry needs to promote that better.

MS. NICOLE MURATI: And just-- you know, one thing, we-- we didn't make the app mandatory so maybe you do see it in other places because they made it mandatory. When we presented this to the cab industry, not everyone was on board and we did not--

we had felt and what we had heard the feedback from the industry had been that we had been so restrictive that they weren't able to develop their own businesses. So at that point we presented them with the option, we told them this is out there, you can, you know, sign up for it, you do not have to. So that's why you don't see it, but you do see Cambridge taxis, they do have it they did get the calls from Cab Fare for free. Um, and Cab Fare did sort of like a-- a weekend long, uh, promotion in Harvard Square and MIT and whatnot. And I think they launched it during, um, uh, graduation weekend. So, you know, it was done but we did not make it, uh, for all cabs. We-- we didn't want to restrict them that way.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: I speak in that note about the Cab Fare. Cab Fare came in, did a little promotion here and there and it went in and out right away because basically it was a charge based app. It was not, uh, uh, booking app that's why the cab industry did not pick up on it. So they need to make it more of a booking app, make it like the

TNCs. That way they can pay from their credit card. Right now we're looking into, um, Wave, I believe. Right now, Wave. It's in New York and we're trying to work in right now. I think there's a-- we-- we're doing a little study on it right now and we'll be-- and it's supposed to go into Boston. We might start it here in Cambridge but there will be-- um, it's a very excellent, it's just like Uber, but like I said, we still have to try and see if we can get it going in here in Cambridge, which I understand that we're pretty open on the app but the point is let's see if it works.

Like I said that Cab Fare is no good no more. It's not even here. I know the guy used to call me, doesn't call me. He's never really gave me a job is basically he says, well, we'll have me using Cab Fare in Central Square a certain time and that's the way it is. So right now we're gonna start doing like a pilot-- they're gonna start doing a pilot-- pilot-- pilot plan but it's basically going to be in between families to see how they can work it, you know, if you're there, you're here, let's say you're

at Harvard Square or you're in Cambridge. That's basically what we need to compete. And still-- basically, that-- that Wave will give you a flat rate. It's not-- it's-- so let's say it's like from Central Square to [inaudible 00:47:52] six bucks will be that \$6. It will be based on time and-- and, uh, and the distance. So it's upfront pricing. So that's-- we're looking into that, where it works. And also we used to have like a little committee, like I'm gonna say about-- about 10 years ago that we used to all sit down, the hotels, the police, everybody and have a little conversation of what's going on in the city and they would try to promote the cabs. There was-- well, they were trying to promote it but I don't know. But at that time it would work-- some things would work, some things wouldn't work. But, uh, in the past five years, six years committee is gone. I haven't seen-- I was part of the committee myself and that's why we're here right now trying to see what we can do. Thank you.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay. I wanna hear from Councillor Zondervan and then in a few minutes

we're going to open up public comment because I see we have a lot of people here. Go ahead.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, I recently downloaded another app called Curb, which is adver-- advertised on all the Boston city cabs. Um, I-- I am a software entrepreneur so I know a little bit about making apps. I made some myself. I-- I don't think that's the problem here. Um, I believe, um, the license commissioner indicated that the taxis could join existing TNCs, is that correct?

MS. NICOLE MURATI: So yes. So one of the questions had been presented whether they could operate as a TNC and-- and the question-- and the answer was yes. That's what the license commission told them.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: So again those apps are out there and-- and taxis could join them if-- if they wanted to. And so my understanding is that that's not the problem, right? One of the problems that we're dealing with is that the TNs are basically, um, pricing the taxi business out, right?

And-- and that's an injustice, um, that's how business disruption works unfortunately. And as was indicated earlier we-- we are not able as the city to prevent that, right? So they can charge much lower rates and basically price the-- the taxi drivers out. So if-- if we're sincere about trying to address the issue then we need to really talk about the pricing. Um, one of the things that we could be considering is-- is congestion pricing, which would also reduce, um, the amount of cars on-- on our streets and New York state actually just approved that a possibility for New York city. So I would like us to-- to think about doing something like that here.

