

Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC)

January 2nd, 2018

Lummi Island Fire Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Interim Chair Nancy Ging called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

ROLL CALL

Present: Nancy Ging, Beth Louis, Mike Skehan, Charles Bailey, Cris Colburn, Scott Aspman

Absent: Rhayma Blake (excused)

Also in Attendance: Roland Middleton-PW Special Projects Mgr., Stuart Rich-President, Protect Lummi Island Community (PLIC), Jim Dickenson, Bill Lee, Mike Kmiecik, Cassandra Shoenmakers-Project Mgr. (kpff)

FLAG SALUTE

OPEN SESSION – No comments

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 12/5/17 Meeting Minutes – Louis moved and **Bailey** seconded a motion that they be approved. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ging thanked Skehan for his previous work as a LIFAC member and thanked Colburn for applying for another 3 year term and welcomed the newest member, Scott Aspman to his new 3 year term. In order to be considered at the Jan 16th Council meeting, applications for the vacant island term would be due into the Council office no later than Jan 9th. Election of officers would take place at the February meeting, with Aspman saying he would be on vacation that week. Louis suggested we look at rotating the Secretary position to members on an annual basis to ease that burden. Ging said we have elections each year anyway, but we should talk about that at our next meeting. Ging said the Questionnaire results, gathered at the Nov PLIC meeting, have been posted to Nextdoor and Brown Betty. Bailey was concerned we reach off islanders also, with Ging saying she included a link for the files saying it's the only way she knows how to do it without mailing expenses.

Ging also said the letter asking for support of pending Ferry District legislation went out to all our legislators and Council members, with all LIFAC member names in the footer (SB5403, HB1331).

Update from Public Works – Middleton said Hudson was home on leave taking care of his new son, Richard William Hudson, but wanted to pass on to us things are running smoothly, with some off hour dock work being completed. He also reported the supplemental budget request for dock work had been approved, but painting at Gooseberry was split into two years to reduce the impact to ferry operations from 5 weeks to 3 each year. Chantelle is also out of the office on medical leave. Debbie Bailey has been brought back from retirement part-time to help out with administrative chores. Rob's position has yet to be filled or advertised.

Traffic Counts Update: Bailey [who needed to leave at 7:20] started the Power Point presentation on traffic with a slide showing some of the tools available to reduce overall demand on the ferry using demand management such as traffic queue cameras, pricing, etc.

[Link to the full PP presentation is here]:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1rdRY770OgUPrbv9I1I4YLwQSP7Tolppn>

Skehan reviewed some of the symbols shown on the Peak Hour Tables for each quarter noting that each table only shows the busiest 7 hours spread for each direction for each day, and is color coded to indicate runs that were considered to be 'Full', either by having 18 or more vehicles recorded or vehicles left at the dock. He suggested we use the tables to have a discussion on what we want to consider as our peak hours during those spreads saying typically peak hours for roadways and bridges are 3 or 4 hours in the PM. It was acknowledged that the two-way data collection for the last 2 years has been invaluable in quantifying how our traffic typically moves during the 4 seasons of the year, during the day and on days of the week, and how that compares to the maximum capacity of the vessel during those same periods. Skehan posed the question of doing quarterly counts going forward costing about \$1,200 each quarter, with most agreeing it was beneficial to do that to note trends as the new vessel and docks are being justified for funding. Colburn discussed the need for the county to be responsible for the data surveys going forward and Louis suggested once traffic patterns have been established and the ferry planning efforts completed we may only need to do them every 3 or 4 years on a quarterly basis to develop trend data for comparison to past ones. [*This discussion was tabled until the PP was completed.*]

Bailey continued the PPT presentation with graphical analysis of the traffic data by seasons, showing both tables and summaries of full boats both ways for 2017 plus spring of 2016. Aspman asked to change the label in the summary tables from 'Scheduled Runs' to 'Total Scheduled Runs'. Discussion ensued on some quarters where large differences between scheduled capacity and actual demand existed with Ging saying that's why it's important to keep doing the two-way data collection and analysis quarterly to determine if that's a fluke or a trend. Bailey stepped the Committee through each of the seasons for the remainder of the presentation.

