

Meeting Details:

FAC:	Salt Spring Island Ferry Advisory Committee
Date:	June 29, 2006
Location:	Harbour House Hotel, Ganges
Time:	7:00 p.m.

Attendees:

<i>Committee</i>	<i>BC Ferries</i>
Bob Jones, Chair	Captain Christian (Chris) A. Frappell, Marine Superintendent, Southern Islands
Harold Swierenga	Captain George Capacci, Vice President, Fleet Operations
Bryan Denton	Gary Leitch, Manager, Stakeholder Relations & Consultation
Bruce Patterson	Betsy Terpsma, Community Relations Manager
Gary Holman	Stephen Nussbaum, Manager, Terminal Operations, Southern Islands
George Ehring	Mark Stefanson, Executive Director, Public Affairs
Lorne Bunyan	Steve Anderson, Manager Fleet Deployment and Scheduling
	Joanne Doyle, Planning Analyst
Observers: Doreen Hewitt, BCF Board Member Mitchell Sherrin, Driftwood Reporter 4 Members of the public	Amar Johal, Director, Sales and Community Relations

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.
- 2. Introductions:** Round table introductions were completed.
- 3. Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved with the addition of the Coast Card and crewing for the *Queen of Nanaimo*.
- 4. Draft Minutes of Previous Meeting, June 14, 2006:**
 - The draft minutes were accepted with the addition of a statement on page 3 of the minutes that a through fare ticket from Tsawwassen via Swartz Bay to Fulford Harbour on a Friday evening does not guarantee same day arrival and may even result in a wait of over three and a half hours at Tsawwassen for the 10:25 p.m. direct sailing to Long Harbour.

5. Rte 9 schedule update

- Captain George Capacci thanked the Salt Spring Island Ferry Advisory Committee members for attending the second committee meeting in June. In the two weeks since the last meeting there have been extensive internal discussions on the Southern Gulf Islands scheduling process.
- A couple of key points from BC Ferries perspective. BC Ferries has made a significant contribution to the *Queen of Nanaimo* to upgrade the life saving appliances, and to extend its service life. While the investment reduces crew size and thus improves the economic viability of the route, the overall goal of the project was to meet Transport Canada regulations and to sustain the vessel's service life to 2015.
- In addition, the Coastal Ferry Services contract provides the basis for the decision making. Under the terms of the contract BC Ferries is the service provider and must meet the terms of the contract. It is up to the Ferry Advisory Committee and the community at large to advocate for changes to service levels.
- Over the course of the first performance term, BC Ferries has developed a mechanism to bring forward schedule changes to the Ministry of Transportation **if there is agreement from all user groups**. It is understood these are minor changes and not changes to the service levels spelled out in the contract.
- As it stands with the Friday evening proposal there is clearly no universal agreement between the Southern Gulf Island communities served by Route 9. While there was no written decision making criteria for the scheduling committee the verbal agreement was "no island shall ask for nor support a change that causes undue hardship to another island." BC Ferries decision is to continue with the same schedule for Friday night service on Route 9 for the Southern Gulf Islands in the upcoming Fall/Winter/Spring schedule.
- Bob Jones pointed out that this statement in fact means that there is a default to the status quo and given this decision making criteria BC Ferries will never change the Southern Gulf Islands schedule. The Salt Spring Ferry Advisory Committee will continue to advocate for additional service to their island and will continue to drive for changes to the schedule.
- BC Ferries noted that in addition to the lengthy wait times at Village Bay for Saturna customers, the other problem with the Friday evening two port proposal was the loss of a direct connection from Pender Island to Tsawwassen. On average there are some 16 vehicles on the Friday night sailing from Pender to the Mainland.
- Although BC Ferries was unable to get agreement on change for the Route 9 in the upcoming Fall/Winter/Spring schedule, it has been a useful planning exercise. The extensive discussion and lessons learned will assist BC Ferries to lay the groundwork for the second and the third performance terms. BC Ferries needs to use the second performance term to look at the Southern Gulf Islands service as a whole, and to plan for the replacement of the *Queen of Nanaimo* which occurs in the third performance term.

