

Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

North Coast Ferry Advisory Committee

Date: March 15, 2007

Time: 9:30AM

Location: Mariott Vancouver Airport Hotel
7571 Westminster Highway, Richmond

Attendees:

<i>Committee</i>	<i>BC Ferries</i>
Steve Smith, Co-Chair	Steve Poole, Marine Superintendent
Larry Greba (part time)	Gary Leitch, Manager, Stakeholder Relations
Ian Hetman	Mathew Burns, Community Relations Manager
Carol Kulesha (by phone)	Dale Ryan, Director, Marketing (part time)
Herb Pond (by phone)	Arlene Macleod, Administrative Assistant
Earl Newman	Dan Wong, Vice President, Corporate Relations
Sharon Cartier	Amar Johal, Director, Sales & Community Relations
Pete Rauch	Roberta Chartier, Manager, Customer Care Centre
Harvey Humchitt	
Hank Bood	
Eddie Russ, Co-Chair	
Kathy Nylen	

1. Call to Order:

09:30 – Steve Smith, Chair

2. Approval of Agenda:

Approved with the addition of:

j. Haida Cultural Centre Opening

Eddie Russ

3. Presentations – Marine Superintendent's Report

Captain Steve Poole presented his report (attached). Among the highlights, Capt. Poole reported a significant decrease in reportable accidents for the northern routes in the past year. Dan Wong noted that safety has been added to the BC Ferries business objectives as the number 1 focus of the company. Safety training hours have been increased from 9000 hours to 14,000 hours.

With respect to the safety improvements, Steve Smith recommended that the committee write a letter to BCF commending the company on the improvement over the last year.

Action: G. Leitch to draft a letter for Steve Smith to send on behalf of the committee.

Capt. Poole noted an increase in on-time performance from 74% to 93% year over year. He also noted that cancelled sailings were up due to unusually bad weather this winter.

With respect to the future service, Capt. Poole noted that the Northern Adventure will go into service on March 31. Dock modifications to receive the new ship are nearing completion. The Queen of Prince Rupert will go into refit on April 10 until June 3. The MV Nimpkish will operate in the mid-coast for approximately 6 weeks this spring. The Queen of Chilliwack will operate on Route 40 into the third week of September (an extension of the schedule).

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

- a. Minutes of the meeting held on September 20, 2006 were approved as distributed.
- b. Review of Action Items:

Steve Smith reported that all action items were complete with the exception of inviting MOT staff to attend the FAC meeting. He explained that this not done due to a consensus of the chairs that pursuing this would not be beneficial. Mr. Smith reported that discussions with respect to the second performance term (PT2) of the *Coastal Ferry Services Contract* have begun. He advised that all of the FAC chairs would be meeting with Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon on March 19 in Victoria to press for a role for the FACs in the process of setting the core service levels and the service fees for PT2. He noted that the legislation does not define a role for the public; the Act defines a role for the government, BC Ferries, and the BC Ferry Commission. He indicated that it is the role of the FACs, collectively and individually to advocate with their elected officials to ensure that their interests are taken into proper account.

Herb Pond proposed two issues to challenge the government on: 1) is the 'user pay model' reasonable for the whole province? And 2) is a 2 tier fare system for residents and tourists desirable and possible?

Stephen Waugh noted that the Central Coast Regional District has prepared a letter to the Minister advocating increased service to the central coast and reasonable tariffs. He proposed that all FAC members work with their local governments to develop a comprehensive position to put to government.

New Business:

- a. Central Call Centre #/local #s at Skidegate

Carol Kulesha indicated that there is much dissatisfaction over recent changes to the customer information processes on the Queen Charlotte Islands which require customers to call Victoria for updates on service. Roberta Chartier indicated that in response to complaints from the FAC and customers the system had been changed as of two days earlier to allow calls to go the local terminal between 10PM and 7AM when and if staff are on site. There was a discussion of the need to upgrade the web based information for the north. Ms. Chartier indicated that it is not yet possible to implement some of the vessel tracking technology available in the south. She indicated that service notices and web based information would be time and date stamped so that people know the information is not stale or when it was last updated.

ACTION: Advise on website what number of cars are being carried when the vessel departs Port Hardy and Prince Rupert, so that Bella Bella can determine if there is space they may use.

b. RV parking at terminals overnight

BC Ferries is considering allowing RVs to park overnight in its terminals as a means of managing traffic better (having RVs in terminal earlier in morning allows for more efficient loading of ships). This puts the company in conflict with local campground owners; ferry traffic is a significant part of their business. BC Ferries has not yet determined its policy. H. Pond advised BCF not to 'over manage the issue' or we will lose the RV business.

c. Mid Coast Fall Schedule

Kathy Nylen and Pete Rauch noted that we still do not have the fall schedule for Route 40. Ms. Nylen noted that the Route 40 schedule is the last to be settled each year. She noted that it is difficult for customers to plan their trips if the schedule is unknown; if customers are unaware there is service into September they will decide to go elsewhere. The fall schedule will be available as of mid June. An update on the negotiations with government on the replacement vessel for route 40 was requested.

ACTION: Request an update detailed report on replacement vessel for Route 40 at the next meeting.

d. Northern Adventure Dedication

The Northern Adventure dedication will take place on Saturday at 11:45 AM. FAC members are asked to proceed to the far end of the cruise ship terminal to access the ceremony and the ship.

e. Reserved Seating on Northern Adventure

This issue is not yet fully resolved. There is a lot of challenges associated with bringing the new ship into service and it is not yet clear whether this is a service which can be offered this year.

f. Use of Lower Deck on NA

The lower deck will be used on the Northern Adventure. This will increase car capacity by 20 units.

g. All Native Basketball Tournament 2008

Action: Marlane Christensen to meet with Eddie Russ and Earl Newman; and to

forward the proposed ferry schedule to support the games as soon as possible.

h. Photo ID requirements on Northern Adventure

Capt. Poole advised that in keeping with increased security requirements and as a result of the sinking of the Queen of the North, new photo ID will be required for passengers boarding the Northern Adventure.

i. North Coast Marketing Plan

Dale Ryan made a presentation of marketing initiatives being undertaken to support the launch of the Northern Adventure and rebuild business in the north. Ms. Ryan's presentation is attached. K. Nysten noted that the improved offerings in the gift shop on the new ship are unlikely to be available on the Chilliwack. Amar Johal, indicated he would discuss the issue with BC Ferries Manager of Retail Services to ensure adequate product is available on the Chilliwack.

j. Haida Cultural Centre Opening

Eddie Russ advised that the cultural centre will have a 'soft' opening July 20-21 2007. He asked that service to the Queen Charlotte Islands be increased during the week before and after the opening to carry anticipated heavy traffic. Capt. Poole will review the service plan and advise.

5. Correspondence: none

6. Next meeting: Thursday, October 4, 2007

7. Meeting adjourned:

14:15

Approved:

Capt. Steve Poole, Marine Superintendent

Date: April 13, 2007

Steve Smith, Chair

Date: April 24, 2007