

Transportation Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, March 26, 2021

1:00 PM in Zoom and YouTube Live

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. S26.

The following committee members were present:

Senators: Cassano S. S04; Daugherty Abrams M. S13; Haskell W. S26; Lopes R. S06; Martin H. S31; Needleman N. S33; Osten C. S19; Somers H. S18

Representatives: Berger-Girvalo A. 111; Blumenthal M. 147; Carney D. 023; Chafee B. 033; Concepcion J. 004; Conley C. 040; Dauphinais A. 044; Devlin L. 134; Goupil C. 035; Haines I. 034; Harrison C. 069; Labriola D. 131; Lemar R. 096; McCarthy Vahey C. 133; Meskers S. 150; Michel D. 146; Morrin Bello A. 028; O'Dea T. 125; Rebimbas R. 070; Reyes G. 075; Rosario C. 128; Simms T. 140; Smith B. 048; Steinberg J. 136; Thomas S. 143; Zawistowski T. 061; Zupkus L. 089

Absent were:

Senators: Kissel J. S07

Representatives:

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for HB-6486, JFS to the floor.

A motion was made by Co-Chairman, Rep. Lemar R. 096., and seconded by Rep. Carney D. 023.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. began the discussion by clarifying that HB-6484 provides updates and additional definitions for autonomous driving-systems so that they may conform with engineering standards. He also explained that the bill eliminates the existing autonomous vehicle pilot program—seeing as said program never got off the ground—and instead requires that the Department of Transportation collaborates with other agencies to establish a program for testing and operating autonomous driving-system equipped vehicles, and that program regulations are adopted.

Rep. Zawistowski T. 061. questioned whether the bill would allow someone to purchase an autonomous vehicle and operate it on our current roadways. Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. answered that the bill establishes regulations under which that could be contemplated—and would incorporate state and federal laws, as well as national best practices on testing. Importantly, it would establish requirements for the operation of autonomous driving-system-equipped vehicles, those being: a driver would have to be registered and carry at least \$5 million of insurance, the owner and operator is responsible for ensuring compliant cooperation, and standards for reporting if a vehicle is involved in a crash. Haskell concluded by stating that it initiates the process but would require much more before that moment arrived.

Rep. Zawistowski T. 061. then questioned whether the Department of Transportation could set regulations without first returning to the legislature for approval. Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. explained that it would initiate the process for the DOT to set regulations, although stipulates that it would need to be in collaboration with other agencies. He continued, stating that there is action taking place within the Biden administration and the federal DOT, and that he was confident our DOT would work closely with our federal counterparts to makes ensure Connecticut is adhering to best practices.

Rep. Zawistowski T. 061. expressed her concern over the safety of residents, and that she wanted to ensure adequate oversight as this issue progresses. She continued, stating that she would feel more comfortable if the requirements set by the DOT would have to come back to the legislature—and concluded by offering her appreciation for the bill. Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26 echoed her concerns, noting that they will be critically important for ensuring the safety of our roads.

**The motion was passed by roll call vote 34-1.**

**The vote was held open until 4 p.m. in order to accommodate committee members who were in other meetings at the time.**

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for HB-6568, JFS to the floor.

The motion was moved by Co-Chairman, Rep. Lemar R. 096., and seconded by Rep. Simms T. 140.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. began the discussion by explaining peer to peer car sharing as essentially Air B&B for vehicles, explaining that it is a practice already present in Connecticut, and that the bill is to protect drivers when they use it by implementing national best practice insurance language—including lapses in coverage, disclosures, driver's license verifications, equipment regulations, and recalls.

Sen. Somers H. 18. questioned whether the legislation was trying to make it number safer for consumers, because there have been problems in the past with renting a car that breaks down, for example—and expanded by asking whether it will create a more level playing field between the car rental agencies and the peer to peer programs. Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. answered yes on both counts, noting that the peer to peer programs currently operating in Connecticut are doing so somewhat outside of insurance and regulatory frameworks—and that this bill attempts to aid that issue.

Rep. Rosario C. 128. questioned whether the peer to peer companies had agreed to the language in the bill. Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. answered that there was agreement on the vast majority of the bill, the exception being pushback as to whether the companies can provide service at Bradley Airport—which, if they were to do so, would entail a reasonable fee to the airport, similar to the operations in other states.

Rep. Carney D. 023. made a motion to create a consent calendar, seconded by Co-Chair, Rep. Lemar 096.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26 entertained motions to add legislation to the consent calendar.

Rep. Carney D. 023. motioned for HB-6568 to be added to the consent calendar, seconded by Rep. Michel D. 146.

**The item was moved to the consent calendar.**

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for HB-6569, JFS to the floor.

The motion was made by Rep. O'Dea T. 125., seconded by Rep. Carney D. 023.

Chairman, Sen Haskell W. 26. opened the discussion by explaining that the legislation would empower local ordinances to issue fines for failing to register a vehicle and strengthen the task force that is working towards compliance with our registration laws.

