

Meeting Details:

FAC:	Southern Gulf Islands Ferry Advisory Committee
Date:	March 21, 2006
Location:	Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney
Time:	9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

<i>Committee</i>	<i>BC Ferries</i>
Co-Chair, Brian Hollingshead, Saturna	Captain George Capacci, Vice President, Fleet Operations
Co-Chair, David Birchall, Galiano	Mark Stefanson, Vice President, Communications and Public Relations
Scheduling Representative, Jill Justice, Pender	Geoff Dickson, Vice President, Marketing and Retail Services
Scheduling Representative, Barry Wilks, Mayne	Stephen Nussbaum, Manager Terminal Operations, Southern Islands
Bill Noble, Galiano David Hutton for David Smith, Galiano	Gary Leitch, Manager, Stakeholder Relations and Consultation
Janet Land, Saturna Valerie McMillan, Saturna	Betsy Terpsma, Community Relations Manager
David Dryer, Pender Don Watson, Pender	Lewis MacKay, Master, Queen of Nanaimo
Donna Branston, Mayne	Stephen Anderson, Manager Fleet Deployment and Scheduling
Bob Jones, Chair, Salt Spring Island FAC	Donna Grapko, Project Manager, Operations Management Teams
Susan DeGryp, Capital Regional District	Roberta Chartier, Manager Customer Service
2 Observers	Christina Berg, Manager Reservations Centre

- 1. Call to Order:** At 9:30 a.m. by Gary Leitch.

- 2. Approval of Agenda:** Approved as circulated. Mayne Island scheduling concerns to be discussed during New Business.

- 3. Election of Co-Chair(s) for next year:** BC Ferries representatives stepped out of the room for the election of Co-Chair(s). The FAC re-elected David Birchall, and Brian Hollingshead as Co-Chairs for the next year. Jill Justice and Barry Wilks were added for representation from all four Southern Gulf Islands for scheduling meetings.

4. Public Presentations:

- a. Public – none.
- b. Marine Superintendent's Operations Report - Stephen Nussbaum made the operation's report on behalf of Captain Chris Frappell.

There was additional discussion of throughfares and loading priorities when traveling from the Southern Gulf Islands through Swartz Bay to Rte 1. BC Ferries is looking at a fleetwide policy to be implemented in the spring.

There was further discussion of the Route 9 and 9A summer schedule and loading procedures at Tsawwassen Terminal. As recommended by FAC members and the scheduling committee there will be a return to the 40-minute cut-off for reservations and a customer hand-out on loading procedures at Tsawwassen during the busy summer months.

Action: SGI FAC asks that the Tsawwassen Terminal Director or a designated Manager be invited to attend all meetings.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

- a. Minutes from the November 16, 2005 Meeting – accepted as circulated.
- b. Action item from previous meeting – Roberta Chartier presented a proposed system for managing bookings on Rte 9 & 9a. The goal of the FAC was to target customers who make reservations and then fail to show for the sailing. These can be one time reservations or block bookings. A range of options were discussed including charging the whole fare for customers who fail to show for a reservation. BCF advised that while they would receive this recommendation they would be more likely to proceed with less drastic action.

The FAC is supportive of continuing with a reservation change fee and implementing stiffer penalties to act as a disincentive for making reservations and failing to show for a sailing. This will also be an incentive for early cancellations.

Motion: Dave Birchall moved, and Dave Hutton seconded, that BC Ferries consider raising the cancellation or no show fee for Rte 9 and 9A to \$25 within 7 days. The change to be effective June 28, 2006. **Passed.**

6. New Business:

- a. Summer 2006 Schedule - Steve Anderson reviewed timeline and changes to the summer 2006 schedule.

The FAC discussed the proposal to add a weekday a.m. Rte 5 stop at Otter Bay to mitigate the Rte 5A commercial 'heavy vehicle' over loads resulting from Mayne Queen car deck limitations.

