

Public Comment to Cambridge City Council 10-Aug-2015  
Xavier Dietrich

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My name is Xavier Dietrich and I am a Cambridge resident. I thank the Council for the opportunity to speak in support of the Taxicab Industry tonight regarding a few items on tonight's agenda.

Two of these items appear as resolutions (numbers 15 and 24), the third item is a policy order (number 18) requesting a moratorium on fees, but not fines, that would otherwise be imposed on Cambridge Taxicab Drivers.

The merits of the various bills before the House regarding regulation of transit network companies mentioned in these policy orders and resolutions will be debated and decided upon elsewhere.

It is my purpose tonight to raise awareness of a real and disturbing issue within the City - specifically the Cambridge License Commission - and that is one of refusal to enforce existing laws.

The law regarding "conveyance of person for hire" is clear as stated in the City of Cambridge's Code of Ordinances 5.20.

The ordinance is clear and yet it appears that the position of the City, including Council Members, the City Manager and the License Commission is that it is appropriate to not enforce these ordinances.

I believe this position is wrong.

Until such time as these ordinances are modified they must be enforced - as it is the duty of the city manager in accordance with the Plan E Charter "to see that within the City the laws of the Commonwealth and the ordinances, resolutions and regulations of the city council are faithfully executed."

It should come as no surprise to city officials if citizens view them as corrupt and express contempt for them as a result of the failures and inappropriate actions of these city officials.

The Cambridge License Commission has a long history of failing to enforce existing laws, including the failure to enforce the aforementioned law regarding conveyance of persons for hire.

Another recent example is the failure to enforce a liquor license violation where the License Commission itself has acknowledged that the Cellar Wine and Spirits is in clear violation of M.G.L. Chapter 138 section 17 and has been since 2005. The only remedy for this violation is revocation of the license.

The License Commission has made it public, six months ago that it has been aware of this violation, yet the ~~establishment~~ remains open and currently remains licensed with no disciplinary action taken toward it.

I am here tonight to support those, and in particular the taxi drivers, who are being harmed by the failure of the city to enforce its own laws.

The action that I propose to remedy this situation is to replace the Chair of the Cambridge License Commission Andrea Jackson with someone who is competent, ethical, and has a basic understanding of the licensing regulation to fairly enforce the law.

I call upon the city council to order the city manager to enforce the law and to that end do a proper and thorough search to replace the License Commission Chair.

Thank you.