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Two more taxis likely to hit roads

By **MELANIE HENNESSEY**

The Champion

Local residents could soon see two more accessible taxi cabs on Milton's roads now that the Town has amended its taxicab and limousine bylaw.

At its meeting January 16, council passed the revised bylaw that allows for two accessible taxicab owner's plates to be released to two individuals on the plate waiting list this year.

After that, the Town will go back to using the population ratio of one taxi plate for every 2,000 residents in 2007.

Other amendments include a 15-hour limit on the shift a taxi driver can work and clarification around broker dispatching duties.

While those in the local taxi industry indicated to council they were happy to see the bylaw's wording refined to say dispatching has to be done "from the broker's office," they made one last push for further clarification at last week's meeting.

Lawyer William Perras, who was representing the owners of Rainbow Taxi, asked that wording be added to specify dispatching can't be done "from a remote location," meaning via cell phone by a person acting as a dispatcher and driver.

"A driver who is dispatching is not in control of his vehicle. It creates a safety issue," he said. "There's a competition issue as well, but there's also a safety issue."

But, Town Licensing Administrator Selena Campbell explained staff thought it would be redundant to add Mr. Perras' suggested wording.

Mr. Perras also presented a petition containing almost two dozen names of those in the local taxi industry who are opposed to brokerages call forwarding their landline phone to cell phones for dispatching purposes.

Ms Campbell noted the bylaw ensures brokerages are to be staffed on a 24-hour basis by a dispatcher.

At a recent public meeting on the bylaw amendments, a few councillors cited concerns with the 45-day time period the first two people on the plate waiting list would be given to let the Town know if they're interested in operating an accessible cab, since there's no guarantee they would be. This means the 45-day wait could be repeated several times until the Town finds two takers.

Staff's report to council explains that due to the concerns raised, staff lowered that period to 19 days.

Currently there are 37 names on the waiting list.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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