



**SOUTHERN SUNSHINE COAST FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
October 15, 2001
7:30 p.m. – 10:10 p.m.
Cedars Inn**

Attendees:

Committee

Ed Steeves, Chair
Byam Cameron
Conchita Harding
Angela Letman
Allan Crane

BC Ferries

Captain Steve Graham
Gary Leitch
Gerry Parker
Deborah Dykes

Welcome and introductions:

Chair, Ed Steeves opened meeting, and introduced committee members and BC Ferries representatives. He explained that the purpose of this meeting is to obtain feedback from the community on what issues the community wants the committee to discuss with BC Ferries. The Chair asked for presentations up to five minutes in length and to try not to duplicate an issue that someone else has already raised.

Presentations:

Barry Cavens:

- Lived on the Coast since 1993
- Commutes on the 6:20 a.m. sailing from Langdale and the 5:30 p.m. sailing from Horseshoe Bay
- Concerned about on-time performance, particularly in summer
- Wants to work at solving problems
- Asked for BC Ferries objectives (hold the sailing until it's full with vehicles or on-time for walk-on passengers) and corporation's definition of "on-time"
- Asked if there were consequences or incentives for employees being on-time
- Construction at Horseshoe Bay has added to problems
- People losing jobs [because they are late for work]; impacting tourism
- Public perception that the service is unreliable
- Suggested the committee probe about corporate processes
- Stated chock blocks [for tires] are not always in place which is a safety issue
- Has spent a great deal of time bringing issues forward to BC Ferries; wants BC Ferries to address these issues
- Feels summer schedule cannot be met; need to issue one that is realistic

- Need ferry to be able to meet transit; if people can't rely on transit, they will travel with their vehicle compounding congestion
- Understands that vessel can be late on occasion but ship is consistently late and the issue needs to be managed

Don Sherwood:

- Has commuted for 10 years
- Founding member of the Sunshine Coast Commuter's Association
- His concerns are 1) scope of schedule 2) punctuality of sailings 3) discount fare equities
- Stated that he was told 10 years ago that BC Ferries was working on problems
- Went through involved stakeholder process with BC Ferries in the past and felt that civil disobedience and calling media was the only way to get issues addressed
- Was told the political route was the appropriate avenue
- Suggested that this committee will be the same
- Stated that BC Ferries has not made any changes in Horseshoe Bay other than the VanPool
- Lack of interest in the community

Jim Ling:

- Has lived on the Coast for more than 30 years
- Concerned about maintenance on vessels and mechanical breakdowns, particularly in the summer season
- Stated that breakdowns give perception that service is unreliable, which affects tourism
- Suggests late night service several times per winter season to allow Coast residents to enjoy events in Vancouver
- Wants to speak with someone directly about status of service, so people can gauge what sailing they will be on and adjust their schedule if ferry is late
- Finds most effective way to find information is to speak with someone who lives near terminal and can see vessel
- Requests discounts for students
- Suggests improved amenities at Langdale so customers waiting can spend their money on the Coast
- Stated that 20 years ago there were two ferries operating on the Langdale run providing hourly service
- Stated that when he calls the 1-888-BCFERRY number he always speaks with a person, but on several occasions he has missed the ferry as the information he's been given is incorrect

Unidentified Woman:

- Asked if the ramp problem that occurred a few weeks ago was fixed. [Answer – yes there was an industrial electrician waiting in line who assisted the terminal staff in fixing the problem. BC Ferries has made upgrades to the power supply system to avoid this problem in the future.]

