

GABRIOLA FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 19, 2018

Informal Notes of Meeting (not an official record)

In attendance:

Gabriola FAC representatives:

Steven Earle
Heather O'Sullivan
Peggy Richardson
Jane McCall Woods
Paul O'Sullivan
Jim Ramsay
Howard Houle
Peter Briscoe

BC Ferries Representatives:

Darin Guenette (Public Affairs Manager)
Mark Wilson (VP, Strategy & Community Engagement)
David Hendry (Director, Strategic Planning)
Captain Lance Lomax (Reg. Marine Superintendent)
Peter Simpson (Director, Fleet Operational Strategy)
John Macdonald (Reg. Mgr., Terminal Operations)

Absent:

David Prevost

Action items for the Gabriola FAC

Action items for BC Ferries representatives

Welcome/Agenda Approval

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 AM by Chair Steven Earle. The agenda was approved and introductions made.

Agenda Items

a. Extending weekend early-afternoon sailings to year-round

- To support our request to extend these weekend sailings year-round, Heather reviewed last year's statistics which indicated the ferries became crowded when the sailings were discontinued after the summer; she predicted results will be even worse this year. Jane has noticed overloads already on weekends, which can add 3-4 hours to trips by families with kids attending sporting events and similar activities.
- A Significant Service Request form needs to be initiated by the FAC and submitted to BC Ferries. Darin will provide a blank SSR form to Steve.
- Mark suggested that the FAC also write to the Minister indicating the social impacts on families, etc.

b. Island 47 Project Update

- Mark reported that two Island 47 vessels are under construction for completion in 2019 and service introduction in 2020. A further four vessels are planned for service introduction in 2021 or 2022, two of which are destined for Route 19. The two Island 47 vessels have a combined capacity of 94 vehicle equivalents, versus 64 for the Quinsam, for a very substantial increase in capacity as well as double the frequency when both vessels are in service. Passenger capacity will also be substantially increased to 450. The vessels will have dual diesel/electric engines which will be capable of later conversion to all electricity. A copy of the deck plans will be available for review after the meeting, but the layout for all six vessels will be the same in the interests of standardization.

- Peter Simpson noted that the schedule with two ferries will be close to 30-minute intervals between sailings when both vessels are in service. The Island 47s can travel at 15.5 knots versus 10-12 with the Quinsam. They are looking at one vessel in service for 16 hours and the other for 12 hours. A split shift could be possible on either vessel. The community will have an opportunity for input before the schedule is finalized. Heather proposed that consideration be given to reinstating the 05:30 sailing to enable residents to connect with the first Route 2 sailing out of Departure Bay. At the same time, residents want to retain the 23:00 hour last sailing.

c. Terminal Development Process Update

- Mark reported that BCF is close to a final option regarding the Gabriola terminal and will be incorporated in the capital plan soon. John added that work is planned to start in 2020, reflecting standardized berthing for two lanes and a separate passenger lane. Impact on the emergency wharf will be included in the plan. Full engagement will result in service disruptions, a management plan for which will be developed.

d. Line-up attendants on Gabriola

- Steve noted that the FAC had requested BCF to provide line-up attendants during peak summer sailings as a safety issue, but BCF declined. It was noted that other routes such as Quadra, Bowen, Hornby and Brentwood Bay do have such attendants. John indicated that those attendants are not there for enforcement but rather to ensure that driveways and businesses are not blocked. Steve added that the issue is safety and that the presence of attendants would help encourage drivers to behave appropriately, because signs don't deter much. He asked BCF to provide us with a cost estimate for line-up attendants for 4 hours a day for 4 months.
- While noting that the two-ship solution will eliminate the problem eventually, **Mark agreed to further review this issue.**

e. On-time performance in 2018 peak season

- David Hendry reported that traffic has increased by 15% this year, and overloads have also increased.

f. Descanso Parking Lot Signage

- New FAC member Peter Briscoe proposed that more information be posted indicating things such as maximum parking time, where to line up, and that no return payment is required. Peggy indicated that the Gabriola Visitors Centre also needs that information as they get many inquiries. **John will review.**
- An electronic sign will be included in the upgrade to the terminal in 2020/2021.

g. Traffic cam in Nanaimo

- Rob Maynard from The Lunch Bunch asked BCF for permission to install a traffic cam in the Nanaimo terminal, noting that privacy is not an issue as the screen resolution is quite low. **Mark replied that BCF needs consider the security aspect, and he will review this request and provide an answer by the end of November.**

h. PT5 process update

- Mark reviewed the requirement every four years for BCF to submit a performance plan to the Ferry Commissioner. PT5 begins in April 2020. A link is available on the FAC website and is open to public feedback. Fuel costs have an impact on fares; they are in neutral at present and only subject to change over the next one and a half years if fuel prices increase/decrease.
- Paul asked if a forecast is available for alternative fuel usage. David Hendry replied that LNG will provide a 50% improvement in pollution and carbon emissions. A low carbon future is BCF's goal.

i. FAC term and reappointment process

- Darin noted that the current 4-year term of FAC members will expire at year end (as it is timed to coincide with municipal elections). BCF is looking for broad representation from the community on the FAC. After two terms, FAC members are not eligible for reappointment, except for elected officials. A replacement is needed for a school district representative and it was suggested that someone from Gabriola would be more suitable than someone from the SD68 office in Nanaimo.
- Comments on suggested groups to provide a wide perspective on Islanders issues should be sent to Darin.

CORRESPONDENCE– Nil

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- **Derek Kilbourn** thanked BCF for the cooperation in posting signage concerning the fund-raising campaign for the skateboard park.
- **Erik Anderson** expressed thanks for BCF's planned improvements to Route 19, which have needed attention for some time. He also suggested BCF should avoid the temptation to increase fares if demand is up. Regarding capacity increase needs, Mark stated that BCF has 12 year capacity plan; infrastructure plans for 40-45 years; and 25 year fleet plans.
- **Randy Young** presented a document with 36 suggestions to Darin.
- **Dave Neads** asked how BCF determined factors regarding 2 vessels vs 1, which was explained by Peter Simpson.
- **Kees Langereis** requested that when a schedule is developed for the 2 ship operation, the start time of commuters heading to/from work should be carefully considered, at times when both ships are not in service.
- **Steven Earle** asked when the \$2 fee for bikes will be removed, as was discussed at the last meeting. Mark indicated that the rate group has been preoccupied by other issues, but he will ensure it is reviewed promptly. Steve also asked whether there are any plans to enable electric vehicles to be recharged while on the ferry. Mark indicated that it would not be a good idea to use a carbon fuel for that purpose.

Next Meeting – May 2019