

Meeting Details

Date: May 17, 2017
Time: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Location: BC Ferries Head Office – Suite 500 - 1621 Blanshard Street

Attendance

Public Interest Representatives

Scott Heron, Co-Chair, Spinal Cord Injury BC
Hugh Mitchell, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Les Chan, Disability Resource Centre
Pat Danforth, Board Member, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
Jane Sheaff, Seniors Serving Seniors
Sandra Jenkins, A/Marnie Essery at Inter-Municipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
Hanna Leavitt, Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians

BC Ferries Representatives

Karen Tindall, Director of Customer Care, Customer Care Department
Bruce Paterson, Fleet Technical Director, Engineering
David Carroll, Director, Terminal Construction, Engineering
Rob Seitz, Superintendent, Terminal Development
Captain Chris Frappell, Marine Superintendent, South and Central Coast
Sheila O'Neill, Catering Superintendent, Central Coast
Stephen Nussbaum, Regional Manager, Swartz Bay
Garnet Renning, Customer Service & Sales Representative, Customer Care

Guest

Cheryl Forsyth, Customer Relations, Customer Care

Regrets

Jeff Davidson, Director, Retail Services, Food and Retail Operations
Melanie Lucia, Director, Catering Operations
Darin Guenette, Manager, Public Affairs
Steve Shardlow, Training Manager, Terminals
Barbara Schuster, CNIB
Mary Ellen Meunier, Seniors Serving Seniors
Valerie Thoem, Independent
Marnie Essery, Inter-municipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues

Introduction

Co-Chair Karen Tindall welcomed the members of the committee.

Review of Minutes – November 16, 2016 meeting. Minutes approved by the committee with one noted addition to the “Induction Loop System” section, after . . . acceptable level, add “*in the forward lounge, the two loops in the cafeteria had very low volume and were unable to be adjusted*”.

Update on Action Items from previous meeting:

1. Induction Loop System – Action: Karen Tindall to follow-up with Marketing on the types of signs used to indicate the induction loops.
Follow-up: Marketing will update the signage.
2. Self-Declaration Information Cards – Action: Karen Tindall will email a copy of the card along with the minutes.
Follow-up: Karen Tindall provided a copy of the card to Scott Heron and Scott will distribute to the group.

Standing Items

Loading Practices

Stephen Nussbaum has reviewed customer comments from the last six months and very few issues were received. There were a couple of issues with vehicles not being loaded with close enough access to the elevators for a variety of reasons, first-come, first-serve, not enough space for vehicles requiring special accessibility.

Customers are asked to put their four-way flashers on while loading to indicate to a Loading Officer that they have accessibility needs. The terminal staff and or Loading Officer will seek those customers with their flashers on prior to loading and ask for specific needs/requirements onboard (eg. side of vehicle access, back of vehicle access, wheelchair access etc.).

There were a few noted comments regarding elevators being out of service. Discussion around upcoming Transport Canada federal regulation restricting passengers from closed car decks. This regulation will be in effect in the fall of 2017. Customers needing to remain in their vehicles will need to identify themselves at the ticket booth when they arrive, and BC Ferries will do their best to accommodate their request. Staff at the terminals and on board the vessels will assist customers wherever possible for a variety of circumstances that preclude them moving up to the passenger decks. This does not affect passengers parked on the upper car decks. The regulation has been in effect since 2007, BC Ferries’ and Transport Canada recently re-examined the policy and in an effort to coordinate safety practices, will change the application of the regulation. There will be more information available regarding implementation and frequently asked questions.

University of Victoria (UVic) Accessibility Project:

Stephen Nussbaum updated the committee on the Accessibility Initiative. One of the outcomes from the project it has been determined that better powered wheelchair assists are necessary. A single powered wheelchair that has a better turning radius will be trialed in the summer (arrival is estimated to be June/July of 2017). Two routes (Horseshoe Bay to Departure Bay and Swartz Bay to Tsawwassen) will be trialed this summer. Staging of foot passengers/wheelchairs seems to work best to embarkation first and disembarking last, much like the airline industry. This allows passengers any extra time to load if necessary.

Stephen Nussbaum advised that BC Ferries is currently looking for software to manage the wheelchair inventory and this is underway. Scott Heron mentioned eye beacons that can be attached to the any point of interest, the size of a hockey puck, they can be loaded with a variety of information and GPS will pick up that information and can be read by an application called BlindSquare that can be placed on smart phones. BlindSquare is the world's most popular accessible GPS-app developed for the blind and visually impaired. It describes the environment, announces points of interest and street intersections as you travel.

Induction Loop System:

There are still some small volume tweaking that will take place at the Point of Sale (cafeteria's onboard).

Vessel Development Update:

Bruce Paterson (BP) provided an updated presentation on the upcoming vessel replacements and mid-life upgrades.

Salish Class Vessels:

The *Salish Orca* started service on May 16th on the Comox to Powell River route. The *Salish Eagle* will officially commence service in June 2017 on the Tsawwassen to Southern Gulf Islands route. The *Salish Raven* will commence service in August 2017 as well as on the Tsawwassen to Southern Gulf Islands route. The *Salish Raven* will be based at the Tsawwassen terminal for the summer servicing the Southern Gulf Islands. All three Salish Class vessels are dual-fuel ships and capable of operating on liquefied natural gas or marine diesel.