Lee Ann Johnson:

- Has commuted for 10 years
- Distributed photos she's taken over the past two years
- Feels there are safety issues with boarding practices and would like to see them resolved
- Presented this information to Tom Ward [former president and CEO of BC Ferries] and Dan Miller [former minister responsible for BC Ferries].
- Stated that many commuters are frustrated and angry about the way the community has been treated
- Stated that because commuting takes so much time out of their lives, they don't show up 30 minutes ahead --- they typically show up ten minutes in advance. This means that they have to board after the vessel has loaded the trucks. The bus passengers experience the same situation
- Stated that there is no shelter in the chain-link area where foot passengers wait at Langdale; the new shelter is on the opposite side
- Feels there are serious issues regarding boarding when the vessel is fully loaded, particularly during the summer
- Concerned about seniors, mobility-restricted people, mothers with strollers having difficulties accessing stairs or elevator
- Currently people have to go upstairs to buy commuter tickets; not handicap accessible
- Stated that prepaid tickets should be sold in the giftshop; response from BC Ferries was that there weren't enough buttons on the cash register
- BC Ferries failure to address these issues for some time has caused deep-seeded alienation

Adrian Carr:

- Leader of the Green Party; here to represent Powell River
- Stated that the large amount of money that commuters spend on ferry fares is one of the reasons they are so passionate about their ferry service
- Overloads and late night service are two issues that people are concerned about
- Residents must use the ferry for essential services, work, medical appointments, shopping, tourism, commercial traffic

- Eco-tourism philosophy is that the local peoples' quality of life can't come second to tourism, so she feels residents should get priority; tourists are able to adjust their schedules
- Suggests discount fares for off-peak times
- If schedule can't be met it should be changed
- Requests late night sailings
- Not in favour of a PacifiCat vessel on the Langdale run
- Age of an "adult fare" should be higher than 12 years
- Commuter rates should have a greater discount
- Discourage cars; encourage bicycles
- Improve intermodal transportation connections
- Requests a foot passenger-only service
- Feels hourly service with smaller vessels would serve residents' needs

Joe Brooks:

- Chair of School District #46
- Represents 4,400 students and approximately 500 employees
- Current fare system makes it very difficult for students to do anything other than basic curriculum
- Feels Sunshine Coast students should not have to pay for outings that enrich their lives
- Has lived on the Coast for 24 years, and enjoyed the hourly sailings and late night sailings of the past
- Stated that students in the lower mainland don't have extra added costs to go to events
- The new 15 passenger van is charged as a bus
- Students have to miss last block of school to get to a game off the Coast
- Later sailings would help the students

Barry Janyk:

- Mayor of the Town of Gibsons
- Stated the ferry schedule from 1962 which included two ferries on the run with a longer operational day; there were 12 sailings each way, now there are eight
- Feels that the quality of service has not improved
- Looking forward to review of BC Ferries currently being conducted by the government
- Feels that improved communication plan is an absolute
- Feels that a public private partnership for a foot passenger-only service is achievable
- Would like to see improvements in recycling, food and terminal amenities

- Stated that he received a letter from MLA Ted Nebbeling in June 2000 quoting section 14.2 – exemption from municipal zoning
- Thanked the committee and BC Ferries for holding this meeting. Feels that on the whole, it is a good service

Mary Bitroff:

- Former commuter
- On the Thanksgiving Monday, her granddaughter was ill and she and her daughter went to Langdale terminal to travel to Horseshoe Bay with their vehicle to pick up the granddaughter. Her request to jump the queue for medical reasons was not accommodated.
- Frustrated with system; feels they were not treated well and feels that there must be a better way in emergency situations
- Requests coffee refills [customers are entitled to a refill in the china cups]
- Asks why safety drills are conducted on commuter sailings
- Asks why BC Ferries does not accept debit cards as a form of payment at the toll booths
- Stated that the administration offices at Langdale and Horseshoe Bay are accessible by stairs, which handicap people cannot use
- Wants BC Ferries to back the community and say that the corporation is part of the highways
- Suggests using the Bowen ferry for late night service
- Suggests retrofitting Berth Two at Langdale to accommodate upper deck loading and unloading
- Stated that there are some violent video games on the ferries [BC Ferries has a new standard in place and all video games with hand-held guns have been removed]
- Feels that customers should be able to use a bus transfer from Sunshine Coast Transit on the West Van Blue Bus system
- Thanked BC Ferries for reasonably-charged parking rates at Langdale