Um, another idea that occurs to me is that we could try to incentivize electric vehicles, um, being used as taxis, um, maybe through some of this funding that-- that we do get from the state, maybe we can figure out a loan program or some other incentive program that would allow the taxi industry to take advantage of that opportunity. I agree with the Mayor that, you know, it's not the taxi

industry's fault, but they are being disrupted and they do also need to evolve, uh, in order to survive. And-- and this could be one way, um, to-- to help them do that. And then in terms of the, uh, enforcement side, I see a lot of TNCs idling in our parking meter spots and that really has to stop. I mean, it's just right here on Bishop Allen, almost every day I'm walking by and there's three or four people sitting in their car on their phone idling in the car. So I do think that we can do more on the enforcement side and I'm always amazed that we say we can't do more enforcement because if we're doing it right, it means we're getting more avenues too, so we should be able to pay for the enforcement that we-- that we need to do. Um, we also need to consider going to some way of allowing people to submit violations via photographs taken on their phones. You know, it can be reviewed by a police officer and then a ticket can be issued so that we're not as limited by the amount of personnel that we can put on the street. Those are just some ideas that I've had.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you, Councillor Kelley.

COUNCILLOR CRAIG A. KELLEY: Thank you. I-- I agree that we seem to be having a couple of discussions, one of which is what we need, uh, state approval for and that would be things like requiring Uber drivers and TNC drivers to be marked, which I think would really change aid the safety aspects because these cars are almost like clown cars. Say, well, pull in front of you in the bike lane, the doors open immediately because there is no transaction and all of a sudden you've got this hazard in front of you that wasn't there before. That's one effort. The enforcement effort is something that we have the authority to do now in terms of-- of parking and I, for whatever reason, can't find any parking data since 2017. Um, but going off of that year and a half old parking enforcement data, it looks like our taxi stand parking enforcement dropped dramatically from 2014 to 2016, 2017 and are no standing and some of our other enforcement efforts did as well. And I agree

with Councillor Zondervan that when I bike around, I see countless people parked somewhere on their phone and I assume-- and I don't generally know because the markings are poor, but I assume many of them are TNC people waiting for the next ride, which is why they can be at someone's house in 30 seconds. So if-- if we want to do what we can to be fair, the immediate place we can start is that level of enforcement because we don't have to ask anyone for permission. We're simply not doing it because for whatever reason at least according to the data I've looked at, which again is a year and a half old. Um, we apparently don't seem to care that much, which I think is very unfortunate.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay. Thank you. Um, well, at this point since we're an hour into a two hour hearing, I'm going to open for public comment. Um, I have sign up sheets and I think there's probably still another on the table. Um, but when I call your name, um, come up to that one, make sure that the little green light indicates that the microphone is on say your name and your address. Um,

and I think-- well, given the number will probably be-- uh, try to keep it under three minutes please. The first name I have is Mr. Gill who's sitting at the table, so I think we'll-- we'll-- we'll skip you. Um, and I'm sorry-- please forgive me in advance if I mispronounce your name. Um, the second name is-- looks like Kolderup Sing, is that-- Thank you. Make sure the microphone is on, is the green light. There you go and speak directly into it so we can hear.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kolderp Sing, address not provided, I've been a driver for 24 years and the first Hackney license got it from Cambridge. I feel like if the city likes TNC too much, convenient, cheaper, all the other things. They're getting free lunch. They have no rules and regulations. Taxis have all the rules and regulation. TNC have no rule to follow. I can sign up today and drive tomorrow with my personal car. Taxi medallion owners and operators have all the rules to follow. The city should issue more medallions, have a reliable app and let the people get a convenience of the taxicab.

Walleyed Nakul, address not provided, I own 24 medallions. Basically I put all my investment, my family's investment in the company and now I'm losing everything. My family, my kids will not have any inheritance whatsoever. The cab stands in the city of Cambridge are not enough to carry the cabs that are parked on the stand because they don't move as fast. When I came here, Mr. Mayor, on your door, there's a sign says climate change is real. What are you gonna do about it? I mean, we are being suffocated by the city. Nobody helps us.