- Until there are new ships in the Southern Gulf Islands service area, BC Ferries will not be able to make major changes to the system. This is a change from the BC Ferries direction to the Scheduling Committee last fall. At this time, BC Ferries will continue to look for changes that improve on-time performance and maximize capacity with minor adjustments to the schedule rather than rework the entire package.
- Looking forward the Ferry Advisory Committee intends to contact Martin Crilly the Ferry Commissioner to advocate for additional service for Salt Spring Island. It was suggested by BC Ferries that the Ferry Advisory Committee also contact the Ministry of Transportation as they ultimately manage the BC Ferries contract on behalf of the provincial government. With the second term of the services contract up for negotiation, this would be a good time to approach the government.
- Peter Allen with the Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce thanked the Ferry Advisory Committee for their hard work on behalf of the businesses on the island. From their viewpoint, the failure to change the Friday evening Route 9 schedule to Salt Spring is having a negative impact on the local economy.
- It was suggested that BC Ferries should coordinate one more meeting with all the Islands to see if they could reach agreement on a Fall/Winter/Spring schedule change. While Captain George Capacci agreed an additional meeting may be a possibility, Steve Anderson pointed out that the schedule is very close to final edits and it would be impossible to incorporate any changes to the final document after mid-July.
- Joanne Doyle provided the Chair with some statistics on through fare traffic for Tsawwassen to Salt Spring Island.

6. New Business

a. Fulford Master Plan Update

- George Ehring outlined the upcoming Official Community Planning (OCP) process to address issues for Fulford Village.
- Gary Leitch outlined BC Ferries current Master Planning schedule. With limited resources BC Ferries currently has the Fulford Master Plan on the list for the next fiscal year. However BC Ferries does want to work with the community as part of their planning process. This in fact forms part of the Terminal Master Plan Decision Criteria (attached). Too often in the past BC Ferries has moved forward with terminal plans without the cooperation of the community and this has proved to be a recipe for failure.
- There was a discussion of the parking and congestion issues at Fulford Harbour. From the community viewpoint the congestion continues to get worse over time. BC Ferries pointed out that traffic statistics are flat however the Skeena Queen provides a larger pulse of traffic through the community than the Bowen Queen did in the past. Also commuter behaviour may be changing with more customers parking at Fulford and walking on the ferry or carpooling.

- The Ferry Advisory Committee asked if in the short term BC Ferries could look at having a Ferry Attendant at the terminal after 3 p.m. Other recommendations are for BC Ferries to remove the ticket booth to provide some additional room in the holding compound and to consider moving employee parking off site.
- Gary Leitch stated that Master Planning covers a 20 year planning horizon. Within the two decade time frame there will be short term, medium term and long term goals. An example of a short term goal: removal of the ticket booth. It is BC Ferries policy only to do improvements on land owned by BC Ferries or under their control with a long term lease.
- **Action: The Islands Trust and Ferry Advisory Committee requests that BC Ferries representatives join the upcoming Official Community Planning process either as part of the overall task force or as part of a sub-committee that feeds into the larger group. The meetings will begin in the fall, with the goal of a draft document to go forward to the community in the spring of 2007.**
- With the community taking the lead on the planning process BC Ferries will participate in the OCP. Stephen Nussbaum Manager, Terminal Operations will be the main contact for BC Ferries. Gary Leitch will also approach the planners to see if additional BC Ferries resources can be made available.
- The Ferry Advisory Committee pointed out that if the new OCP process is to be successful all the players need to be at the table and seeking solutions for the benefit of all the community. BC Ferries needs to bring their route statistics, planning information and overall experience in other communities to the table.

b. Coast Card

- The Ferry Advisory Committee is looking forward to the report back on the Coast Card consultation with various Ferry Advisory Committees. Gary Holman stated that there may be an opportunity to move forward with the proposal on Salt Spring Island and would like to discuss this further with BC Ferries before the fall meeting.
- Gary Leitch stated that the report will be available over the next few weeks.

c. Staffing for the Queen of Nanaimo

- Ferry Advisory Committee members had heard that BC Ferries was having some difficulties crewing the *Queen of Nanaimo* for the summer.
- Captain Chris Frappell confirmed that BC Ferries is having some challenges hiring part-time catering crew on Salt Spring Island. This could impact the licences for the *Queen of Nanaimo* under Transport Canada rules. For example, the *Queen of Nanaimo* requires 27 crew for an 'A' licence (a maximum of 977 passengers) or 22 crew for a 'B' licence (a maximum of 750 passengers), if the vessel is short crew it could mean a drop in licence level.

- Residents who are interested in part time catering work are advised to contact the Long Harbour office at (250) 537-1478.

7. Next Meeting: At the call of the Chair and BC Ferries.

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

Approved:

Captain Chris Frappell, Marine Superintendent
Bob Jones, Chair

Date: July 5, 2006

Date: July 30, 2006

Terminal Master Plan Decision Criteria

