



# Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

## Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee

**Date:** October 23, 2007

**Time:** 6 – 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Gabriola Golf Club  
825 South Road, Gabriola Island

### Attendees:

<i>Committee</i>	<i>BC Ferries</i>
Andre Lemieux Steve Wohllebe Randy Young	Captain Chris Frappell, Marine Superintendent Captain Michael Smit, Senior Master, <i>MV Quinsam</i> Rob Clarke, Chief Financial Officer Don Cheshire, Regional Terminal Director Melanie Lucia, Regional Terminal Manager Robert Byron, Terminal Supervisor Amar Johal, Director, Sales & Community Relations Jane King, Manager, Sales & Community Relations

### 1. Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

### 2. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved with the following additions:

- a. Four Public Presentations
- b. Second Turnaround at Descanso Bay
- c. Super Cs Presentation
- d. Questions and Answers (Before Correspondence)

### 3. Presentations:

- a. 1. Residents' Ferry Fare Opinion Survey results were presented by three different residents. 446 Residents' Surveys were completed. Of those surveyed, 64% replied yes and 32% said no to the question: "Can you afford to buy commuter tickets?" 100% of respondents were in favour of a return to a government subsidized ferry service.

The residents stated the ferry is their highway, an essential service and it should not be allowed to become a for profit service that will ultimately destroy their community. One resident said historically, when the service was operated by the Ministry of Highways the ferry fare was \$1.25.

Resident's also expressed concern over the Island becoming an enclave for the rich, with no one available to do the work. The residents then came together in song: *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean: Our highway goes over the water, to school and to work and to play, the price has gone up...it hadn't oughta, o'roll back the fares today, roll back, roll back, o roll back the fares today, today, roll back, roll back, o roll back the fares today.*

2. Ruth Loomis questioned why MLA's travel for free. Felt it was unfair especially to all the children and families that have to travel to play games on the other side. "We are going to protest it."
3. Bruce Taylor, a past Ferry Advisory Committee Member reiterated the ferries are their highway, that is why they are there and that Islanders should not be forced off the Island and out of our homes due to rising fares.
4. Ferry Advisory Committee Chair, Andre Lemieux read out a letter from Hugh McLeod saying "...ferry service should be returned to the crown status..." and the Coast Card (now Smart Media) prevents users from sharing tickets. He also commented that "...if there would be a bridge it would be toll free."
- b. **Operations Report:** Captain Chris Frappell presented the Operations Report with the following item discussed:

BC Ferries confirmed the route is heavily subsidized from both the provincial and federal governments, with provincial service fees and federal subsidy allocations totaling 46% of total revenues for this route in Fiscal 2007.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Minutes of the meeting held on May 24, 2007 were approved and distributed on July 18, 2007.

5. **Review of action items:**

- a. BC Ferries to send a copy of the email correspondence from Charles Roach to the Committee. **COMPLETED.**
- b. BC Ferries to provide an explanation of the portion of operating costs associated with refits and where the surplus goes from Route Group 6. **Any revenue surplus for Route Group 6 goes into general income earnings then it is re-invested throughout the fleet. Chief Financial Officer, Rob Clarke also advised refits cause the spike in operating costs, typically every four years. He further noted that the current estimate for the mid-life upgrade on the *MV Quinsam* is \$11.5 million.**
- c. BC Ferries to consider putting tables in the seating area for the ship's mid-life upgrade. **Captain Frappell advised the there will be an opportunity for the FAC to review the plans once they are done.**
- d. BC Ferries to investigate costs and feasibility of electronic signage at Descanso Bay. **Regional Terminal Director, Don Cheshire confirmed BC Ferries is investigating the viability of electronic signage with the IT (Information Technology) Department at an estimated cost of \$300,000.**
- e. BC Ferries to distribute the 1-800 number for the Ministry of Health's Medical Assistance program which B Ferries is part of. **COMPLETED.**
- f. BC Ferries to find out if the Gabriola Island route will be part of an elasticity study. **BC**

**Ferries confirmed Gabriola Island was included in the elasticity study.**

- g. BC Ferries to provide an organization chart for BC Ferries that the FAC can refer to. **Jane King to forward the updated organizational chart.**
- h. BC Ferries to work with the FAC to update the fax distribution list. **Jane King to work with Steve Wohlbe on developing a new fax distribution list for use with the distribution of Service Notices.**

**6. New Business:**

- a. PT2 Update: Amar Johal presented an update on *Performance Term 2*.