Pat Barber:

- Has been a daily commuter for three years
- Stated that on-time sailings are not just a problem in the summer months
- Stated that there are vessel and ramp problems also
- Stated that the schedule is unworkable and wants a schedule that residents can plan their lives around
- Residents would rather spend their money on the Coast, than in restaurants in Horseshoe Bay
- No facilities for cyclists on the vessels (bike racks)
- Stated that if BC Ferries is not a business, than it is a public service and the service is not there

Gordon Bailey:

- Has been commuting for five years; prior to that, been on the Southern Gulf Islands for 25 years
- No place to put his bike on the ferry
- Feels the foot passenger ramp in Horseshoe Bay would not withstand an earthquake
- Feels boarding passes are not required
- Feels BC Ferries' vans should be shut off when parked by the luggage rack
- Cars should be told to shut off their engines while in the holding compound
- Part of the Langdale ramp was fixed; the other part needs to be repaired [work is slated for end of November 2001]
- Stated that BC Ferries' management is putting employees in harassing situations
- Stated he has been late for work just about every day
- Stated that there is a by-law in North Vancouver that a vehicle can't keep its engine running for more than three minutes or driver will get a ticket

Bob Jones:

- Was a member of the former Howe Sound/Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee
- Stated the issues that were raised tonight are the same ones raised years ago
- Stated that there weren't any "decision makers" from BC Ferries in attendance at this meeting
- Stated that the covered walkway at Langdale was built at basically no cost when employees had down time

Jane Smither:

- Commuter, resident of Roberts Creek
- Would like 24-hour service
- Suggests residents should get a priority pass and the first 100 residents to show up for a sailing would get priority
- Suggests a monthly pass for frequent users, similar to a bus pass
- Suggests using a PacifiCat on shore as a restaurant, or casino

Angela Letman:

- Read out the terms of reference of the committee:

The Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee is formed with the following mandate:

- *To raise and pursue issues identified by customers about the local ferry service;*
 - *To make recommendations on how the ferry corporation should respond to issues;*
 - *To advise on the most effective ways to communicate with the community;*
 - *To provide feedback to the local community through the media, by reports to local municipal councils, by public meetings or by other appropriate means;*
 - *To provide advice to the ferry corporation on interdependent ferry issues and policy issues that arise from time to time;*
 - *To liaise with the Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee regarding Route #7, Earl's Cove – Saltery Bay;*
 - *To liaise with Gambier/Keats Ferry Advisory Committee regarding Route 13;*
 - *To elect two representatives to represent the Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee on the Coastal Council to BC Ferries*
- Stated that a commuter did not come forward in response to the advertisement in the local paper for membership on the committee. Three of the committee members are elected representatives of the Sunshine Coast

Ed Steeves:

- This committee is the 12th committee in BC Ferries system
- We carry the voice of the people
- At our first meeting, we went through a list of issues
- We held this meeting to hear from the public personally
- There was a study done in November 2000 which stated that the Langdale rates are too high
- Feels that youth sporting event participants should travel for free
- Feels students up to 18 years of age should receive a concessionary rate
- Stated that the Sunshine Coast is the largest ferry-dependent community
- Vancouver is the largest employer on the Sunshine Coast
- Stated that the committee wants a fare review
- At the first meeting we did have a bit of a disagreement of the classification of some issues into local, corporate, short, and long-term issues
- The fare review will occur in the first quarter of 2002
- The committee wants to get community input on a summer schedule for next year. Forward ideas to Captain Graham, Marine Superintendent at barry.graham@bcferries.com

Barry Cavens:

- Asked why a commuter was not on this committee. Had assurances from BC Ferries that they would be included. Asked if new committee wanted their input.

