

BC Ferry Services Inc.

Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details

Date July 17, 2013
Time 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Location BC Ferries Head Office – Suite 500-1321 Blanshard Street

Attendance

Public Interest Representatives

Scott Heron, Co-Chair, Spinal Cord Injury BC
Pat Danforth, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
Susan Gallagher, Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians
Hugh Mitchell, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Jane Sheaff, Seniors Serving Seniors
Ernie Stignant, Disability Resource Centre

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
Sheila O'Neill, Catering Representative, Central Coast
Garnet Renning, Customer Service & Sales Representative
Stephen Nussbaum, Regional Manager, Swartz Bay
Captain Chris Frappell, Marine Superintendent, South and Central Coast
Steve Shardlow, Training Manager, Terminals
David Carroll, Director, Terminal Construction, Engineering

Regrets

Peter Simpson, Director Operational Strategy, Fleet Operations
Jeff Joyce, Director, Operational Training, Fleet Operations and Training
Valerie Thoem, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
Barbara Schuster, Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Introductions

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

Review of minutes – January 17, 2013

Matters Arising

Karen and Pat requested that items for discussion were added to the “Other Business” portion of the meeting. These items included a discussion about current membership and a handout, provided by Karen, regarding Terms of Reference for the committee to review.

Standing Items

Loading Practices

Stephen advised the committee that he had recently received customer feedback regarding loading practices, specifically on Route 2. Customer feedback about revised loading practices is constantly being considered. Stephen mentioned that suggestions for pre-boarding announcements for persons with mobility issues and preferred seating for persons with disabilities were being considered as a result of ongoing customer feedback.

Jane Sheaff advised the committee of a situation a friend of hers encountered while travelling with a wheelchair reservation between Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen. Her friend had recently undergone hip replacement surgery and booked wheelchair with assistance reservations through the Customer Service Centre. Both times when she arrived and departed from Tsawwassen, the terminal attendants were not aware of her reservations and therefore she did not receive the assistance she required. Jane was asking on behalf of her friend where the miscommunication could have taken place and why the terminal was not aware of her bookings. Karen advised Jane that her friend followed the proper procedures for checking in and she advised that she would investigate further as to why the information was not passed forward. Karen also advised the committee that customers could also check in with the Chief Steward once onboard to ensure that the proper arrangements were made for their wheelchair reservations. Jane and Hugh suggested that this should be included online with the wheelchair reservation information.

Stephen confirmed that wheelchairs are available at terminals and onboard vessels for customers who do not necessarily book wheelchairs, but who might require them last minute.

The committee discussed ways to get information about loading practices and wheelchair reservations out to their respective organizations. Scott suggested that BC Ferries could provide an approved template with policy information that could be brought back to organizations and handed out or put in newsletters. Karen reminded the committee of the Visitor Pass Program available for persons who required assistance loading and unloading at terminals. Susan asked where brochures with information about accessibility at BC Ferries were being distributed. Karen advised the brochures are available onboard each ship, on the website and at the major terminals.

ACTION: Karen will review wheelchair reservations with the Customer Service Centre team.

Ernie suggested that representatives from BC Ferries attend other transportation company meetings about accessibility in order to spread the word about services offered by BC Ferries for persons with mobility issues. The committee agreed that this was a good suggestion and could possibly be considered in the future.

Induction Loop Technology

Bruce advised the committee that the Fleet Support Unit is finding it difficult to find any supported evidence of Induction Loop technology being placed into steel structures. The team is currently trying to determine how to move forward with a possible pilot project on the Queen of Oak Bay.

Hugh advised that he thought Marine Atlantic had incorporated Induction Loop Technology.

ACTION: Bruce advised that he would follow this lead and investigate further. He will provide an update at the next meeting.

Vessel Developments

Bruce provided the committee with a handout and PowerPoint presentation of the current vessel developments. The presentation consisted of updates about the Cable Ferry, the ICF vessel design concepts, life extensions and upgrades to the MV Tachek, the MV Kwuna, the MV Queen of Capilano and the MV Queen of Oak Bay. Discussion ensued.

Spirit Class – Mid-Life Upgrade

Jeff Davidson provided design samples for the Cafeteria, main seating lounge, SeaWest lounge, Buffet, and Coast Café Express. He asked the committee what they thought about the color contrasts in each of these areas. The committee provided their thoughts on what they perceived to be the best themes and colors to help identify different areas of the ship. Susan advised that having the actual seat cushion of the lounge chairs a light color to contrast the dark color of the carpet is very helpful.

Susan and Jeff plan to meet again to discuss the color and designs in more detail. Susan will provide further feedback on behalf of individuals who have sight impairments. Jeff asked the committee to give him feedback about design changes and top 10 criteria that should be considered regarding accessibility to help with the design process of the new ICF vessels.

Karen suggested that committee members go back to their organizations and gather feedback from them about accessibility issues at BC Ferries. Karen requested that this feedback is sent to her and she will then gather this information and provide a presentation at the next meeting. Karen will then provide another presentation about how these suggestions were implemented into the design of the ICF vessels at a possible committee meeting scheduled for May.

Jane suggested that BC Ferries studies and compares the design schemes at the Royal Jubilee Hospital's new lounge and at several retirement homes in Victoria to get further ideas about designs and colors for accessibility.

ACTION: Bruce Paterson/Jeff Davidson to continue to provide updates to the members of the committee regarding the status of this project. External members to provide top 10 design criteria recommendations to Karen prior to next meeting.

Accessibility Changes on the Coastal Renaissance

Karen and Bruce presented a Power Point presentation on the changes made from the committees' feedback. Hand outs of the Power Point were provided as well as email. Discussion ensued.

Terminal Developments

David Carroll provided a Power Point presentation on Terminal Developments. Hand outs were provided as well. David presented the Alert Bay rebuild project that had recently been completed, a review of the planned construction at Westview and Little River Terminals and the plans for the upcoming Cable Ferry project. Discussion ensued.

David advised that the Way Finding Signage project was completed at Swartz Bay. Tsawwassen is the next major terminal to undergo the project. All major terminals are expected to be completed within 4-5 years.

The subject of large screens was brought up in regards to the signage project. Karen advised that she will provide updates from the ACE project about screens at terminals next meeting. She will also include any updates concerning accessibility within the ACE project.

David advised he will provide a presentation about the Langdale Master Plan next meeting.

ACTION: Karen to provide an ACE Update relative to accessibility and the large digital signage at the major terminals at the next meeting. David to present Langdale Master plan process at the next meeting.

Training

Steve Shardlow presented a SEA pamphlet to the committee. The program continues to be implemented across the fleet. The training consists of a combination of electronic, self study and on site training (vessel and terminal specific). This standardized training across the fleet provides employees with hands on experience and the benefit of shared information. Steve advised that terminal and deck training programs have been completed. Engineering and Catering are expected to be fully implemented by 2016. Steve advised that Supervisor and Ticket Agent training about wheelchair reservations would be beneficial to customers and would help eliminate miscommunication surrounding the proper procedures. Steve advised of where on the brochure customers could find information online about SEA training methods and information.

Other Business

Pat Danforth announced that she will be stepping down as Co-Chair of the Accessibility Committee. Scott Heron was nominated to take over as Co-Chair.

The addition of new members to the committee was discussed and several candidates were put forward. Decisions about new members will be made at the next meeting.

Karen handed out the Terms of Reference as well as emailed the members a copy. A review of the terms will take place at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

February 4, 2014