We're dying slowly. Have mercy on us, on our families. You're giving jobs to TNC drivers. But in the meantime, you're removing our jobs away. Mahmoud, address not provided, everything is under regulation and the law. Chaos does not establish anything. The Cambridge city is not able to have a voice against the state. They steal the money from the people and they donate that to the state and the state give it to the city. City of the Cambridge should not accept that money to show that they have a right. Everything is on the regulation.

David Shirzay, address not provided, thank you for the last time when you guys received the money, you're spending somehow but the name was that they put on the bill was for the taxi. You are supposed to fight behalf of us. Uber or Lyft, they can give their app to us. We know about the Cambridge really well. We will do their job. We have everything. I was a committee member. Their lawyer, they were blindfolded, they will say no. If they can also give us opportunity instead of taxi number license, they can lead us to put the LV plate for the taxi, they can lower also insurance.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: If anyone who has come to speak has comments in writing that they would like to give to the clerk, she can put them on the-- put them in the basket. Thank you so much. Uh, next speaker, um, Tarell-- Tarell Key, I can't read the handwriting and it looks like the last name may-- may begin with a K. T-A-R-L. Is that ringing a bell? Well sir, we have some. Let me-- let me go through the list and then I'll give you an opportunity to speak. So okay, so he's not here. Um, Um, several

people didn't indicate whether they want to speak, but they put their cab number in the column. Um, so I don't know, there's one that says 183. Uh, Jack, did you-- did you wish to speak? Okay then. Come on up.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jack, address not provided, indicated that he used to sit on the school taxi committee, but that's been wiped out by Uber. We don't know exactly what we're gonna do, but as far as I'm concerned, talking about what we should do with the taxi but that doesn't exist anymore. Taxi drivers in Cambridge can't compete with Uber because they don't have a stand. The La Ville de Material Canada gave the drivers almost \$50,000 each driver. They gave them 46. Now people need to give them more than \$12.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Um, okay. So no one else on this sheet has actually said yes. So I guess at this point I'm gonna say if there's someone who'd like to speak, this gentleman come on up and will go through anyone else who would like to speak.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mohammed Malek, address not

provided, spoke about the app and about how to help us with the money. The city of Cambridge has been working on a program to buy us a hybrid. The app, the existing app that we had before actually went out of business in two days or three days. It is not a booking app, so it did work. Hybrid program will help us stay in business for a longer while and promote the city as a hybrid taxi and clean environment and cleaner cars. Most of our taxi business is about 60 percent from the businesses in Cambridge, not from the residents. So that's not gonna work for us. We need to support a national app which is the app coming here. Put decals on them, numbers from four corners and a big number from the back, so we could actually spot the crime.

Ojigiu, address not provided, said a while ago I was going to church, I was kind of late and I parked by car. At the end of the service, I returned my car trying to go home and all the white men came up and said next time, don't park your car here again. Because he thinks I did park too close to the crosswalk. When you see a license plate coming from

California, coming from Maine, coming from anywhere in the country, is allowed to work while me as a resident of the United States of Massachusetts, I cannot work.

Janelle Shagillis, address not provided, I've been an owner operator in Cambridge over 30 years. I wish you guys can come up with a law or some policy to help the people who are going out of business. We cannot compete with Uber, this is left and right, dark and the day. Uber has no expenses. What are you guys gonna do for us at this moment to help the industry? This is my question. Yes, we need apps. Where is the money coming from?

Donald Williams, address not provided, my father started buying medallions in 1972. I got in this business in 82. TNCs don't pay nothing. I just got my insurance bill \$13,000. I just had to put a new car on for taxi inspection that just cost me five grand. The cost is going up. She's saying, no, they removed the restrictions on the car so we can buy a little older car. We can't survive this TNC with no relief.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Is there anyone else who would like to speak? If there isn't, I'm gonna close public comment and bring the discussion back to the people around the table. Um, any of my colleagues like to respond to anything or ask any further questions?

MAYOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: I don't know if you covered this. I was a little bit late to the meeting, so I don't know if you went over this, but, um, you know, we did hear from a couple of people about obviously the-- the drop in the value of the medallions and there was some conversation about the city purchasing medallions back. Is that something that we have thought about? Is that something we can do?