Lee Ann Johnson:

- Stated that the timing of the morning meetings does not easily allow a commuter to be on the committee. Suggests an e-mail newsletter

Ed Steeves:

- The committee has only had the one meeting so far, but they plan to move the meeting location around the Coast and would entertain an afternoon or evening meeting

Captain Steve Graham:

- Thanked the audience for coming to the meeting
- BC Ferries is concentrating on next year's summer schedule, and the corporation will present a schedule around December
- Asked that any scheduling ideas be e-mailed to him (barry.graham@bcferries.com)
- BC Ferries can't provide two vessels all summer long, but can provide two vessels at the peak times
- The vessels will be the Queen of Surrey and the Queen of Esquimalt
- Engineers have a small window for maintenance as they are run 16-18 hours per day
- Stated that BC Ferries does the best it can to keep the vessels running
- Stated that last summer when the Queen of Surrey broke down for two days, almost immediately another "C" Class was brought in to provide the service
- We've heard from you tonight that you'd rather a schedule that's realistic
- We can open up the schedule, but in doing so, you won't have a 5:30 p.m. sailing from Horseshoe Bay
- Most of the year, the service is reasonable
- We've had a 40% improvement in the on-time performance of the Nanaimo run; now it's time to focus on the Langdale run

Lee Ann Johnson:

- Asked that corporation looks at service loads, frequency of sailings, on-time performance etc.
- Feels that the service has continually deteriorated
- Concerned about compromising safety as crews try to maintain schedule
- Stated that the people are frustrated and they want some courtesy back

Bob Jones:

- Stated that the summer the Bowen Queen ran as an extra vessel worked very well
- Suggested BC Ferries charter a bus to meet sailings

Captain Steve Graham:

- Stated that the Bowen Queen will not be available next summer; it's being utilized elsewhere in the system. Next summer the Langdale run will have the Queen of Surrey and the Queen of Esquimalt

Gerry Parker:

- BC Ferries works closely with Sunshine Coast Transit. Has already had discussions about changing the ferry schedule, and then the transit schedule will be changed to accommodate the ferries

Captain Steve Graham:

- BC Ferries is currently under a core review by the government. Until the government comes out with that report, BC Ferries cannot move forward. The corporation does have plans to build more ferries once it receives direction from the government.

Meeting ended at 10:10 p.m.



**SOUTHERN SUNSHINE COAST FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
October 16, 2001
6:20 a.m. – 7:00 a.m.
Queen of Surrey**

Attendees:

Committee

Ed Steeves, Chair
Byam Cameron
Conchita Harding
Angela Letman
Allan Crane
Don Murray

BC Ferries

Captain Steve Graham
Gary Leitch
Gerry Parker
Deborah Dykes

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Ed Steeves introduced the committee and explained that the committee is comprised of two people from Gibsons, Sechelt, Sunshine Coast Regional District and one from the Sechelt Indian Band Government.

Committee Members are:

Councilor Ed Steeves, District of Sechelt
Jakob Knaus, community member Sechelt
Councilor Angela Letman, Town of Gibsons
Conchita Harding, community member Gibsons
Chair of Regional District Don Murray, Sunshine Coast Regional District
Allan Crane, community member Sunshine Coast Regional District
Byam Cameron, Sechelt Indian Band Government

BC Ferries attendees:

Captain Steve Graham, Marine Superintendent
Gerry Parker, Terminal Manager, Langdale
Gary Leitch, Manager of Stakeholder Relations
Deborah Dykes, Communications Coordinator

There are 11 other committees in the BC Ferries system; this committee is the 12th one. This committee will send two members to BC Ferries' Coastal Council, which includes representation from all 12 committees. Some of the other committees have been in place for 3 – 4 years.

The Sunshine Coast is the largest ferry dependent community in British Columbia. Vancouver is the largest employer of Sunshine Coast residents. Last night 60 – 70 people showed up at the public meeting and listed lots of items

they want the committee to discuss with BC Ferries. BC Ferries wanted to hear these issues first hand.

