

Tri-Island Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting

Overview: at Pt McNeill Town Office – October 22, 2015

In Attendance:

Committee: Carmen Burrows, Marnie Crowe, Art Dick, Shelley Downey, Melissa Fletcher, Sharon Gordon, Dennis Swanson

BC Ferries: Mark Collins- VP Strategic Planning and Community Engagement, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Al de Koninck - Marine Superintendent, Jeff West -Superintendent, Terminal Operations, Darin Guenette-Public Affairs Manager

Meeting Highlights:

The objective of the meeting was to: discuss previous issues and explore options for addressing issues brought to the FAC from the community.

The next meeting will be face-to-face in May 2016.

Issues Summary and Resolution Plan

A. Issue: Loading issues

Definition: The FAC had previously expressed about times when customers at Sointula were not provided enough time to park and walk-on when the ferry was fully loaded. Al explained that crews will typically hold a departure a few minutes to allow a walk-on, but this instance provided was actually a communications misunderstanding. There were also concerns around crews ‘short-loading’ in order to keep the vessel on schedule.

To help address all loading concerns, Al is working on developing a ‘facts info sheet’ to inform communities about: where the overload mark is, how the vessel loads, and other similar processes. When complete he will share with FACs for posting where it makes sense.

In a related discussion, Al offered to work with Alert Bay and Sointula groups in finding ways to identify and assist locals who may wish to obtain marine tickets, thus provide options for future employment with BC Ferries.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: develop ‘facts info sheet’ and share with FAC.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Send FAC completed ‘facts info sheet’	Al	When able

B. Issue: Overlength fare rationale

Definition: David explained that the current fare structure of charging non-commercial vehicles greater than 20 feet in length a ‘commercial per foot fare’ for each foot over 20 feet was determined approximately five years ago, after having consulted FACs. At that time, the overheight fare category was removed due to lack of rationale and customer dissatisfaction, and in order to remain revenue neutral, the new overlength fare was put into effect.

A brief discussion followed about new fare possibilities, including dynamic pricing, when initiatives are implemented as part of the Fare Flexibility and Digital Experience project.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
No action required		

C. Issue: Vehicle fare promotion

Definition: Darin notified the FAC that BC Ferries would be offering a 50% discount on vehicle fares from November 16 to December 19, following the pattern used in the recent passenger fare promotion (Mon to Thurs and Saturday, select sailings eligible).

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

D. Issue: Vessel refit/replacement issues

Definition: Al confirmed that the Quinitsa (from the Buckley Bay-Denman Island route) will be serving as the relief vessel while the Quadra Queen II moves to the Quadra-Cortes route to perform relief duties June 15 to Aug 9, 2016. As the Quinitsa has a larger vehicle capacity (approx. 50) and is slower than the QQII, his team is currently modelling scenarios to help develop schedule options during that time.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: work with FAC to analyze schedule options during the summer of 2016.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date

Meet with FAC once modelling options developed, and determine schedule ideas when Quinitsa in service	Al	As applicable
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E. Issue: Operations Presentation

Definition: Al provided a brief summary of operational information (traffic stats, on-time performance, etc) and near future terminal or vessel changes planned. With recent employee turnover, more crew members are being familiarized...thus causing some delays as they learn. As well, the Senior Master, Brian Hart, is retiring in May of 2016.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

F. Issue: Debit cards

Definition: BC Ferries reps clarified that debit card payment was not accepted because of the increased transaction time required and unreliability of instant internet connectivity.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

G. Issue: Sointula bathroom

Definition: Jeff noted that he had most recently offered an idea to establish a ‘standalone restroom’ facility outside of the Co-op building with store managers, but he has not heard anything back in the past few months.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: let FAC know if Co-op progresses the idea to build a shared-cost, standalone restroom for the use of BC Ferries customers.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Update FAC on ‘restroom plans’	Jeff	As appropriate

H. Issue: Feedback on berth upgrades

Definition: Discussion occurred around ideas for improving the efficiency of parking/line-ups near the Sointula terminal, as well as how to keep loading orderly for ‘Lanes 1 and 2’ at Alert Bay.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Consider how to stage traffic ‘straight up the hill’ at Sointula, and review signage/light position at Alert Bay.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Analyse what is involved in ‘staging directly uphill’ from the berth’ at Sointula.	Jeff	When able
Review signage/signal light in staging area at Alert Bay	Jeff	When able

I. Issue: Customer Satisfaction Survey

Definition: Mark pointed out that some concerns have been raised by Minor route FAC members that the information gathered through the Customer Satisfaction Tracking (CST) survey process may be used to make decisions that affects routes not included in the survey.

Mark pointed out that most of the Minor routes are not included in the CST, but rather these routes are involved in the FAC process, whereby they have direct avenues for suggestions/feedback/consultation with BC Ferries management. Having said this, he sought FAC thoughts on the survey and whether they feel being surveyed in some way in the future is important.

FAC members said that it may be felt in the community the ‘BC Ferries does not care’ because they are not surveying the community, and they suggest that some sort of survey may be helpful to seek input.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Include FAC input with other FACs and consider if any future survey process makes sense for Minor routes.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Analyze FAC input on future survey considerations	Mark	As applicable
Send FAC a link to CST info	Darin	As soon as reasonable