MS. NICOLE MURATI: Respectfully, I think that's a question for the city solicitor.

MS. NANCY GLOWA: We don't think that we can buy the medallions back in. You know, as a straight out, you know, we just pay for them. We are exploring other options to try to, um, see if there are ways that we can help the taxi industry. So we are in the

process of reviewing what options there may be.

MAYOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: So I would, um, you know, I think one of the frustrating things is that government moves slowly, so while we're reviewing and studying and thinking and contemplating and debating, people are losing their homes and have \$9 in their bank account. So, um, you know, this is not a new subject. So I would just encourage us to, uh, I was gonna say put the pedal to the metal but I don't-- I don't want to encourage speeding. Um, that we move faster with this because this-- this is people's livelihoods, um, and we need to figure out, you know, how-- how to help them. Um, I do think it's also important to know and we heard a lot of frustration about what the city is not doing. I do think it's important to go over and maybe we can develop some kind of document about what the city has control over and what the city doesn't. You know, I don't think we can-- maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think we can stop TNCs from coming into this city legally. And so when-- when people get up to the mic and say the city needs to stop T-- I mean,

if we're not allowed to do that legally, then we need to be spending our energy and our time talking about what we can do. Um, and so we need to make sure that we're-- I mean, I don't even have a necessarily a clear idea about what, uh, what we can and can't do legally. And so I think getting a better picture of that so that we can make sure that we're, you know, moving forward on-- on things that are really going to make a difference and are really gonna be helpful, um, is important. But at the-- but at the end of the day, we've gotta, you know, we need to move quickly, um, you know, because this is people's livelihoods and-- and there, you know, it's it's, uh, sometimes we don't move as fast as we need to and we-- we need to do that.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mayor. That's exactly we need. Thank you.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Um, no, we're-- we've closed public comment. I'm sorry. Um, and yes, we actually did discuss what we can do before you came in. Um, yeah. Councillor Mallon.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: Thank you, Madam

Chair. And thanks to everybody who came today and spoke. I would say this is not a frustrating conversation. It's a heartbreaking one. Um, I'm wondering if there's a way to work with the Boston city council on this. Since this is a regional issue and it might be stronger if we had some sort of home rule legislation between the two municipalities, um, around what we can do to limit TNCs. I mean, if you just look at, um, you know, the number of TNCs in New York city. I think somebody thankfully, I think you mentioned this earlier with six million people, they only have 80,000 vehicles on the road. With one million people here in the greater Boston area, we have 180,000 vehicles on the road. Uh, if we had the same percentage-wise as New York city, we would have 1,000. So I think there's a way for us to work with Boston to be a little bit stronger, not just here in Cambridge, but together.

I know Michelle Wu does a lot of work on transportation equity and I know that the vice mayor has worked with her in the past. I'm just wondering if that's a way to go forward. I also I'm wondering-

- I know we keep saying this is a state level regulation but we do have an ordinance on the book around Hackney's and is there a way we could work within our existing ordinance to require just to get creative. I just actually don't know the answer to this question. So, you know, if you're a taxi driver and you are working within our Hackney ordinance, cars have to be presented for examination and must have a valid state registration. Is there a way to get creative in our own ordinance and do something here where we have to require an examination of any TNC and limit the number of TNC examinations per year? I don't know. Um, but I think this has reached a level where I think I don't-- I don't feel comfortable saying this is just a state level thing and there's nothing we can do here. I think we-- I think there's a way to get creative here, um, and I'd like to see us do it.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Um, can I speak?

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. I'm-- I'm seeing some heads shake over there. I want to get to Councillor Zondervan, but I-- did you want an

opportunity to respond to what Councillor Mallon was saying?