The last two slides showed 2016 'Pre-Drydock Week' and some discussion took place on how that could be useful in determining how many cars were moved to the mainland in anticipation of not having a ferry. This could help define how many parking spaces were needed using the net flow of traffic off the island. Shoenmakers explained how LOS can relate to the 'left behind' indicators for how many boats cars had to wait and how that could relate to wait times and the need for that definition based on cycle time of the boat. Further discussion centered on alternate ways to determine how long vehicles have to wait for a ferry during busy period, suggesting cameras, or volunteer spotters for determining queue length at those times. Bailey also agreed we should continue to collect the data as we have been, but hand the task over to the county for future quarters. Others agreed with that. Middleton asked for that to be put into a written request to Jon Hutchings with sufficient detail and database information for PW to evaluate and respond to the request. He asked that that memo also include other related items such as ferry queue cameras and other items that have been asked for in the past, so those items don't get lost during this busy period during the bigger project. Bailey will draft a memo for Ging to review.

Colburn gave a briefing on how WTA uses 'Mobile Data' to capture detailed passenger stop information on all Para-Transit routes and runs for 100% of their operations, generating massive amounts of data. Drivers have a tablet display to record ons/off. This was a presentation given to LIFAC when Colburn first came onto the Committee, but it never went any further. Ging asked why the crew couldn't just enter the data into a computer or tablet instead of going through the process of making out paper logs.[Bailey left at 7:25]

Continuing with PW Updates: Middleton noted the upcoming PLIC Annual Meeting the following Thursday where he will speak on the Gooseberry Dock Relocation Planning efforts currently underway. He cautioned those LIFAC members attending from speaking out or interacting with the public because of OPMA rules. He also reiterated that PW is only facilitating studies on the ferry system improvements LOS and that citizens need to go through LIFAC to have their concerns and ideas heard. Calling him directly results in nothing as he will not make a single decision about any of this. Ging asked which members would be attending the PLIC meeting, with two indicating they would likely go. A report back to LIFAC would happen at our next regular meeting in February.

Middleton also reported that 8 fee land owners near the proposed relocated dock area have now been contacted by mail, starting a process to engage them in looking at their properties as potential acquisition sites for the ferry dock and queue areas. The WC Real Estate Coordinator is now in private discussions with some of the owners about purchasing a 'First Option Agreement' to enable PW to be first in line if or when it becomes necessary to purchase properties. Costs and terms of the agreements are still being worked on, but seem minimal to establish that option for the county, being perhaps a few thousand dollars to do that. Each would run 5 years with an additional yearly payment to keep it current. PW is working on 3 dock options.

1. Do Nothing – remaining at the current location with the current dock and ramps until the current lease expires in 2046. (No Build)
2. Move to where the fuel pumps and store are currently located on Lummi property which would still require both an upland and tideland lease agreement with Lummi Nation.
3. Move to fee land adjacent to the fuel pumps taking advantage of PW owning the property outright between the County owned 60' ROW on Haxton Way and the water which would not require an upland lease with Lummi Nation and may not require a tidelands lease if the entire approach is Federalized.

Update – Ferry System Improvement Project: Shoemakers – kpff

Link to PPT here: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1crlRGpnNDCuTXZqnev2JvLIJce90bs8q>

Shoemakers briefed the Committee on where the project is with the existing conditions memo nearing completion with a few edits by several LIFAC members, including Louis, Ging and Skehan. The ridership forecast is nearing completion with just a few weeks of data left to input. She said the inputs from the PLIC meeting in November were very useful to determine LOS, such as some of the comments on 2 hour boat waits. Aspman cautioned that people sometimes exaggerate how long they must wait for things. Ging would like to nail down the LOS with a survey of riders, which is on the agenda for this evening.

