

BC Ferry Services Inc.

Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details

Date July 12, 2012
Time 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Location BC Ferries Head Office – Suite 500-1321 Blanshard Street

Attendance

Public Interest Representatives

Pat Danforth, Co-Chair
Susan Gallagher, Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians
Hugh Mitchell, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Scott Heron, Disability Resource Centre
Barbara Schuster, Canadian National Institute for the Blind
Valerie Thoem, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
Jane Sheaff, Seniors Serving Seniors

BC Ferries Representatives

Karen Tindall, Director of Customer Care, Customer Care Department
Jeff Davidson, Director, Retail Services, Food and Retail Operations
Bruce Paterson, Fleet Technical Director, Engineering
David Carroll, Director, Terminal Construction, Engineering
Jerry Lightburn, Catering Representative, North Coast
Garnet Renning, Customer Sales & Service Representative
Stephen Nussbaum, Regional Manager, Swartz Bay

Guests

Paul Curtis, Manager, Web Services and Customer Information Network

Regrets

Ernie Stigant, Multiple Sclerosis Society
Peter Simpson, Director Operational Strategy, Fleet Operations
Jeff Joyce, Director, Operational Training, Fleet Operations and Training
Captain Chris Frappell, Marine Superintendent, South Coast

Introductions

Co-Chairs Pat Danforth and Karen Tindall welcomed the members of the committee.

Review of minutes – February 9, 2012

Matters Arising

David Carroll pointed out that the wording on page 4 of the minutes under *Upcoming* should state Westview instead of Powell River and Little River instead of Westview.

Matters Arising from Action Items

Pat Danforth put forth her concerns regarding the C-Mist Communications Program. She mentioned that she had difficulties navigating the website as she was trying to locate the online C-mist form.

ACTION: Karen Tindall described where to locate the C-mist form through the BC Ferries home page and other places within the website. Karen Tindall and Paul Curtis will discuss further, and may look at reviewing the current placement of the links.

ACTION: Barbara Schuster advised the committee that Mary-Kay Kennedy of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind has notified patrons that the CNIB card is still accepted as a form of Disabled Status Identification.

Standing Items

Training

Karen Tindall advised the committee that training documents are ready to be implemented to the online training program. Once completed, she will send a comprehensive document to committee members to review prior to the next meeting.

Loading Practices

Valerie Thoen commented on the loading practices at Departure Bay terminal. She has witnessed inconsistent placement of disabled passenger vehicles in relation to the proximity of the elevators. Karen Tindall clarified the accessibility loading procedures for the committee.

ACTION: Stephen Nussbaum will review the accessibility loading procedures at Swartz Bay, Tsawwassen and Departure Bay terminals and reported on at the next meeting.

Stephen Nussbaum asked the committee members for further feedback on any disability issues at the terminals. He then suggested that he could be contacted via email to address any questions or concerns.

Signage

Karen Tindall handed out copies of the Master Plan document for the BC Ferries Way-Finding and Signage Program. David Carroll advised the committee that Bond Creative has been retained to aid with the design and implementation of this signage program. David said the objective of the program is to continue to improve signage and to set standards of consistency throughout the fleet. A series of simplified signage using more symbols than wording was implemented throughout terminals in 2011. David advised that BC Ferries is working towards implementing the Master Plan later this year at Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen terminals. He also noted the project budget had not yet been approved.

Induction Loop Technology

Paul Curtis passed around hand-outs to the committee about Induction Loop Technology. Paul went over the documentation with the committee, advising them of the current status and research that has taken place for the proposed project. Bruce Paterson discussed the next steps of researching and developing the project. He also discussed that there may be a pilot project for Induction Loop technology implemented during the refit of the Spirit of British Columbia in the spring of 2013. Discussion ensued.

Hugh Mitchell also put forth the idea of placing the technology at the ticket booths. Further discussion ensued.

ACTION: Paul Curtis and Bruce Paterson to continue to update the committee of the project status.

Vessel Developments

Island Sky

Bruce Paterson advised the committee that The Island Sky refit has been completed. The elevator is now in compliance with CTA requirements.

Tachek Upgrade

The Tachek is currently operating between Quadra Island and Cortes Island. Its upgrades are still in the planning stages. They will be similar upgrades to the Tacheks sister ship the Quadra Queen.

Kahloke

The Kahloke is currently operating between Denman Island and Hornby Island. The upgrades for the Kahloke have been delayed. The delay is due to the shipyard being behind schedule. The upgrade was originally scheduled for July 4th, 2012 and has now been scheduled to commence on July 31st.

Queen of Chilliwack – Life Extension

The second phase of the life extension project has been completed. This phase involved upgrades to the passenger services and the electrical system.

Spirit Class – Mid-Life Upgrade

BC Ferries is currently going through the consultation process with the company stakeholders regarding the Mid-Life Upgrades. The tentative plan is to start the upgrades with the Spirit of British Columbia in September of 2015, followed by the Spirit of Vancouver Island in September of 2016. The vessels upgrades will mirror each other. The upgrades will include modernization to life saving equipment through the wider use of visual aids and audio. There will also be the consideration of an

integrated communication system including wireless internet and televisions. The upgrades are still in the planning process.

ACTION: Bruce Paterson to continue to provide updates to the members of the committee regarding the status of this project.

Cable Ferry

Bruce Paterson advised the committee that the Cable Ferry project is ongoing. Research is being conducted of vessels and cables ferry systems. BC Ferries is currently in the planning stages for this project and if approved would commence service in April 2014.

Terminal Developments

Swartz Bay Berth 5

David Carroll advised the committee that Berth 5 is operational. Berth 4 is expected to be in operation near the end of summer 2012. The Berth 4 ramp is identical to Berth 5, with focus on the foot passenger walkways by highlighting gangways and trip areas. The same ramps will be used for major and minor vessels. They are 1.5 metres wide, provide smoother transitions and have an increased length which will reduce overall ramp steepness.

Nanaimo Harbour Waiting Room

David Carroll advised the committee that there is a washroom facility that is appropriate for passengers with accessibility concerns.

Powell River (Westview) and Comox (Little River) Projects

David Carroll advised the committee that Westview Terminal washrooms and waiting room has undergone upgrades to way finding signage.

The project to standardize the berths of Westview, Little River and Alert Bay is proceeding in 2013.

The upgrades to both Westview and Little River terminals will take place in 2013 and require a shut-down of approximately 8 weeks. BC Ferries is currently working out the different service options during this shut-down period, with service potentially being offered between Departure Bay and Saltery Bay. BC Ferries will provide customers with extensive notification as to when this change to service would take place.

Alert Bay Berth Rebuild Project

The berth rebuild project will require a shut-down of the Alert Bay terminal in April 2013. A water taxi service and barge service would be provided in lieu of the regular ferry.

Other Business

Staxi Review

Stephen Nussbaum provided an update of the new Staxi wheelchairs in use at Horseshoe Bay terminal. The Staxi has been in use for a week and a half. Crews from other terminals are going to be sent over to Horseshoe Bay for training on the Staxi unit. The unit itself is a wire framed chair that propels forward when the user applies pressure to the handle, similar to how one would move a lawn mower forward. This unit also has a seatbelt to ensure the safety of the passenger. If the feedback on the Staxi is positive then BC Ferries will look at purchasing more units for Departure Bay, Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen.

ACTION: Stephen Nussbaum will follow up with feedback about the Staxi at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

January 17, 2013