

Meeting Details:

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| FAC: | Southern Gulf Islands Ferry Advisory Committee |
| Date: | Thursday, January 8, 2004 |
| Location: | Retail Room, Swartz Bay Terminal |
| Time: | 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. |

Attendees:

| <i>Committee</i> | <i>BC Ferries</i> |
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| Brian Hollingshead, Co-Chair, Saturna | Captain Ratch Wallace, A/VP Inter-Island and Northern Services |
| Valerie McMillan, Saturna Island | |
| Janet Land, Saturna Island | Captain Bill Dickie, A/Marine Superintendent |
| Donna Branston, Mayne Island | |
| Barry Wilks, Mayne Island | Captain Roger Charron, Senior Master, Queen of Nanaimo |
| Jill Justice, Pender Islands | |
| David Hutton, Galiano Island | Captain Allan Bell, Senior Master, Queen of Cumberland |
| David Birchall, Galiano Island | |
| David Morgan, Galiano Island | Captain Jim Grimmer, Senior Master, Mayne Queen |
| Bob Jones, Salt Spring Island | |
| | Steve Clapton, Manager, Terminal Operations |
| Regrets: | Gregg Clackson, Terminal Manager, Swartz Bay |
| Jim Deverill, Mayne Island | Clive Johnston, Operations Planning & Resource Officer |
| Dave Dryer, Pender Islands | |
| Bob Todrick, Pender Islands | Peter Hildebrand, Manager, Pricing & Revenue |
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| | Lea Theriault, Operations Supervisor, Reservations Centre |
| | Mia Kaye, Secretary, Marine Superintendent, Inter-Island Services (S) |
| | Stephen Nussbaum, Communications Manager, Inter-Island & Northern Services |
| Guests: | |
| Mark Stefanson, VP, Communications | |

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda:

- a. The agenda was amended to include the following items:
 - Accommodation of Mayne Island traffic on the 3:00 p.m. sailing from Swartz Bay;
 - Swartz Bay/Tsawwassen terminal parking;
 - Ticket booth signage at Swartz Bay and use of Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands booths simultaneously;
 - Capital projects update;
 - Election of co-chairs for 2004;
 - In-camera meeting

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

- a. Minutes of the meeting held on June 3, 2003 were approved and distributed in September, 2003.
- b. It was requested and agreed that the draft minutes from this and subsequent SGIFAC meetings be distributed for review within ten days of the meeting.

4. Old Business:

- a. BC Ferries connection with TransLink at Tsawwassen Terminal:
 - BC Ferries and Brian Hollingshead approached TransLink as requested at the last meeting and report that TransLink agreed to adjust their Saturday morning schedules to arrive at Tsawwassen terminal ahead of the Tsawwassen – Southern Gulf Islands departure.
 - The Saturday morning #601 bus leaves Pender and Howe at 7:12 a.m., arriving at the Ladner exchange at 7:35 a.m. and transferring passengers to a #604 bus leaving the Ladner exchange at 8:00 a.m. The #640 bus arrives at Tsawwassen terminal at 8:15 a.m., fifteen minutes before the scheduled departure of the Tsawwassen – Southern Gulf Islands sailing. The service seems to be well used and is appreciated. (These details were added to the minutes subsequent to the meeting)

Action: CLOSED

- b. Unscheduled stop at Otter Bay on the 12:10 p.m. direct sailing from Mayne Island to Swartz bay due to overloads on the 11:30 p.m. sailing from Pender Island to Swartz Bay:
 - This issue arose during the past summer's schedule. While BC Ferries is not able to track the number of customers turned away from the 11:30 p.m. sailing from Pender Island to Swartz Bay, overloads have been few compared to the lengthy delays caused for Mayne Island customers.
 - BC Ferries has directed that an unscheduled stop only be made in cases of emergency and/or significant overloads at the discretion of the Marine Superintendent.
 - Pender Island representatives reluctantly accepted this position.

Action: CLOSED

- c. The upper lounge on the Queen of Nanaimo is sometimes closed to passengers:
 - The Senior Master has issued directives to the ship's crew to keep the upper lounge open at all times.
 - This directive does not seem to be adhered to on a consistent basis.

