

Meeting Details:

FAC:	Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee
Date	September 15, 2008
Location:	Gabriola Golf & Country Club
Time:	6:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Committee	BC Ferries
Andre Lemieux, Chair	Rob Clarke, Executive Vice President, and Chief Financial Officer
Steve Wohllebe	Captain Christian (Chris) Frappell, Marine Superintendent, Southern Islands
Randy Young	Amar Johal, Director, Sales and Community Relations
Eric Moeller	Grant Bierlmeier, Director, Tariff and Revenue
Elgin McKillop	Paul Madsen, Executive Director, Strategic Planning
Dodd Pellant	Melanie Lucia, Regional Terminal Manager, Nanaimo
	Captain Michael Smit, Senior Master, Queen of Cumberland
Public:	Carla Barthel, Terminal Operations Supervisor
There were a number of members of the public in attendance. 15 public presentations were made.	Sarah Cotton, Manager, Sales and Community Relations

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.
- 2. Introductions:** Round table introductions were completed.
- 3. Approval of Agenda:** Approved.
- 4. Correspondence:** Anne Levitt, Dean of Social Sciences at Vancouver Island University, has offered the department's faculty members to develop survey to reflect questions that the community wants.

Many written public presentations regarding the bridge survey were submitted to Andre Lemieux.

5. Presentations:**a. Public Presentations**

Sheila Malcolmson (Island Trustee) – Several reasons to say no to survey:
Extensive community input against bridges.

Bridge from Gabriola to Nanaimo would start other bridge building
Keep the community as is – bridge would change it
Kevin Falcon agrees with this as was stated this week

Gisele Rudisher (Island Trustee) – Urges the community to vote no unless David Hahn could guarantee a bridge would be cheaper. Would increased traffic that damages the environment be accounted for?

Jeremy Baker – Because of the present state of increased ferry fares, he requests a survey of resident's thoughts and feelings towards the bridge, and the impact on the community.

Karel Korinek – Existing ferry service does not meet the health and safety expectations of the public. A bridge would cost \$75 – 80 million. Ferries are one of the worst air pollutants. A feasibility study should be made in short order to evaluate the pros and cons, and involve as many "Gabriolans" as possible.

Sam McGee – Has lived on Gabriola for 26 years. Elderly friends have moved off the island because they don't want to die in a ferry line up. With increasing fares, Sam goes over to Vancouver Island once a month. Before the fare increases, he went over 3-4 times per month. Families are now cut off as they won't visit as often due to increasing ferry fares.

Veronica Hartman – She and Jean McLaren conducted their own survey. Only nine out of 634 surveys conducted wanted the bridge.

Jean McLaren – David Hahn's 50 year "bridge thinking" isn't forward thinking. Higher fares have impacted her life. Her friends and family can't afford to travel. Treat us fairly.

Sophie Arthau – Will only speak of human issues. She chose to come here 5 years ago. The survey should not go ahead. An island is completely detached. From a human aspect – her family had a house on an island when she grew up. When a bridge was built, their way of life disappeared.

Ian Lowden – The whole bridge concept sucks. A tiny minority don't like living here and they want the rest of them to know about it.

Member of the public - Need a referendum – Islands Trust will have to pay the 87 million dollars for the referendum.

Mike Richards – Works for Georgia Straight Alliance. He sent a letter to David Hahn and has backed up what the Islands Trust has said. He does not want to be more traffic dependent as an island. BC Ferries should think of triple bottom line accounting. Look up environmental impacts of bridges on Google – 6 ½ million hits.

Bill Schram – Praises the masters and crew of the Quinsam. However, ferry service is not living up to the charter as it's becoming increasingly expensive. It is no longer an affordable service. **Note to the minutes: It is unclear what charter Mr. Schram is referring to.)**

Elma Gabin – Has lived on Gabriola for 38 years. Gabriola still has a caring, close community – a bridge will change the nature of the community. Flood gates will be open to heavy traffic. A

bridge forces more reliance on vehicles. No referendum is needed – most islanders value the nature of the island.

Susan Yates – On behalf of the Gulf Islands Alliance. She encourages residents to decline the offer to fund a survey. It is a waste of funds and valuable community energy – it would also elicit widespread opposition and divide islanders. In addition, it would take away from other issues that are of importance (i.e.) affordable housing, etc.

Mark Shaw – The gentleman doesn't want the bridge but what do we do when oil gets to \$300 barrel? Will the ferry service decrease once oil gets that expensive? Ferry prices are detrimental to island living. People are walking away from their houses.

Katherine Szabco – In favour of alternative of ferry service based on economic sustainability of ferries. There was a 25% increase in the last year - School enrolment is declining, and the increases are affecting tourism. Gabriola will become a place where only the rich can live. It is not sustainable.

b. Operations Report

Captain Chris Frappell presented the Marine Operations report with information on traffic, on time performance and vessels. This report is attached.

Highlights

- On-time performance for the Quinsam is an issue as the vessel needs to go into refit (Scheduled for October 1). Mechanically, she's tired.
- Service issues – BCF had to cancel two round trips in the summer as the company couldn't find a staff member to work a shift.
- Quinsam Mid-Life Upgrade. With the Bowen Queen in service on Route 19, there will be a few sailing delays and cancellations. A service notice will be issued to outline all of the affected sailings.

c. Financial Performance

Rob Clarke presented on F2009 Financial Performance.

The FAC asked if there will be further pressure on tariffs. BC Ferries is operating on a price cap under the commissioner. The only pressure that is on tariffs is the cost of fuel. If fuel goes down, then the surcharge will come down.

Eric Moeller mentioned that oil has dropped \$50 a barrel. What is the length of a contract with Chevron? In terms of the fuel surcharge being reduced, at what point might we see that?