Rep. O'Dea T. 125. mentioned that the bill may benefit by adding a process or a policy whereby condominium complexes nor any residential building can grant parking permits to vehicles that are registered out of state. Chairman, Sen Haskell W. 26 stated that he would like to continue that conversation.

Rep. Carney D. 023. motioned for HB-6569 to be added to the consent calendar, seconded by Rep. Simms T. 140.

**The item was moved to the consent calendar.**

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for HB-6570, JFS to the floor.

The motion was made by Co-Chairman, Lemar R. 096., seconded by Rep. Smith B. 048.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. opened discussion by explaining the bill would require the DOT, in consultation with the Department of Housing, to identify five passenger rail train or bus stations with a state owned parking lot, and five state owned parcels of land

in proximity to a passenger rail train or bus station that may be suited for low income housing or transit oriented development.

Rep. O'Dea T. 125. questioned whether, if a town did not want to be involved in the study addressed in lines 3-14, is there language that would make that omission voluntary.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. answered that the bill's voluntary is based on the fact that the bill allows for only a request for information and does not give the state authority to otherwise move forward.

Rep. O'Dea T. 125. expressed concern over the town not being appropriately consulted.

Rep. Devlin L. 134. echoed Rep. O'Dea T. 125.'s concerns, then questioned whether capacity for commuting parking would be lost. Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. referenced line 7, which says that no amount of parking would be changed—but noted the concern over the impact increased residential parking needs would affect commuting parking capacity.

Rep. Devlin L. 134. explained that, by including additional residential parking while not increasing overall parking capacity, commuting parking would be diminished in consequence. To which Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. answered that, while he is not on the planning and zoning committee, he figured that beneficial opportunities for housing development would include increasing overall parking capacity.

Rep. Devlin L. 134. asked for the Chairman to define "request for information." Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. stated that his understanding was that it would be a collaboration with municipal authorities, then handed the question to Co-Chair, Rep. Lemar R. 096.—who explained that the aforementioned concerns have encouraged him to consider ways to better collaborate with local municipalities, which was heightened during the active public hearing in which many constituents testified against the bill on account of the DOT misusing land they had already attained; thus, he defined the request for information as the DOT working closely with communities and developers to identify applicable locations, so that the opportunities available are logged and known.

Rep. Devlin L. 134. expressed her concern that the collaboration is not clearly defined, then questioned whether property taxes would go to the state or local community. Co-Chairman, Rep. Lemar R. 096. expressed that the bill does not allow the DOT to move forward, and that negotiations with the DOT, legislature, and local communities would need to negotiate such important details.

Rep. Devlin L. 134. questioned the specifics of section 2 and stated that she found it reasonable for the DOT to consider utilizing properties which they already own. Co-Chairman, Rep. Lemar R. 096. echoed her sentiment.

Rep. Smith B. 048. offered similar comments regarding the request for information.

**The motion was passed by roll call vote 21-14**

**The vote was held open until 4 p.m. in order to accommodate committee members who were in other meetings at the time.**

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for HB-5423, JFS to the floor.

The motion was made by Rep. Simms T. 140. and seconded by Sen. Osten C. S19.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. opened the discussion by summarizing the bill.

Rep. Meskers S. 150. expressed his support for developing railways for economic development.

Rep. Carney D. 023. expressed his support as well, then made a motion to add the item to the consent calendar—seconded by Rep. Smith B. 048.

**The item was moved to the consent calendar.**

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for a JF with a change of reference of SB-241 to the Appropriations Committee.

The motion was made by Sen. Osten C. S19., seconded by Rep. Simms T. 140.

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. opened discussion by describing the bill.

Sen. Osten C. S19. made a motion to move the item to the consent calendar, seconded by Rep. Smith B. 048.

**The item was moved to the consent calendar.**

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for SB-866, JFS to the floor.

The motion was made by Sen. Osten C. S19., seconded by Rep. Simms T. 140.

Rep. Carney D. 023. made a motion to move the item to the consent calendar, seconded by Sen. Osten C. S19.

**The item was moved to the consent calendar.**

Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26. entertained motions for SB-605, JFS to the floor.

The motion was moved by Rep. Michel D. 146., seconded by Rep. Meskers S. 150.

Rep. Carney D. 023. proposed an oral amendment to the bill, seconded by Co-Chairman, Rep. Lemar R. 096.

**The amendment passed unanimously via voice vote.**

Rep. Meskers S. 150. expressed his concern with paying legislative attention to the terminology of the lease holds and repurposing.

Sen. Osten C. S19. made a motion to move the item as amended to the consent calendar.

**The item was moved to the consent calendar.**

A roll call vote for all actionable items on the consent calendar was taken.

**The items passed unanimously, 35-0.**

**Chairman, Sen. Haskell W. 26 called the meeting to recess at 2:25 p.m.**

**The voting was held open until 4 p.m.**

Ian Bond

Phil Mainiero

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Assistant Clerk

Committee Clerk