

Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee

Date: April 3, 2013

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Location: Gabriola Island Golf & Country Club

Participants:

FAC Committee	BC Ferries
Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley	Corrine Storey, Vice President, Customer Services
John Hodgkins - Chair	Captain Lewis MacKay, Marine Superintendent, Southern Islands
Roger Perry	Jason Bowman, Director, Terminal Operations
Gisele Rudischer	David Hendry, Director, Strategic Planning
	Darin Guenette, Manager, Public Affairs
	Captain Mark Waugh, Senior Master Route 19, (observing)
	Others
	Several members of the public, including media

1. Call to Order and introductions: 5:35 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda: a decision was made to move the Superintendent's presentation to precede public input. Thereafter, the agenda was approved.

3. Agenda Items:

a. Drinking water/vending machines on board – It was requested of BC Ferries that either a water fountain be reinstalled or the bottled water available be priced lower (currently priced at \$2.50, compared to pop at \$1.25). Captain MacKay noted that regulations set to ensure drinking water is safe and clean have changed in the recent past, and it would be very costly for BC Ferries to install a system that would satisfy these requirements. He added that crew members also do not have available tap water on board and that options to bring water on board will be explored. Corrine noted that BC Ferries is in a contract with a vendor to manage vending machines and this is how prices are set. **ACTION: Corrine Storey will discuss pricing of water products with vending contractor. COMPLETED: pricing is determined by size of bottle/can, and the water bottles are much larger than the pop cans.**

Further discussion continued on if/how to provide water for customers and an idea was put forth to consider self-contained, purifying water machines like those seen in Nanaimo sites.

b. Parking spaces at Descanso Bay – It was pointed out that two additional parking spots have recently been assigned for crew members, reducing the capacity for customers. This was followed up with a suggestion that crew parking spots be made available for general public use during times when they would not be required.

Jason Bowman noted that these two, new spots were made available from area that was not previously parking, so there was no reduction in customer parking. He added that 14 spots were required for the oncoming and outgoing crew, but that BC Ferries was willing to consider limiting all parking spots to a maximum 24-hour period in order to keep turnover reasonable. BC Ferries was then asked if the 14 crew spots could have a 'limited time' restriction for the period around shift change. **ACTION: Jason Bowman will investigate 'watch changeover' and '24-hour'**

parking restrictions at Descanso Bay and send proposal to FAC.

ACTION: Jason will also research if the no-post near the electrical box can be moved, opening up another parking spot.

c. Communicating at Descanso (unscheduled item) – John Hodgkins said that there is a lack of information provided to customers at Descanso when any unusual situation occurs (delays, cancellations, etc) and he suggests all consider new communication means.

Jason replied that BC Ferries currently relies on: Twitter (urgent, short-notice), emails, Service Notices, call centre responses. He added that there is a pilot underway at Vesuvius terminal to trial a simple, electronic sign that can be remotely controlled. However, he cautioned that there are many terminals that need some sort of sign/info board, and the most efficient and cost effective solution would need to be a universal plan. For this 'total plan' concept, BC Ferries is currently accepting bids, and the results of the pilot should be known near the end of 2013.

The committee suggested that BC Ferries consider erecting a simple sign displaying the BC Ferries Call Centre phone number for customers to get updates.

d. Provincial consultation – John summarized the Provincial consultation session on Gabriola during the fall of 2012 and some local reactions to this process. He noted that there was another, island-coordinated session, where locals explored future opportunities for transportation. Corrine stated that BC Ferries provided information and technical support during the Province's process only. She said the government is considering deferring the current June 30 deadline for making service adjustment decisions into 2014, and she reminded the group that the cost savings the Province is aiming to identify may come from any/all of BC Ferries' routes.

e. Costs associated with 2010 schedule change – John asked whether there were increased costs to BC Ferries by implementing the new schedule in 2010. Captain MacKay explained that BC Ferries did incur approximately 30 minutes of overtime each day when the schedule was first expanded. However, the fuel savings realized in keeping this schedule far outweigh the overtime costs, thus a net positive benefit in costs.

f. Number of Nanaimo terminals – John said he has heard many questions in the communities about the efficiency of operating three terminals in Nanaimo. He asked if BC Ferries can share any analysis regarding possible cost savings found when operating out of two of three terminals on two occasions in the recent past. Corrine replied that these examples were not good indicators of what may be true cost savings, as BC Ferries still incurred costs while each terminal was temporarily closed.

4. Presentations:

a. Operations Report – Captain MacKay provided a summary of notable occurrences in the past year and a preview of undertakings pertaining to Route 19 in the near future. A brief review of traffic, on-time performance statistics, and previous meeting action items was included. Following up on a previous action item, he also noted that disabled washrooms are locked to prevent abuse or vandalism, but there is a visible call button next to the door in case it needs to be opened.

b. Public: nothing further from earlier input.

5. Correspondence: nothing presented.

6. New Business:

a. BC Services Card – Darin Guenette told the committee that, with the Province’s introduction of the BC Services Card, BC Ferries ticketing agents are now required to perform an inspection of this card when a senior is using it to receive a travel discount. This may delay transactions, but must be done each time.

b. Experience Card buy in levels – BC Ferries was asked if there are any options available for changes to buy-in levels at a ‘local/route specific’ level. Corrine replied that BC Ferries is already exploring options to current buy-in structure, such as a way to allow lower income individuals receive discounts without a minimum buy-in level. She explained that the fare levels on Route 3 (Langdale-Horseshoe Bay) determine the minimum buy-in, as this level must cover two sailings on that route. Finally, individuals may pool resources to purchase one account with multiple cards that may be used. It was noted by Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley that using the longer Langdale-Horseshoe Bay route as the standard disadvantages Gabriola users by requiring them to invest in more than two sailings.

7. Next meeting: Darin noted a WebEx format meeting is planned in the fall, details to follow.

Approved:

Capt. Lewis MacKay, Marine Sup’t

Date: July 9, 2013

John Hodgkins, Chair

Date: August 1, 2013