Rob Clarke replied that we have a 5 year contract with Chevron with additional years that can be added on. We complete most contracts in 5-7 years. BC Ferries will look at reducing the surcharge by the new year.

d. Tariff Rationalization

Grant Bierlmeier led a discussion around Route 19 and tariff rationalization for April 1, 2009. He stated that he wanted to get FAC's thoughts.

Guiding Principles:

Revenue Neutrality
Simplicity
Reasonability
Current Tariffs

e. Community Engagement

BC Ferries is asking all FACs to submit a list on ways they engage with the community, in order to develop a set of best practices while providing a stronger focus on knowledge sharing.

Action: Andre Lemieux to provide Sarah Cotton with a list on how the Gabriola FAC engages with the community.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting – Review of Action Items:

- BC Ferries to confirm what the crew protocol is for servicing the washrooms while the MV Quinsam is underway. **COMPLETED.**

- BC Ferries to investigate what the fresh water ferries are doing to save fuel and report back to the FAC. **COMPLETED.**

7. FAC Business

Timetable for Second Half of Quinsam MLU. Broadly similar timeframe the following year but BCF won't commit to it as of yet.

Fresh Water Fountain on Quinsam – The water fountain has been disconnected as we no longer supply potable (drinking quality) water to the fountain. The water testing regime has become too onerous to justify.

Senior Discount Days – Andre Lemieux is wanting to show to the ministry that seniors are using the ferries on Saturday and Sundays when it's empty. Seniors would only have to pay for certain sailings Wed, Thurs, Fri. Presentation to ministry is almost ready.

Separate Passenger Loading Ramp – FAC thinks it will improve loading and unloading the vessel. **ACTION: Melanie Lucia to look at during Master Planning 2009.**

Experience Card system completion – BCF is committed to looking at Card pooling where there is one master card with secondary cards. The company would like this to go ahead. It's competing against work needed to be done on ships, terminals, etc.

Digital Information Board – Tabled until Don Cheshire is back.

Signage – Is needed to indicate end of line by turning left down the hill.

Cut off times – If ferry is late but in the dock, the ticket agent will cut off at the correct time to keep it on schedule. The more cars you load, the later you get. The ships need to get back on schedule. Fundamentally, BCF obeys cut off times for safety reasons.

Cost of doing rock work in the spring – There is an old arbutus tree on the side of the ramp. The FAC would like to know how much it cost and would like to see an engineering report. The

engineers think it was something done to standard, not something that was necessary. **ACTION: Melanie Lucia to talk to Rob Seitz.**

8. New Business (Amar Johal):

- a. FAC Appointment Process** - FAC members to advise BCF by September 30 if they want to continue to serve for the next FAC term. BC Ferries will implement Fall 2008 general advertising (if required) to solicit additional representation. If you as an individual want to stay on, let us know. If you're representing an organization/association, then they need to let us know if they want you to stay on.
- b. Point of Assembly (POA) Update** – BC Ferries is looking at centralizing POAs to larger centres such as Swartz Bay and Nanaimo as retention of officers on the islands is proving problematic.
- c. New Business Opportunities**
 - **New Travel Centre in Downtown Vancouver (Fairmont Pacific Rim)** – The new BC Ferries Travel and Sales Centre is located across from Tourism Vancouver and near the cruise ship terminal, thereby exposing BC Ferries to a new customer base.
 - **Growing Commercial Sales Business** – BC Ferries is looking at options to increase its market share in the commercial customer segment. More details will be released as they become available.
 - **Management Services** – BC Ferries plans to expand consultative work by providing management services to other organizations. One recent example is BC Ferries' management of the Sidney Terminal.
 - **2010 Winter Olympics** – BC Ferries is working on a 2010 plan which includes additional sailings, vessel charters, etc. 2010 is also important for employee engagement, as it falls on BC Ferries' 50 year anniversary.

9. Gabriola Bridge Survey

Rob Clarke advised the committee that fares will keep going up. The offer of a bridge survey was made by BC Ferries because a bridge may be viable. BC Ferries keeps hearing that ferry fares are devastating coastal communities, therefore Rob Clarke asked the following questions to the committee and the public attendees, "How do you go forward to government that you deserve higher subsidies when you're not prepared to explore alternatives? There's an offer on the table, but you have to ask why you're afraid to ask the question?" The public responded by saying that the survey will destroy the community. The Islands Trust has had a No Bridge Policy in their Official Community Plan (OCP) that has been in place for 10 years.

It was suggested by Andre Lemieux that a business plan needs to be in place before a survey is commenced. Rob Clarke responded that BC Ferries is not prepared to fund a business plan, unless there is reasonable support from the community. Hence the need for a survey.

It was suggested by the FAC that if there is to be a survey, it should be a survey of alternatives. A suggested alternative would be to build a tunnel rather than a bridge. Eric Moeller is in favour of a survey as long as the words are carefully chosen.

Andre Lemieux asked BC Ferries how much additional money will the company put forward? Rob Clarke responded by saying that BC Ferries is fundamentally indifferent to building the bridge and no additional money will be put forward. David Hahn responded to the question of alternatives so BC Ferries offered to facilitate a survey as a response to the concern.

Randy Young stated that we don't know what all the alternatives are. The FAC doesn't have a budget from BC Ferries for next year, so the public has no idea what will happen in 5 years. He asked if BC Ferries would finance a study of alternatives from Vancouver Island University.

Rob Clarke thought the answer is yes. The next step is asking Vancouver Island University what they will do for \$5,000. BC Ferries will advance the debate since long-term fares will go up.

Randy Young put forward the **Motion: Andre Lemieux to meet with Vancouver Island University to determine what facilities they have in order to come up with a survey of alternatives. Seconded. Motion Carried.**

10. Next Meeting: May/June 2009.