Shoemakers continued with the discussion on using the ridership model to inform the alternatives selection as to capacity needed over 40 years, looking at vessel configurations, speed, and cycle times. Acceptable wait times could be different for peak and non-peak times or seasonal differences. Louis would like to target commuters on wait times in the survey as they are impacted more. Colburn noted the working class is impacted by property values which are also tied to mobility, such as ferry waits. Shoemakers wanted to impress upon us how important that information was because it's our community and what's acceptable to us will drive the options going forward. Middleton responded to a question about going to Fairhaven saying the Council has made that decision already – we are going to stay at Gooseberry Pt.

Louis went through her requested changes to the document explaining each being editorial changes and one being on public transit using the Lummi Nation shuttle bus service. She thanked kpff for doing a great job on the memo.

Skehan explained his one change using current zoning as a better indicator of maximum population with full buildout (about 3,000 residents), rather than the maximum water available to sustain population of 2,222 as that is an old number and more recent studies show it to be much higher. Middleton talked about the Hirst decision which doesn't affect Lummi Island. He also thought zoning was a better cap to use. Skehan also added two additional limits to growth as shore power and ferry capacity in the narrative. Middleton requested we do not use the size of the vessel to control growth as some have suggested in meetings he has been to in past years as future concurrency is impacted. Louis talked about impact studies and how they relate to growth. Ging and Middleton discussed concurrency and ferries as they relate to the Growth Management Act.

Ging asked for a clarification on Figure 1, as it is very busy and somewhat confusing. Kpff may break it into two figures for clarity.

In response to a question on when we could expect other memos on the project, Shoenmakers said they were testing a new MS product where they could share and track changes and would test that out shortly with PW, then invite LIFAC members via email to join in to review documents as they come out. Ridership numbers would be coming out shortly and should be available for our February meeting for review. Skehan asked if fare elasticity would be part of the ridership model. Shoenmakers responded it would not, being a separate task later on when looking at demand management ideas, so for the ridership model they are using current fares and fare policy as the baseline. Ging, in response to Aspman explained that fares have had a large effect on travel demand in the past.

In answer to a question about the user preference survey, discussion centered on the type of survey to use (Survey Monkey, Google), and the potential question pool and who would develop that. Shoenmakers offered to send a first draft of questions kpff would like answered to LIFAC by a week from Friday [January 12th]

On vessel alternatives, kpff would like to meet with a small group from LIFAC to discuss alternatives and items to be included, such as configuration, priorities, passenger spaces, etc. They have met with the crew on this and want to start refining some of that information and the PLIC meeting info on vessel needs. A mid-January meeting with them, PW and the small group would be preferred during the week in town. Shoenmakers will set that meeting up. February will be a very busy month with additional tasks 2-5 being drafted for the first public meeting to follow sometime in mid-March. The April 3rd regular meeting should be a longer one in town to digest what was heard in public comments to move the final alternatives along, leading to a preferred alternative in June.

Middleton reviewed the punch list of activities moving forward so we have ample time in May to be able to move a recommendation to Council in June.

Colburn wanted to express the importance of making this process a countywide effort and not just an island project. Some discussion ensued on brainstorming ideas to make it a broader issue as the Council is sensitive to impacting the road fund with 100% of all ferry capital costs. Louis proposed we have a broader meeting on the mainland to make that case, such as after the enabling legislation is adopted by the state for Ferry Districts with vehicles, and prior to the Council needing to form a Ferry District.

Middleton talked about the political realities of forming a countywide district using the property tax to fund it as an uphill climb. He used the Potter Road Bridge recently built across the Nooksack River costing upwards of \$10m to serve a population far smaller than Lummi Island, but it needed to be done. That project used mostly federal funding. Skehan said convincing the Council to adopt a small tax for the ferry district would be his preferred strategy going forward as doing a special election of all voters for an island-only Ferry District would be very difficult to pull off. Ging said she agreed with that assessment. Louis noted that programs are honoring previous commitments to projects, but that no new infrastructure projects have been approved.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

_____ Adopted _____
By: _____ Date