

Meeting Details:

FAC:	Salt Spring Island Ferry Advisory Committee
Date	September 16, 2008
Location:	Harbour House Hotel, Salt Spring Island
Time:	6:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Committee	BC Ferries
Harold Swierenga, Chair	Rob Clarke, Executive Vice President, and Chief Financial Officer
Gary Holman	Captain Christian (Chris) Frappell, Marine Superintendent, Southern Islands
Bryan Denton	Amar Johal, Director, Sales and Community Relations
Public Dave Fulford	Grant Bierlmeier, Director, Tariff and Revenue
Absent Bruce Patterson	Paul Madsen, Executive Director, Strategic Planning
Lorne Bunyan	Paul McDaniel, Regional Director, Terminal Operations, Swartz Bay and Southern Islands
Janice Harkley	Ron Gray, Terminal Manager, Swartz Bay and Southern Islands
Bob Jones	Sarah Cotton, Manager, Sales and Community Relations
George Ehring	Captain Lewis MacKay, Senior Master, Queen of Nanaimo
	Captain Hardeep Grewal, Senior Master, Howe Sound Queen
	Captain Thomas Schnare, Senior Master, Skeena Queen
	Steve Anderson, Manager, Fleet Deployment and Scheduling

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.
- 2. Introductions:** Round table introductions were completed.
- 3. Approval of Agenda:** Approved.
- 4. Correspondence:** No public correspondence.

5. Presentations:

a. Operations Report

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

Highlights

- Gary Holman asked if BC Ferries has any way to break down the resident numbers for the Salt Spring Island routes. He noted that with the Experience Card, the majority of offpeak travel is residents. **Action initiated by:** Gary Holman
Action and Responsible: Grant Bierlmeier to get Route 4 and 6 Experience Card numbers and non-Experience Card numbers by month to the SSI FAC.
- Harold Swierenga noted that the Experience Card has been prominently marketed and tourists have used the card because of the difference in price.
- Rob Clarke noted that American tourism is down significantly (down 6% as of June). The impact of high fuel prices at the pump is considerable. People are just not driving and there is a serious impact on many businesses.
- In terms of on-time performance, Route 4 is one of the best performing routes in the system. Route 9 was a challenge this year because of the delay in the start of Route 9A.
- The Skeena Queen is scheduled for refit – cushions on the lounge seats will be added in addition to full spectrum lighting in the lounges.
- Harold Swierenga asked which vessel will replace the Queen of Nanaimo when it goes into refit. Chris Frappell responded that the Queen of Burnaby will come down from Little River, and the Queen of Chilliwack will relieve the Queen of Burnaby.
- The FAC asked BC Ferries what the company means by the master plan process for the terminals. Paul McDaniel responded the company takes a longer view – what do we see this looking like 15-20 years from now? BC Ferries assesses the growth patterns so when the company makes interim decisions, we won't have to undo them in the longer term.
- Gary Holman mentioned that the last time BC Ferries spoke of master plans, it was around the time of the OCP review. The position that BC Ferries took at the time, was the company wanted the community to be providing direction. Rob Clarke responded that BC Ferries will approach this with significant public consultation and it will be a heavily community involved process.
- Harold Swierenga asked if BC Ferries is looking at passenger only ferries. Rob Clarke replied that there are no active studies that he is aware of.

b. Financial Performance

Rob Clarke presented on F2009 Financial Performance.

- Harold Swierenga asked for a breakdown of the Social Program Reimbursements that goes to the school kids. **Action Initiated by:** Harold Swierenga **Action and Responsible:** Grant Bierlmeier to provide Harold Swierenga with year over year number of units of travel (over five years) under the social programs on the route and will break it down for school programs.

c. Tariff Rationalization

Grant Bierlmeier led a discussion around Routes 4, 6 and 9 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

Gary Holman suggested that residents would feel comfortable to include a guiding principle for a price differential between residents and non-residents (i.e.) rebate for residents.

d. 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: SSI FAC to provide Sarah Cotton with a list on how the FAC engages with the community.

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

- Amar Johal to make through fare map routing and will distribute at major and minor terminals. **COMPLETED**
- Amar Johal to request to have better signage on highways directing customers to Tsawwassen. **COMPLETED.**
- Rob Clarke to update committee on timeframe for the Fulford Terminal Upgrade in the Capital Plan. **COMPLETED.**
- Phil Benbow to contact BC Transit to advise the change in the summer schedule, at Vesuvius and Crofton. **COMPLETED.**
- Phil Benbow to take the necessary steps to ensure consistent application of reservation check in time for Route 1 reservations for passengers coming from route 4 (20 minute cut off prior to sailing at the toll booth). **COMPLETED.**
- As taxis are not at Swartz Bay at 3:50 p.m., customers will contact the Victoria taxi companies to advise the need of cabs at this time during the day.
- BC Ferries to look into the feasibility of a reservation system in the Fulford Waiting Room. Therefore, passengers could pay through fare and reservation fee to ensure they make the next sailing from Swartz Bay. **COMPLETED.** Ron Gray investigated POS possibility at Fulford. BC Ferries has determined that there is no business case justification for this. In addition, BC Ferries removed all kiosks due to a security risk and putting one in an unmanned terminal is too much of a risk. Paul McDaniel added that our current IT infrastructure does not support this.