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Um, just-- well, it-- it reminded me of something I wish I said earlier through Madam Chair. Um. I guess-- I acknowledge and certainly I agree with Councilor Mallon's frustration at the fact that a lot of this is for better for worse the state level regulation and they-- they pretty much in the process of passing that law in 2016, removed almost all authority from local municipalities other than to sort of enforce the laws as they exist for any vehicle as opposed to anything specific to TNCs as we have for taxis. So it is very frustrating and I guess I've come to say many times publicly that the-- the current state regulations are almost comically ineffectual. If you-- if you set out to design a system that didn't work, this is worse than that. Um, and even down to basic things like the DPU expects the local police to be able to enforce whether a driver has, um, you know, passed all the background checks and has the right insurance but has absolutely no way to

communicate that information outside of their own agencies. So there's no hope for the police to be able to figure out whether the driver has the-- the insurance. So it's-- it's just a terrible system to be quite frank.

So I-- I would tend to agree with your earlier sentiment that-- and-- and the city of Boston has put out some thoughts on, you know, on a potential bill and and a re-- re-work of the TNC regulations at the state level. And so I-- I don't disagree that we should try to be as creative as we can at the local level to the extent that we can. But I do think that it's very important that we focus as well not just that-- we focus as well on improving the state regulation. And I think this is a story you're hearing throughout the country that, you know, the initial round of TNC regulations which many of which followed the same model where the TNCs came in with-- and sort of lobbied for very-- for fairly lax regulations and people thought that these were sort of unmi-- unmitigated good thing and we've learned in a variety of ways that they're not. There's very-

- we look and saying, well, this just isn't really working the way, uh, we wanted it to. So I think-- I think in addition to doing whatever we can at the local level, I do think that there's an important role and I think partnering with the city of Boston on that is-- could be a very valuable effort, you know, and-- and potentially other communities that are experiencing-- in the inner core that are experiencing similar issues.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. Councillor Zondervan you wanted to weigh in?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Um, first of all, I do want to acknowledge all the frustration, disappointment, sadness, grief, um, in the room and the public comment. Um, it is, I know very personal for many people and it's very difficult and I personally wish nothing more than that we had some easy way to, uh, to help. Um, as you're hearing, we don't have easy ways to help, but that doesn't mean we're helpless and I do think we can start by enforcing the law. Um, last year I got into a car accident for the

first time and it was with an Uber driver and they didn't have proper insurance and it took me a little back and forth to get compensated for the damage they did to my car. So the Ubers and Lyft these days are marked, it is rather obvious that they are operating in that fashion. We can pull them over and we can ask for their driver's license and their insurance. Um, they are supposedly not employees of Uber or Lyft, so that means they're operating an independent business. Do they have a license to do so? I don't think so. So why are we not able to enforce the requirement that they have a license to operate a business in Cambridge?

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: If I could ask you not to interrupt by applause. Thank you. Go ahead. Are you done?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Um, this-- this is all part of a broader injustice in our society and I'm sad to say that, you know, even if we do all the right things in the next few years and we're able to sustain the taxi industry for a little bit longer, the taxi industry and people driving

Uber and Lyft are facing challenges from automation. We will be looking at cars that drive themselves and even fewer people will be getting paid to do that work. So we need to look at the bigger picture as well and think about how we are going to ensure justice for our working people in this country, in the state, in the city as we go forward because this is just the tip of the iceberg, the canary in the coal mine of what we're facing. Thank you.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. Um, Councillor Kelley, did you or Councillor Carlone, did you have anything else to add?

COUNCILLOR CRAIG A. KELLEY: I would just say I'm a little frustrated that we're kicking around so ineffectively the idea of a home rule petition to do this when-- when it came time to, for example, have retired police officers work construction details that home rule petition just suddenly appeared. We didn't ask for it. But we-- we've acknowledged that there is a challenge with TNCs and how they're regulated and understandably dover has very different concerns in a place like Cambridge. And we

as councillors aren't particularly experts in either transportation or necessarily getting home repetitions done, but it seems like we've been slogging through this with very little leadership from city staff and-- and I don't know how we can change. That's an acknowledged problem that TNCs don't face reasonable laws for a place like Cambridge. Um, and I think we need to work a lot harder and making sure that they do and even that playing field.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay, um, Mr. City Manager is here. He might-- would you like to respond to that? Because that was perhaps a little-- a little off-base.