Action: The Senior Master will reissue the directive and, on behalf of the FAC and customers, express their appreciation to those watches which are keeping the lounge open.

d. Parking availability at the Tsawwassen First Nations Parking lot:

- This issue was resolved when parking became available again later in June, 2003.

Action: CLOSED

e. Newspaper availability on the Mayne Queen:

- A newspaper box was installed on the car deck of the Mayne Queen and seems to be satisfactory to customers.

Action: CLOSED

f. Friday PM sailing to Tsawwassen from Mayne and Galiano Islands:

- A proposal was presented to reroute the 4:25 p.m. sailing from Long Harbour non-stop to Tsawwassen to make a stop at Mayne Island to pick up Mayne and Galiano traffic as an earlier departure alternative.

Action: BC Ferries will include this proposal as part of the schedule review project.

g. Vessel congestion at Village Bay terminal, Mayne Island, Monday to Thursday afternoons:

- The committee suggested that the 4:10 p.m. sailing from Swartz Bay to Mayne Island depart 10 to 15 minutes later to decrease vessel idle time waiting for a berth at Village Bay, Mayne Island.
- The Senior Master reported that there is no consistent waiting time for a berth and that a later departure from Swartz Bay would delay the schedule for the remainder of the day.

Action: CLOSED

h. Village Bay, Mayne Island vehicle traffic congestion on the terminal:

- Vehicles transferring at Village Bay create traffic congestion. The committee asked BC Ferries to review the traffic circulation design on the Village Bay terminal.

Action: Steve Clapton will review the situation and discuss ideas for improvement with Village Bay terminal staff.

5. Correspondence:

a. None

6. New Business:

a. Schedule Review Project:

- Captain Wallace introduced the Committee to a schedule review project which has been initiated to address the many complaints received about the poor on-time performance of last year's Southern Gulf Islands summer schedule.
- The project has two main objectives. The first is to compile an accurate Origin/Destination analysis of traffic volumes into and out of the Southern Gulf Islands. The second is to analyze and isolate the operational and schedule issues to clearly define the problems.

- The analysis will form the basis for potential schedule changes. BC Ferries is required to publish its schedules 12 months in advance and therefore must publish the schedules for 2005 in the spring of 2004.
- Bob Jones and Brian Hollingshead have been invited to join the study team and have accepted.

Action: BC Ferries will schedule an Advisory Committee meeting in early March to provide input.

Lea Theriault advised she will try to create a system to help track reservation waitlists and turn-aways for a future report to the Committee.

- b. Extending the supplementary summer service on the Tsawwassen to Southern Gulf Islands route (Rt 9A, Bowen Queen):
- The Committee suggested that this service begin earlier in the late spring and/or operate later into the early fall.
 - BC Ferries reported that Transport Canada will only issue the required HT III license (to cross the Strait) to the Bowen Queen during the summer months and in addition, the Bowen Queen is required as the replacement vessel on other routes for refits.

Action: BC Ferries will review options to extend the supplementary service.

- c. Queen of Cumberland platform deck procedures:
- BC Ferries reported that there is no change to the Transport Canada direction that passengers must not remain on the platform decks when they are being raised or lowered.
 - The present procedures will remain in effect permanently.

Action: CLOSED

- d. Traffic/Service forecasts for the future:
- Last summer's traffic volumes and schedule adherence problems will be addressed as part of the schedule review project.

Action: CLOSED

- e. Fare increases and fare equity:
- All fare increases were implemented as laid out in the Coastal Ferry Services Contract at an average annual increase of 4.4 per cent on the minor routes.
 - The Committee pointed out that the fares for commercial vehicles are 45 per cent higher than for recreational vehicles of equivalent length. The Committee stated that this is an unreasonable cost burden on island businesses trying to provide necessary local services in competition with those on Vancouver Island and a burden generally on Gulf Island residents who are obliged to pay the higher costs for services requiring goods and materials trucked from Vancouver Island or the mainland.

Action: Peter Hildebrand noted the Committee's concerns on this issue and will review the commercial fare category and report back.

- f. Village Bay, Mayne Island terminal signage for transfers:
- The Committee asked BC Ferries to review the signage at Village Bay terminal to clarify directions for vehicles transferring at the terminal.