Paul McDaniel gave an update on the **Swartz Bay Terminal** - A trial with Ministry of Transportation (TRAN) and Integrated Traffic Safety is working well at reducing speed. Police are onsite to target speeders and delineators have been put in place to prevent drivers from changing lanes as they enter into Swartz Bay. There have been some close calls with rear end collisions as the delineators are now in place.

Ron Gray added that BC Ferries wants blue BCF signs to replace the green BCF signs. Swartz Bay has done a lot of work to establish a positive relationship with TRAN and Integrated Traffic Safety.

The FAC asked if BC Ferries has done a risk assessment for the approach to ferries. BC Ferries replied that it is on the agenda.

Harold Swierenga asked when BC Ferries would be engaging the public for master plan. Rob Clarke replied that BC Ferries hopes to schedule open houses in calendar 2009.

Gary Holman added that it would be helpful to sit down with the FAC to talk about process for community involvement/engagement. **Action Initiated by:** Gary Holman **Action and Responsible:** Sarah Cotton and Emma McWalter to set up a meeting with the FAC to review process of Master Plan.

BC Transit now has some express buses between Swartz Bay and Downtown. They are ramping up to get more. BC Transit now has direct service from UVic to Swartz Bay (Friday and Sunday afternoons)

Gary Holman mentioned the washrooms at the Fulford Harbour Terminal. Rock Salt posted a sign saying public washrooms are at BC Ferries terminals. BC Ferries considers the Fulford Harbour washrooms for customers but we don't stop the public from using them.

7. FAC Business

- Fulford Traffic Congestion – The Salt Spring Island Transportation Committee met with the Ministry of Transportation (TRAN) on September 12th, 2008. Harold Swierenga is optimistic that the Fulford congestion issue will move forward. Ron Gray added that Bob Webb deferred the matter to Greg Galpin at TRAN and the local RCMP. The FAC asked if lights at the terminal will be effective. Ron Gray doubts they will be truly effective with locals rushing for the ferry. He sees 3 lanes as being the solution - the road is wider and the line of sight is better. BC Ferries will meet with TRAN and CRD to look at getting the road widened. There are concerns that BC Ferries has given up one crew parking spot for the BC Transit bus. Harold Swierenga added that these implications could be solved when looking at the master plan. The FAC asked if installation of lights by the trestle would work? Paul McDaniel replied that it is very difficult to get flashing lights put in.

Action and Responsible: Paul McDaniel and team to do a formal risk assessment on the pinchpoint.

Guest Dave Fulford requested that someone from the Fulford Group be involved in this process. The trustees have asked that they carry on as a group after the OCP process.

Gary Holman added that surveys of the right-of-way need to be done in order to widen the road, as an additional right of way is needed. He is doubtful that TRAN will pay for the entire cost, since BC Ferries uses the road as a parking lot.

3 basic costs:

Attaining a right of way

Building the road

Building a pathway

Gary Holman concluded that before we can start talking about cost, all parties need to agree on a plan. BC Ferries and the Salt Spring FAC need to agree on what they will ask TRAN to do. **Action Initiated by:** Gary Holman **Action:** Ron Gray to look at sharing the cost of road widening with TRAN.

- Route 6 schedule change - Steve Anderson told the committee that the adjustment of schedule took the last sailing off on Saturday nights, and an earlier first sailing was put on in the morning. Crofton/Vesuvius is full on Saturday morning, and quiet on Saturday nights. The schedule change has improved the congestion in Crofton. Coming out of Vesuvius Saturday mornings is popular in the winter for skiing at Mt. Washington and Christmas shopping, etc. Harold did get comments from Chemainus Theatre goers, but the adjustment improves customer service and provides an economic impact to Salt Spring Island. Chris Frappell brought these proposed schedule changes forward in the spring. At the time there was no real concern, but now the theatre group has come forward. Harold has asked the group how many people are concerned and he's had no response.
- There was a question of the use of the Experience Card by volunteer groups. The groups would hand out single tickets, and Social Services will disseminate information when they need it. They want a way to use the card like the paper ticket, but after speaking with Rebecca Bailey, it doesn't seem like an option.
- FACC – A number of press releases have gone out in the last few months. In view of election in spring, it's the time to put on the pressure on the government particularly with the minor routes. The group has conducted business under CCFAC and they now deal with TRAN. The Narrowing gap of prepaid tickets and regular tickets is of concern.

8. New Business (Amar Johal):

- FAC Appointment Process** - FAC members to advise BC Ferries 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.

Gary Holman suggested that the appointment process should include the Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce, a Salt Spring Island Trustee, and a CRD Director. Harold advised that he is also a member of the Chamber.

- 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. However, implementation of this would not occur without discussion with the FAC.

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.

The FAC asked if the development of terminal sites was an option in terms of generating additional revenue. (i.e.) a sandwich stop at Long Harbour. BC Ferries replied that because the company does not own the land, we cannot develop it.

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

10. Next Meeting: May/June 2009.