Mid-Life Upgrades:

The *Spirit of British Columbia* is heading to Poland for the mid-life upgrade on September 17th and will return in May, 2018. The *Spirit of Vancouver Island* will be heading for its mid-life upgrade in the Fall of 2018 and returning in the Spring of 2019. Both vessels will be dual-fueled when the upgrades are complete. These vessels are expected to provide another 25 years of service.

Hanna Leavitt inquired about the vessels that are outfitted with LNG capability, how is their service affected in the event of a traffic accident delaying the re-fueling of the vessels? BP advised that all vessels with LNG capability have two days of LNG plus a day of reserve on the ship and have the capability of running on diesel as they are dual-fueled.

The *Skeena Queen* is scheduled for a mid-life upgrade in the May 2019. This vessel serves the Swartz Bay to Salt Spring Island (Fulford Harbour) route and was built in 1997. Upgrades that are planned are passenger lounges, bridge upgrades, lifesaving equipment, mechanical mid-life work, which is part of the normal course of upgrades.

Hugh Mitchell asked why we are not using BC Shipyards and BP advised that we did not receive a bid from any BC Shipyards.

Break: 2:10 - 2:30 pm – Birthday cake enjoyed to celebrate Pat Danforth's birthday

Terminal Development Update:

Rob Seitz shared with the group that a new department has been created within Engineering which will attend to all aspects of planning, construction and maintaining our many terminals. The overall plan is incorporate a consistent approach to all our terminal upgrades to consolidate standardization and ensure barrier free designs incorporates new technology when upgrading.

David Carroll showed a presentation outlining terminal development and construction updates which includes the following significant 2017/018 projects with accessibility improvements:

- Major terminals elevators modernization and escalators replacement;
- Denman West, Denman East and Hornby waiting room/washroom buildings replacement;
- Buckley Bay toll booth replacement;
- Construction planning for Langdale master plan improvements (2018/2019 project start); and
- Swartz Bay and a number of minor/intermediate terminal development plans.

Sandra Jenkins asked about unisex restrooms available for caregivers and children. Rob Seitz advised that unisex restrooms are being considered with all upgrades and they will be referenced as 'universal restrooms'.

Terminology was discussed, 'barrier free' design and 'universal design'. Universal design is preferable as it incorporates and considers all disabilities, refers to a broad-spectrum, accessible to everyone, people with disabilities and people without disabilities.

Pat Danforth asked about incorporating truncated domes into curb cuts when terminals are being upgraded as the City of Victoria has some pilot projects started.

Action: David Carroll will look into Pat Danforth's suggestion and update the group at the next meeting.

Sunset Dinner Cruise:

Scott advised that the cruise took place on March 18th and the group unfortunately missed the sunset, 26 people from Victoria attended and nonetheless enjoyed the event travelling from SWB-TSA and met up with 50+ members and socialized and enjoyed the evening. This cruise is one of the most popular events enjoyed by members. This is one of many different events that take place in Victoria and throughout the province; peer group events, fishing program, recreation, kayaking in the summer, hockey/dinner socials. Scott shared with the group that he keeps a blog updated on the Spinal Cord Injury website that allows members to communicate, a variety of education topics available, accessibility features to members and sharing of photos of different events that take place.

Salish Orca Tour Feedback:

Scott Heron shared that there are photos on the Spinal Cord Injury BC website, generally the access is great onboard. Signage and braille are excellent, there was some signage in the wrong places but has been actioned to be moved. Scott Heron advised that everything that has been discussed at this group has been incorporated into the design of the new *Salish Orca* vessel and all in all very pleased with the results.

Other Business:

Digital Signage Project:

Digital signage and monitors were discussed and this project is currently underway to improve and be placed in all of our terminals and vessels. Many of our terminals and vessels already have digital signage in place. New vessels are automatically outfitted with digital signage/monitors.

Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Format:

Karen Tindall discussed the format of this meeting's agenda and proposed that it would be much more valuable to learn new ideas and initiatives from the representatives of this group first in the agenda. BC Ferries will continue to update the group on our standing items and share presentations with the group from our various departments. Jane Sheaff asked if BC Ferries has any routine customer satisfaction surveys and Karen Tindall advised that we can share this information with the group as customer satisfaction surveys are regularly conducted at BC Ferries.

David Carroll shared with the group that we are considering offering a virtual tour of our terminals and vessels to our customers as part of our new website redesign project that would offer a 360-degree view, where amenities are located, emergency assembly stations and restrooms. Many different apps were discussed at the recent BC Ferries Leadership meeting. Scott Heron asked about GoPro and YouTube, Karen Tindall advised they are considering all suggestions.

Self-Declaration Information Cards:

Karen Tindall advised that there is an Operational Directive to hand this card to passengers at the ticket booth that informs passengers the procedures with self-identifying themselves.

Meeting Adjourned 3:15pm

Next Meeting Dates:

November 15, 2017 and May 2, 2018