

November 30, 1978
 Minute Book 69 - Page 364
 Special Meeting

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, met in a special session on Thursday, November 30, 1978, at 11:00 a. m., in the Council Chamber, City Hall, with Mayor Kenneth R. Harris presiding, and Councilmembers Tom Cox, Jr., Charlie Dannelly, Ron Leeper, Pat Locke, H. Milton Short, and Minette Trosch present.

ABSENT: Councilmembers Don Carroll, Betty Chafin, Harvey B. Gantt, Laura Frech, and George K. Selden, Jr.

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INVOCATION.

The invocation was given by Councilmember Milton Short.

INTRODUCTION TO ITEM OF BUSINESS UNDER CONSIDERATION.

At the Mayor's request, Mr. Henry Underhill, City Attorney, explained that this special meeting was called pursuant to Section 3.22 of the Charter of the City of Charlotte; that all notices required by that provision of the Charter and by the State Statute regarding open meetings have been complied with.

He advised that according to the Charter, the only business which may be transacted at a special meeting can be that business which is identified in the notice calling the meeting - in this instance, the single agenda item which is before them. An exception may be made when the Mayor and all members of Council are present and consent to the transaction of other business. He stated that since a full Council is not present, but merely a quorum, no other business can be transacted at this meeting. That he does not read the Charter provision to prohibit Council from discussing other matters, but they can take no action on anything other than the designated agenda item.

Mr. Burkhalter, City Manager, advised that notices were delivered to all Councilmembers and all except Mr. Selden have personal knowledge of the meeting; that Mr. Selden is out of the City and the notice was delivered and signed for at his place of address.

ORDINANCE NO. 443 TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE CITY CODE WITH RESPECT TO THE OPERATION OF TAXICABS.

Mr. Michael Kidd, Transit Coordinator, stated on Monday of this week the Mayor announced the City's alternative transportation plans to try to deal with some of the problems created by the work stoppage of drivers and mechanics of the Charlotte Transit System who are on strike. That one of the items discussed in that plan was utilizing taxicabs in the City of Charlotte in some fashion other than the way they are used on regular meter rate.

It was suggested at that time that negotiations and discussions would be started with cab companies to see what arrangements could be worked out. At that time, some City subsidy was perhaps envisioned in whatever arrangements were made.

The Mecklenburg County Taxicab Association, representing the cab companies in Charlotte - Yellow Cab, Charlotte Cab, Checker Cab and Victory Cab, got together with the City staff. They discussed the operation of a shared ride service. One of the first things they identified was the ordinances dealing with charges, fair payment received, passenger pick-up at the square, prohibition on cruising, number of persons allowed in a taxi, and operation of a taxicab along mass transit routes. It is these ordinances that Council is being asked to suspend today.

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He stated that in return the taxi companies made a very strong point that they believed fully in private enterprise and they felt like that for a fare of \$1.25 for a one-way trip they could operate these services and not require any City subsidy. That this was good news to the City staff because in talking about a City subsidy it got rather complicated in several areas and a contract would have been required and would perhaps have taken a little more time.

The cab companies have agreed to operate a shared-ride and taxicab service for \$1.25 per trip. Passengers would be required to call and reserve a trip at least four hours in advance of travel and would be encouraged, if there are repetitive trips where they leave for work at the same time everyday, to make arrangements for a week in advance, or a month in advance (whatever period of time they would like to use the service, or that the ordinances are suspended). The cab dispatchers would group the people; right now they respond on a one-to-one basis. During the period in which the ordinances are suspended they would group people in various areas of town traveling to other parts of town, and cabs would be loaded up to carry more people at one time. The service would be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The four cab companies have agreed to work cooperatively on this and pass on passengers and operate as smoothly as possible.

He stated if Council takes positive action on this today, the program would begin at 5 a. m. tomorrow morning. Citizens could start reserving cabs this afternoon for tomorrow morning. He recommended adoption of the proposed ordinance.

Motion was made by Councilmember Locke, seconded by Councilmember Short, to adopt the subject ordinance temporarily suspending certain provisions of the City Code concerning operation of taxicabs to allow taxicabs to provide transportation services during the strike by bus company employees.

Councilmember Leeper stated he has noted that if this works out fairly well the cab companies might be interested in keeping this on on a continuing basis, and asked if this is correct?

Mr. Kidd replied this is correct; that in their discussions it was revealed there is a taxicab committee set up to study the ordinances. It has not had much time to work on it. But, this program will give them a chance to look at a demonstration of this type of thing; to liberalize some of the ordinances governing taxicabs and give them some relief financially and do some other things to help supplement the bus service. He stated his personal concern is that he wants to make sure that what they do in no way damages what the City is trying to do with the transit system. That over a period of time he believes they will work something out.

Councilmember Short asked if someone attempted to join the shared-ride and found that no one else was available to share, would the cab companies propose to go ahead anyway and help that person, after they had waited the four-hour period? Mr. Kidd replied affirmatively. They will call this a share-a-cab program and people who call in will be asked to identify themselves. If they do not, the dispatcher will ask if they want the regular meter rate or will they ride a share-a-cab. If there is only one person in a cab he will be guaranteed the \$1.25 rate.

Councilmember Dannelly asked if they are assuring that people will be able to get to their jobs on time? Mr. Kidd replied he would have to qualify his answer. That this is the first time they have tried this type of program in Charlotte; that the cab people could perhaps discuss this a little better than he can. He is sure there will be some rough spots, but they have been assured by the cab companies that they will do everything they can to make sure that it works effectively. Mr. Dannelly stated that the question Mr. Leeper raised is certainly something to think about with the energy crisis in the future.

Councilmember Locke asked if Mr. Kidd will be helping to coordinate the grouping program since there are four taxicab companies involved? Mr. Kidd replied that the City would not be involved in that at all; that the way it

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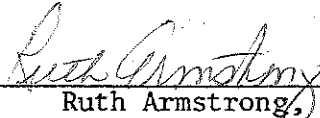
is proposed to work, people will be asked to call their favorite cab company, or the first one they come to in the telephone book, or whatever. That company will take that reservation; if they are booked up, they will pass it on to someone else. That unfortunately, there is no common telephone line. They thought about trying to set one up, but it would just tend to add another layer in the process. The companies feel they can do the job under these arrangements.

The vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 26, at Page 393.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion for adjournment was made by Councilmember Cox, seconded by Councilmember Dannelly, and carried unanimously.



Ruth Armstrong
Ruth Armstrong, City Clerk