Motion: Janet Land moved, and Val McMillan seconded, that BC Ferries apply to Ministry of Transportation to withdraw this proposal from the 2006 Summer Schedule. **Passed.**

- b. Fall/Winter/Spring 2006 Schedule – Steve Anderson’s presentation on the proposed changes for the upcoming fall/winter/spring schedule resulted in more discussion and the committee requesting further input.

After a break for lunch, committee members summarized their concerns with the proposed schedule changes.

Action: All Committee members are asked to submit their concerns **in writing** to Co-Chair Brian Hollingshead in advance of upcoming scheduling meetings. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 28.

- c. Coast Card – Geoff Dickson presented BC Ferries proposal for Coast Cards to replace commuter or discount tickets. The Coast Card proposal for commuter tickets is at the discussion stage. BC Ferries requires input from FAC members and other potential users. Expiry dates are a requirement for the cards, but the timeframe is under discussion. FAC members commented that an expiry date of 12 months from the date of issue would be reasonable. The idea would be to pilot the Coast Card in one area or route before rolling out to the rest of the fleet.

Action: FAC feedback to be provided to BC Ferries on the Coast Card proposal.

- d. Public Consultation for 2nd Performance Term – Mark Stefanson shared that BC Ferries is beginning the dialogue with both the Ministry of Transportation and the Commissioner about the second performance term. BC Ferries expects the negotiation for the service fee to be challenging. BC Ferries appreciates any views the FAC members may have on how to best get input from all ferry users. All comments to be coordinated via the Co-chairs back to BC Ferries.
- e. Other Discussion – There were several questions around the Queen of Nanaimo Sustainment Project. A hand-out (attached) provides facts on the new licence levels and vessel utilization. The Queen of Nanaimo only reaches maximum license a few days per year. Approximately 50% of the time the vessel sails on the lowest licence level.

FAC members commented that while the vessel only reaches maximum licence a few days a year, those days are predictable for example long weekends. Significantly reducing the passenger capacity will result in a greater loss at critical times of the year and may increase the incidence of maxing out licence levels on the vessel. George Capacci indicated that if statistics prove that reaching maximum licence is increasing BCF may have to look at other ways to increase capacity.

It was pointed out by FAC members that the Kids Play Zone on the Queen of Nanaimo requires a slide. The TV in the play area is not working. Captain George Capacci stated that BC Ferries is working to rectify these two issues in the Kids Zone.

- f. Mayne Island concerns:
- I. Rte 5 Summer Schedule overloads @ Village Bay – Stephen Nussbaum stated that this concern had been discussed during the scheduling portion of the meeting. A stop at Village Bay is part of the discretionary operating procedure between the Rte 5 and 5A vessels but is not scheduled.
 - II. Feasibility of stretching Queen of Cumberland – Captain Capacci stated that this would be difficult to engineer with the diesel-electric design of the vessel. If traffic approaches capacity, then a practical solution would be to find a more suitable vessel for the route.
 - III. Feasibility of constructing extra traffic lanes at Village Bay – Stephen Nussbaum stated that the Village Bay Master Planning Process is scheduled for 2008-2009 this would be the time to address the construction at additional traffic lanes.
 - IV. Rte 5 & Rte 5A elimination of Village Bay bypass enroute to Sturdies Bay – Stephen Nussbaum noted that this point had been covered in scheduling discussion. The future needs of Mayne Island to be discussed in scheduling meetings for the next performance term.
 - V. Queen of Nanaimo – periodic closure of Upper Lounge – Lewis McKay stated that the closure of the lounge is related to a reduction in crew on the lower licence levels and the Transport Canada requirements for life saving equipment. The lounge closure allows BC Ferries to achieve some savings and improve the route's overall business performance.

7. Correspondence: Email from Joy McAughtrie, Pender Island Service. The addition of an afternoon sailing is a long standing issue for Pender Island customers. BC Ferries to respond to the email.