Presentations:

Deanna Hoversland:

- Was a member of the commuter's association for years, but they didn't get anything done
- All these points have been presented before
- Students should get a discounted rate
- Prepaid tickets should be available for purchase on board
- Transit buses should pick-up and drop-off closer to the berth at Langdale
- There should be an ATM on board
- Discount rates for prepaid tickets should be greater
- Residents should get priority boarding
- In the summer there should be an 11:30 p.m. ferry so residents can stay in town
- Have the ferries leave on-time
- Hourly sailings in the summer from noon to 6:00 p.m.
- Lower motorcycle rates

Ed Gower:

- Asks why the Nanaimo ships have another 15 minutes to load and unload
- Concerned about maintenance on the vessels
- Tired of ships breaking down; running on one engine, one rudder
- Asks to enforce handicap parking spaces in parking lot. Says school buses and others park there
- Stated that many people on the Coast have spent a lot of time to promote tourism and asks how do we expect tourists to come if they have to wait two to four hours in a parking lot
- Stated that BC Ferries considers it's the tourists in the summer that keep the business running. In the winter and all year long it's the commuters. We feel we are treated second rate

Tanya:

- Stated that there is a \$2.50 charge to take a bicycle on the ferry. We've asked BC Ferries why and were told it's because of the Salt Spring run. We want commuter tickets for bicycles, or no fee at all
- Stated that they've been told the Horseshoe Bay Manager has the right over the Captain to cancel a run. Cited an occasion where the ferry was 45 minutes behind, and the vessel was held to get it back on time.

Kelly:

- Asked that if we are getting bomb threat calls, can we get a phone that traces the calls
- Questioned the way the ferry system is financed. When he was a child it was part of the highway system. He still considers it to be part of the highway system
- Stated that the rates are too high and should be subsidized
- Stated that there should be a charge of \$40.00 to go to Whistler

Ed Gower:

- Stated that the Manager in Horseshoe Bay deliberately lied to a commuter
- Last year was told by crew on the vessel that they won't accept complaints anymore as there were too many [Catering Manager asked staff to try to resolve concerns within their power on board the vessel]
- These are issues that were brought forward 10 years ago

Ed Steeves:

- The first meeting of this committee was held on September 7. We are taking a new approach with this committee by having elected officials as members. We felt it would carry more weight. We've been active already looking at local, short-term issues, local and long term-issues and corporate issues.
- Stated that BC Ferries agreed our fares are too high.
- Feels that participants in school based outings should be allowed to travel for free
- Feels that students up to 18 years of age should be charged a concessionary rate, and bicycles should be free
- Throughout the system, some prepaid ticket discounts are higher than ours, some routes don't have discounts at all. Our discount should be greater, similar to Bowen
- Reservations have been put on the table
- In December, we will be looking at next summer's schedule and asked for input
- There will be a second ferry on this run in the summer
- Fares/tariffs/discounts are up for review in the first quarter of 2002
- The committee has been busy and will try to represent the community to the best of their ability

Unidentified Person:

- Stated the Langdale berth was upgraded for earthquake sustainability. Asked why the other berth at Langdale was not upgraded to accommodate upper deck loading and unloading

- Stated that ideally ferries should run on time. There should be a person dedicated to give people an honest answer of how late a ferry is. It should be one person's position to keep track of the ferry

Ed Steeves:

- The issue about accurate information was raised at the public meeting the night prior. It was suggested to have a telephone line to keep people informed.

Ed Gower:

- Hopes the committee and BC Ferries understands the level of frustration. We want to be treated with respect
- Request parking for commuter vans
- Problems getting to Horseshoe Bay terminal with construction; got held back on highway
- Request long-term parking rates in new Horseshoe Bay parkade

Ed Steeves:

- Thanked the audience for their participation
- The minutes will be available on the District of Sechelt, Town of Gibsons, and Sunshine Coast Regional Districts' websites, as well as at the public libraries.
- Suggestions are welcome. Please send them in.

Meeting adjourned 7:00 a.m.

Minutes approved by: Captain Steve Graham, BC Ferries
 Ed Steeves, Chair, Southern Sunshine Coast Ferry
 Advisory Committee