CITY MANAGER LOUIS DEPASQUALE: I think-- I think, uh, I respect Councillor Kelley's opinion tremendously, but I can tell you that we have worked with the taxi drivers, we've had meetings, the law office, the traffic department, the police department, the license department, the finance department has been in my almost numerous times. This is a problem that the city of Cambridge cannot

solve on its own. We can help. We are committed to helping and we're going to get something done. But it's bigger than the city of Cambridge. We need help with the legislature. We need-- we need help at the state house, but there's only so much we can do. We are restricted under the laws of what we can fund in this industry. And we've really tried to think out of the box and be incredibly creative. But when you do that and it comes to public funds, there's limitation. So I apologize if people think we're moving too slowly. But I can tell you we are moving.

We've-- I thought the last meeting we had about two or three weeks ago was very productive. It's not gonna solve all the problems, but we understand that the council is tremendously committed to doing whatever we can in the city to make it better for our taxi drivers. And I can tell you the city department heads and myself are following the lead of the council on this and doing everything we can to try to come up with some ideas to make this work. Maybe it's taken a little longer than we all would have liked, but it's not from lack of effort, uh,

not understanding the importance of this. So, we will continue to work with you. I thought the last meeting was the best meeting we had. And-- but I can tell you it's not going to solve all the problems, but I understand the urgency and we will continue to work with the taxi cab drivers. And I want to thank them for the meetings we've had, for understanding that we don't have all the solutions, but we're in this together and we are going to try to help to come up with something off. So thank you.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. One last word and we we'll-- yeah.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: You're saying there's no funding. Is there any funding, extra funding for enforcement for the city of Cambridge? Which basically would be enforcement we need is for live parking, blocking bike lanes because I've been out here day and night and when I used to work here at night, let's say 15 years ago, you cannot make a U-turn in the middle of Mass Ave. Or take from, let's say from Harvard Square, go on to Mass Ave because there was police enforcement everywhere. I'm not

saying that the police ain't there because I know a lot of police officers and I know they go through a lot of, you know, stress about this but I don't see that many officers out there. I do see a lot of officers on details because I know I've been through Central Square many times and it's very rare you see a cruiser sometimes. So I don't know. I believe there should be some extra funding for enforcement that can be done now. That's what I believe. I don't know if there is an extra funding for that.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Um, we can certainly discuss that as-- as part of the budget and the staff will discuss it as part of their budget. So we can't answer that today. But I think that's certainly, um, worth considering. Commissioner Barr, did you want to weigh to that?

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: Sure. We-- we frequently take advantage of grant money, is designed specifically for extra enforcement and, um, we-- we, you know, regularly engage in extra enforcement. The idea that we could stop a vehicle because it displayed a uber or lyft tag is, um, is

simply a false one. We need a-- we need reasonable suspicion to stop a vehicle, um, and no pretextual stops. But yeah, we-- we routinely take advantage of extra funding designed specifically for enhanced enforcement of those violations.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Thank you. Councillor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thanks. I just wanted to get clarification. Does a driver need any kind of business license to operate an Uber or Lyft in Cambridge?

MS. NICOLE MURATI: No, according to-- its-- well, I don't want to speak for the city solicitor here but, um, according to the way that the law came in, no, they do not and no, we cannot require one.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you for that. I-- I would strongly question that, um, with the state because they are either employees or they're running their own business and they have to choose and right now they're in no man's land. And I understand the commissioner's comment that we can't pull them over just because, um, but we can

certainly find opportunities to check on whether they have proper insurance to operate, uh, as a-- as a commercial vehicle, which is what they're doing.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Um, Commissioner Barr, did you-- you look like your finger was on the microphone there.

DIRECTOR JOSEPH E. BARR: One stop for another violation, then we certainly can check to make sure that they have the requisite insurance and licenses but not solely because they are operating as a Lyft or-- or Uber driver.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Correct. I do understand that. Thank you.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Uh Councillor Carlone did you-- were you trying to get my attention? No? Okay. Oh, you have to wave harder, Councillor Carlone. Sorry.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Uh, we're all obviously very fru-- everybody in the room is obviously very frustrated by this and, um, it doesn't give you enough satisfaction. Those who are attending to know that everybody in the council

feels this frustration as well. Um, at one point, Airbnbs were not meant to be registered and through state law now they're registered. So this could be, um, the same kind of thinking as Councillor Mallon said work with Boston, Somerville, Brookline the core cities and set up some rules that makes sense. Um, if it makes sense like Airbnb is being registered and ensuring that they are safe places to have others stay over, it seems to me it's the same thing with vehicles on our streets. So this should be considered and, uh, I-- I honestly can't imagine that would not be approved if we're talking about all the things that we brought up but focusing on safety and knowing who is insured and who isn't. Seems pretty straightforward to me.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay. Okay, one-- one more thing and then I'm gonna show some closing remarks and we'll adjourn.