Action: Steve Clapton will review the signage and any other related problems and report back.

- g. Tsawwassen to Saturna transfer at Swartz Bay vessel announcements:
- The Committee reported that announcements on the Tsawwassen – Swartz Bay route vessels are not being made consistently on the 7:00 a.m. sailing when it is late. The purpose for the announcements are to request Saturna bound passengers to identify themselves when the ship expects to be late arriving so that transfer information can be relayed to the Swartz Bay – Saturna vessel to help coordinate the transfer and to let passengers know if the Saturna bound vessel will wait for them at Swartz Bay.
 - In addition, Tsawwassen ticket booth staff are requested to advise Saturna bound passengers if the Tsawwassen – Swartz Bay vessel is running too late to make the Swartz Bay connection.

Action: Stephen Nussbaum will request that these announcements be made with consistency.

- h. Salt Spring Island to Saturna Island inter-island thrufare:
- This transfer was included in last summer's schedule brochure and will continue to be included.

Action: CLOSED

- i. Schedule adjustment for the annual Saturna Lamb Barbeque on July 1, 2004
- As July 1, 2004 falls on a day that the Bowen Queen is in service, BC Ferries will consider revising the schedule in the same way as two years ago providing a later departure from Saturna to accommodate the barbeque.

Action: Captain Wallace will review the schedule and report back to the Committee.

- j. Mayne Island traffic on the 3:00 p.m. sailing to Saturna Island:
- Some Village Bay, Mayne Island destined passengers would like to board the 3:00 p.m. sailing to Saturna Island which continues to Mayne Island, instead of taking the 4:10 direct sailing to Mayne Island.
 - BC Ferries reported that this causes loading delays at Swartz Bay and delays the ship's arrival at Mayne Island which creates delays on the Southern Gulf Islands – Tsawwassen route.
 - For these reasons, Mayne Island bound traffic will not be accommodated on the 3:00 p.m. sailing to Saturna Island.

Action: CLOSED

- k. Long term pay parking options at Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen:
- The Committee requested that hourly increments be added to the pay parking meters to better reflect actual usage.
 - The Committee expressed serious concerns over the recent rate increase and that it may influence customers to take their vehicles to the islands or stay home rather than park them at the terminals when routes are already at capacity in peak periods.
 - The Committee also requested earlier communications to the Committee members and customers about impending rate increases.

Action: BC Ferries will review the suggestion for hourly parking rate increments and report back.

- l. Toll booth signage at Swartz Bay toll booths and destination sales flexibility:
- The Committee requested that the signage above the toll booths at Swartz Bay terminal be replaced with a sign technology that is more visible in direct sunlight and that the destination wording be changed from "Outer Gulf Islands" to "Southern Gulf Islands".
 - Gregg Clackson reported that funds have been requested for upgrades to the toll booth signs. He will notify the Committee of progress regarding funding.
 - Gregg Clackson reported that destination sales flexibility can not be implemented because customer arrival order would not be preserved.

Action: Gregg Clackson will advise the Committee if the funding for the signage upgrade is approved or not.

- m. Capital project update:
- Steve Clapton provided an update of the current capital projects as follows:
 - Sturdies Bay ramp tower replacement: this project will require a 10-14 day closure of the terminal with alternate service provided by barge and water taxi.
 - Crofton Terminal Redevelopment: a new terminal plan is being developed for the fall of 2004.
 - Lyall Harbour terminal waiting room: the waiting room and washroom are being rebuilt for the summer of 2004 to replace the facilities destroyed in the 2003 government dock fire.
- n. Election of co-chairs for 2004:
- Brian Hollingshead, Saturna Island and David Birchall, Galiano Island were elected as co-chairs.

7. In-Camera Meeting:

- a. An In-Camera meeting was held to discuss issues of interest regarding the Coastal Ferry Act.

8. Next Meeting:

- a. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for early March to review potential schedule changes.

9. Meeting adjourned: 2:30 p.m.

Approved:

Captain Bill Dickie

Brian Hollingshead, Co-Chair

David Birchall, Co-Chair

Date: January 15,2004

Date: January 18, 2004

Date: January 18, 2004