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FOR INFORMATION CALL

April 17, 2013

Ald. Robert Bauman
(414) 286-2221

Proposal to lift cap on city taxicab permits, improve taxi service to get Thursday committee hearing

A proposed city ordinance introduced by **Alderman Robert J. Bauman** seeking to repeal the city's cap on issuing new public passenger vehicle permits and to establish new requirements aimed at improving taxicab services in the city will be discussed **TOMORROW** (Thursday, April 18) during a public hearing before the Common Council's **Public Safety Committee**.

Thursday's committee meeting will start at 9 a.m. in room 301-B at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St. The taxicab related items are scheduled to be heard starting at 10:15 a.m.

The ordinance offered by Alderman Bauman – **Common Council file #111222** – would repeal the limitation on issuance of new public passenger vehicle permits for taxicabs and authorizes the issuance of 50 new permits prior to November 1, 2014. It establishes that 10 additional new permits may be issued each year after November 1, 2014, for a period of five years.

The ordinance also authorizes the City Clerk to establish a process for accepting and processing completed applications using a lottery or other system as necessary to ensure orderly processing of taxicab permit applications. If a lottery is established, according to the file, the City Clerk may provide for a waiting list, and a \$100 lottery participation fee would be established.

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Taxicab measures/ADD ONE

File # 111222 proposes an increase in the one-year permit fee from \$175 to \$370, and the one-year renewal permit fee from \$100 to \$295. The fees for a new permit and for a renewal permit would be reduced by \$20 if the permitted vehicle is registered within the city.

Alderman Bauman, chair of the Public Works Committee, has said a city ordinance adopted in 1991 (that arbitrarily capped the number of public passenger vehicle permits) has led to fewer taxis operating in Milwaukee today than did 20 years ago. He said lifting the cap and enacting more robust inspection and vehicle equipment standards, the city will be allowing “the free market to determine the number of taxis that will operate in Milwaukee while insuring the comfort, safety, and cleanliness of those taxis.”

The committee will also receive a report on rates for meter fare taxicabs completed by the city’s Legislative Reference Bureau. The report compares taxicab rates in Milwaukee, Chicago, and 20 other cities.

The ordinance sponsored by Alderman Bauman, which has been heard before the city’s Public Transportation Review Board in its earlier form, would also create a more frequent taxicab inspection process, as well as taxi vehicle standards and equipment requirements, including establishing required attire for drivers (white shirt with khaki pants), and the goal of making the city’s taxicab fleet fuel efficient by 2019.

The ordinance provides that new and renewal permits issued on or after November 1, 2014, may only be issued to vehicles that, in addition to meeting all other requirements, either meet requirements for handicapped-elderly vehicles or that provide passenger leg room of not less than 40 inches. This leg room requirement is measured from the back of the seat to the back of the seat in front.

The ordinance requires that two inspections of permitted taxicabs be scheduled and conducted in the course of a permit year. The Department of Public Works would be assigned to conduct all inspections of taxicabs operated by holders of public passenger vehicle permits.