MR. BALDWIN GIL: Thank you. I understand, you know, the vehicles registered in Massachusetts they allow but what about the cars are coming from New Hampshire, Connecticut and they're doing the TNC

work here? Can you check them out? Because the New Hampshire plates, they don't have any insurance. They're self. Can-- they cannot check them either?

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: I can't answer that.
Can--

POLICE COMMISSIONER BRADVILLE G. BARD: Through you, Madam Vice Mayor, the same rules apply. Um, you know, irrespective of the tag that's on the car and what state issued that tag. If a predicate violation didn't occur, then we don't have the reasonable suspicion to stop that vehicle and make any interrogatories.

MR. NELSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. As a-- as a home rule petition, could that be put in as in Cambridge here? That anybody that's not in the Massachusetts plate cannot pick up here because the way I look at it is if I can't take my cab to Georgia and pick up over there. Even Boston, which is right over some of them, I get pulled over, they pound my cab \$500 fine. I gotta go to court.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Well, certainly home rule petition could hypothetically say anything

whether it would gain any traction in the state legislature is-- is another matter. Um, I think to sort of try to wrap up, um, what is really not a conversation that has any closure at the moment and I don't want to acknowledge that as my colleagues have. This is-- this is difficult to hear, um, taxi owners and drivers are small business people and-- and it-- it is really devastating to see an industry implode. Um, and it's interesting that we refer to it as the taxi industry because essentially there isn't one centralized industry, there are a bunch of independent owners even independent of each other, taxi owner drivers in Cambridge versus those in Boston versus those in Brooklyn and other cities. And there isn't a centralized entity, uh, you know, that represents all of you and that can bring your different perspectives together into one unified voice. By contrast, the TNCs are companies that are heavily backed with venture capital money. Um, they've been willing to lose money, hand over fist on discounted fares and-- and other things, um, obviously, to the detriment of the so called taxi

industry. Um, and I think we will continue to see fallout from that, you know, in-- in all respects. Um, I don't think it's likely that we'll continue to see those discounted fares forever. Or even that the TNC industry will look the same to, you know, in two years or five years as it does today. So this is a very fluid, um, you know, market at the moment and all of us are trying to figure out where it's going and how we can, uh, be fair and-- and equitable by-- by you all and and most importantly serve the transportation needs that residents, visitors and so forth have. I mean, this-- stepping back, this is an industry that is intended to further mobility. Um, it is one of many options that people have before them. And, you know, if-- if we want to have a viable industry of any kind that offers rides to people in what we call today cars, I don't know what they'll be called in 10 years if robots are driving them, then we're gonna have to figure out something.

Um, you know, I think we've heard loud and clear that the state law has left us, um, pretty, you know, with our hands a little bit tied behind our

backs and that there are elements of it that we would like to see changed and strengthened so that we have more of a voice and how we want, um, to be able to manage, you know, the people who are offering rides on our streets. So I don't know the best path to that whether it's working with the Boston City Council, whether it's working with Mayor Walsh, whether it's working with, uh, staff to staff or the MAPC. I'm not exactly sure what entity is the most effective to get cities voices heard to the state legislature. I know there are some bills pending. I haven't reviewed them all closely, so I can't say whether the council should support any or none of them. Um, but certainly I would like us, uh, as a committee and with the staff to consider what the best path to working with people at the state level to have this message heard.