Members of the public were opposed to the fare increases. CFO, Rob Clarke informed the public that the policy of what an affordable fare is, is a government policy. BC Ferries is trying to operate a world class system. The government subsidies are used to offset the operating costs. He also complimented the Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs in being instrumental in negotiating an additional \$7,000,000 from the provincial government.

- b. Smart Media: Previously known as the Coast Card, Amar Johal presented an update on the new Smart Media card.

BC Ferries confirmed all paper tickets issued after November 1 will be stamped with defined values. Registration for the new Smart Card is a free service. Currently if you lose the pre-paid tickets they can not be replaced. With the Smart Card, if the card is registered it can be replaced and the balance transferred to the new card. The question was asked whether the Smart Card account could be accessed if the Card was forgotten. **ACTION: BC Ferries to investigate if access to a Card holder's account is possible in the event the card is forgotten.**

- c. Super Cs: Amar Johal updated the FAC and the public in attendance of the Super Cs ships due to be in service on the major routes in 2008.
- d. Second Turnaround at Descanso Bay: Regional Terminal Director, Don Cheshire confirmed discussions had taken place with the Ministry of Transportation and the MOT has told BC Ferries the area is being redeveloped and is currently in the re-zoning phase. If and when the zoning is approved, MOT will then have an idea of if/when the turnaround will be constructed. Likely it would be located 300 meters up the road.

**7. Question and Answers:**

Members of the public asked for clarification on BC Ferries current business structure. CFO, Rob Clarke explained how BC Ferries is controlled by the BC Ferry Authority, a Board of Directors consisting of nine members. All of the Authority Board members, plus three others form the 12 member Board of the company. The public was further directed to the web site

[www.bcferries.com/aboutbcferries](http://www.bcferries.com/aboutbcferries) for more information.

BC Ferries advised it is responsible for operation of the salt water fleet only, not the province's inland services.

The debit card is not accepted at BC Ferries because of the time it takes to process.

BC Ferries confirmed the levels of service to the Islands are a government policy decision.

BC Ferry Commissioner answers to the fare caps. He makes the final decisions which can't be overturned by anyone other than by the tribunal of the court of law.

A member of the public read a letter from Leonard Krog opposing the fare increases, saying the government is turning the Gulf Islands into a gated community which the Islands Trust was elected to preserve. The letter stated it was a battle in which everyone will have to fight. FAC member, Steve Wohllebe told the crowd he has been involved in the process since 1996/97 and to keep the politics out of it. Best to work as a group of communities to get social and economic consequences to the people that set the tariffs and the subsidies.

BC Ferries confirmed the *MV Bowen Queen* works as a replacement vessel and the allocation of costs are based on the proportion of its use per route.

It was confirmed one of the requirements by the BC Ferry Commissioner was to save fuel. BC Ferries has seen a considerable reduction in fuel burned by the use of fuel monitoring devices.

When the *MV Quinsam* has her mid-life upgrade the old paint will have to be stripped off completely and replaced with modern life paint.

A member of the public requested the FAC to include government representation. The FAC chair suggested the Ratepayers invite the Ministry of Transportation to a meeting.

**8. Correspondence:** Andre Lemieux confirmed there was no other written correspondence received.

**9. Next meeting:** April 2008.

**10. FAC Survey presented to members by Amar Johal for take away.**

**11. Meeting adjourned:** 8:46 p.m.

**Approved:**

Andre Lemieux, Chair

Date: December 17, 2007

Captain Chris Frappell, BC Ferries

Date: December 2, 2007

**Attachments:**

- Operations Report
- *Performance Term 2 Update*
- Smart Media
- Super Cs Presentation
- FAC Survey
- Gabriola Island Resident's Survey