8. Next Meeting: At the call of BC Ferries and the Co-Chairs.

9. Meeting adjourned: 2:10 p.m.

Approved:

Steve Nussbaum,
Acting for the Marine Superintendent
Brian Hollingshead, Co-Chair
David Birchall, Co-Chair

Date: April 3, 2006

Date: With changes April 18, 2006

Date: Away

Queen of Nanaimo



Sustainment Project

Did you know?

- From September 2005 to mid-January 2006, BC Ferries invested over \$14 million in a major capital project to prepare the Queen of Nanaimo for another 10 years of service in the Southern Gulf Islands.
- The prime contractor for the capital project was Deas Pacific Marine Inc., BC Ferries wholly-owned subsidiary located in Richmond.
- The Queen of Nanaimo was built in Victoria in 1964 with a capacity of 192 vehicles and a service speed of 16 knots.
- On an annual basis the vessel carries over 160,000 vehicles and 500,000 passengers between Tsawwassen, Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Salt Spring Islands.
- Vehicle utilization is lowest in the months of January and February when the vessel operates at an average of 36% capacity and is highest in the months of July and August when the vessel operates at an average of 82% capacity. Fridays are traditionally the busiest travel day on the route.

Project details

There were several drivers behind BC Ferries capital investment in the Queen of Nanaimo including new Transport Canada requirements, the ability to meet the terms of the Coastal Ferry Services Contract and the need to improve the route's business performance.

A total of **75%** of the Queen of Nanaimo's capital project budget was spent on safety, structural and mechanical improvements.

- The highlights include installing a new life-saving system; surveying and painting the hull; replacing structural steel; renewing deck plating; updating structural fire protection; renewing and upgrading boilers; installing a new oily water separator; and rebuilding the main propeller shafts and controllable pitch propellers.

The remaining **25%** of the capital project budget was spent on passenger amenity upgrades.

- The customer improvements include installing new flooring, lighting and furniture; upgrading washrooms; redesigning the cafeteria; completing a new 540 square foot Passages gift shop; and improving the children's play area.
- The cafeteria has a more efficient layout and offers new menu items including Bread Garden sandwiches.
- The vessel now has the look and feel of other BC Ferries upgraded vessels including the C-class and Spirit-class vessels that operate on the major routes between the Mainland and Vancouver Island and the Mainland and the Sunshine Coast.

New life saving equipment – safety first

- Ensuring the safety and security of our customers and crew is BC Ferries first priority
- One of the drivers for the refit was a need to upgrade the life saving equipment if the vessel was to remain in service for another 10 years.
- The vessel is now equipped with a new state-of-the-art marine evacuation system consisting of slides and rafts allowing BC Ferries crew to safely and efficiently evacuate the vessel in 30 minutes or less.
- There are now four evacuation points on the vessel down from a total of nine evacuation points. This new system requires fewer crew to operate which improves the efficiency for BC Ferries.



New passenger and crew licences

- Transport Canada sets the passenger licence and required crew levels for all BC Ferries vessels.
- The refitted Queen of Nanaimo has been approved to sail with four different passenger licences. Crew levels have been reduced, for example from a maximum of 35 crew required under the old “A” licence to a maximum of 27 crew under the new “A” licence. With lower crew levels under the new “D” licence the Upper Lounge will be closed to customers. The car capacity remains unchanged at 192 vehicles.
- BC Ferries selects the operating licence for the vessel based on reservations and projected traffic. For an average day in the off peak season the Queen of Nanaimo operates on a “D” licence. During the peak season and on heavy travel days such as Fridays, the vessel’s licence will be bumped to a “B” or an “A” licence.

Queen of Nanaimo Licence	Passenger Levels	Crew Levels	Projected % of Year Licence Required
A	977	27	10%
B	750	22	15%
C	584	20	25%
D	450	19	50%

- In past years, the Queen of Nanaimo has reached maximum passenger licence only a few days per year.

Contact BC Ferries

- For additional information or for reservations call 1-888-BCFERRY or *BCF from your cell phone. Or visit our web site at www.bcferrys.com.