Um, so that's one thing that I'd like to come out of this meeting. Um, another thing is, um, we've heard from the city manager and-- and from people around the table that we-- that we are meeting with the taxi owners. We also heard that there used to be

regular meetings that don't happen. So I-- I hope that those meetings are sort of happening on a regular basis and are somewhat formalized because I think it is important for, you know, for our staff and for the taxi owners to be regularly meeting to work through these issues so that we are not letting things, you know, um, just drift. And I'm not reproaching anyone. I'm just encouraging us to-- to stay focused on-- on working together in that way. Um, one very micro thing is we heard that there is no longer a taxi stand near MIT. And I believe that may have been relocated during the south Mass Ave, um, you know, improvements that we did and and if there is a way to have some taxi presence near MIT. I think we've heard from the owners that-- that-- that would be helpful. Um, and I think, you know, an emphasis on enforcement of all cars regardless of whether they're TNCs or taxis idling in the wrong places or, um, other private vehicles.

I think that is something that we hear every single day, uh, that enforcement just, you know, is a game of whack a mole. But we need to dedicate more

resources to it. So, um, I think the only order that I would have coming out of this is for us to, uh, ask the city manager and the staff to continue to work with the taxi industry and to, um, work with us on going to the state with, uh, changes to the state law that we think would help both the ta-- taxi industry and help us manage the situation on the street. Does that seem amenable? Councillor Mallon, did you wanna add something?

VICE MAYOR ALANNA MALLON: I think one other thing that was mentioned in the meeting was getting an opinion from the city solicitor on what to do with the 2018 funding. Um, If there's a way that we could use that in a possibly more directed way to help the taxi drivers.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Okay, We can add that. Yes.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Um, the other thing is if it's true, the state has five cents per trip and there were over six million trips. That's almost \$340,000. And, um, I assume that's an MAPC. The state is, uh, the agency is looking into how to

spend that. We could ask to be kept up with any, um, studies that they're doing and it's-- I'm sure Joe and others would-- would know that. But for the council to be kept up to date on that because maybe I'm wrong, but that-- if it's trying to help the taxi industry, maybe that goes into the-- the app development or the research of a national app or some, uh, true response to the need that's been voiced today. And, um, that seems like a good part of money to perhaps deal with that.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Yes, I think that's a good suggestion. So I think what we're hearing is continue to meet with the taxi industry, help us figure out what we want to advocate with the state for changes in that law, um, opinion from the city solicitor on how the money that we receive from the state for the TNC fees can be spent. Uh, what Councillor Carlone just said, which I've already forgotten because I didn't write it down, but the clerk did. Oh, the-- the update on the-- on the work that-- that MAPC is doing with Mass development, which is the entity and Councillor Carlone, what

else?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Councillor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: We're looking alike.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Sorry, go ahead.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Um, and I had to suggest another task force. I'm not going to.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Go ahead.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Um, but maybe we can have more regular meetings in this committee on this issue as-- as a forum to keep us up to date on the progress. You know, maybe it's once a month or every couple of months or some regular cadence so that we're not losing track of this-- of this matter.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Yeah, I think that's a good idea. I think when we have maybe a report back on-- on the things that we've just asked for, then that would be an opportunity for us to come back together and discuss where we stand. So, okay. Um, I want to thank everybody.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: We need to vote on that.

VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: Oh, we need to vote on that. I'm sorry. I thought-- okay, sorry, getting ahead of myself. Okay. Is everybody comfortable with what we've discussed in? Okay. So, right. Thank you, Madam Clerk for keeping me on track.

CITY CLERK DONNA P. LOPEZ: All in favor.

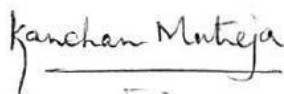
VICE MAYOR JAN DEVEREUX: All in favor. Yes. Okay. Okay. Then I want to thank everybody for coming. Um, thank you for your patience and speaking and your patience with the situation. We appreciate it. Meeting's adjourned.

The Cambridge City Council Transportation and Public Utilities Committee adjourned at approximately 03:00 p.m.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, **Kanchan Mutreja**, a transcriber for Datagain, do hereby certify: That said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 25th day of January 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kanchan Mutreja". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Transcriber

We look forward to hearing back as to when the next scheduled meeting will take place to continue to address open items.

Thanks again for your continued support!

--

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