

Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC)

February 6th, 2018
Lummi Island Fire Hall

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Charles Bailey, Rhayma Blake, Cris Colburn, Jim Dickinson, Patricia Dunn, Nancy Ging

Absent: Scott Aspman (excused)

Also in Attendance: Roland Middleton-Whatcom County Public Works Special Projects Mgr., Richard Hudson-Senior Master, Todd Donovan-Whatcom County Council Liaison, Cassandra Shoenmakers-Project Mgr. (kpff), Bill Lee, Wynne Lee, Bill Fox, Mike Kmiecik, Carolyn Kmiecik, Joan Moye, Judy Bush, Mary Ross, Doug Johnson

FLAG SALUTE

OPEN SESSION – Bill Fox suggested inviting newly appointed County Council Member Tim Ballew II to our LIFAC meetings.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 1/2/18 Meeting Minutes – Colburn moved and **Bailey** seconded a motion that they be approved. The motion carried.

LIFAC INTERNAL BUSINESS

- 1. Membership** - Ging welcomed Dunn and Dickinson to the committee and congratulated Colburn on his reappointment.
- 2. Election of Officers** – Dunn moved and Baily seconded separate motions to elect Ging as Chairman, Colburn as Vice-Chairman, and Blake as Secretary. The motions carried.
- 3. Meeting Schedule** – In an effort to reduce conflicts with the Whatcom County Council meetings which are also on Tuesdays, Colburn moved and Dunn seconded a motion to change the LIFAC regular meeting date to the second Wednesday of the month beginning March 2018. The motion carried. The 3/14/18 meeting will be in Bellingham starting at 6:00 PM. Middleton will secure a location. Donovan suggested the County Council Conference Room might also be available if needed. Dickinson suggested the Garden Level Conference Room. Bailey reminded members that the AV facilities in the Public Works second floor conference room are preferred.
- 4. Public Works Staff Meeting with the Consultants 2/9/18** – Public Works has invited several representatives from LIFAC to attend. Ging suggested those serving on the committee the longest should represent the committee. Dickinson suggested his marine knowledge might be useful. Colburn moved and Dunn seconded a motion that Blake, Colburn, and Ging represent LIFAC at that meeting. The motion carried.
- 5. Invitation to COG's Citizen's Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) 3/13/18** – LIFAC has been invited to send a representative for a 15-minute presentation on our ferry replacement project. Ging expressed interest in being the representative. Dunn moved and Colburn seconded a motion that Ging represent LIFAC at that meeting. The motion carried. Middleton will also attend that meeting, and Bailey offered Ging help in preparing a PowerPoint. Ging added that whenever the full committee is not in attendance at a meeting,

it is incumbent on the representative(s) to provide an update to the rest of the committee, preferably by email.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Update from Richard Hudson, Senior Master of the Whatcom Chief

- a. Crew Member Scott Culbertson passed away on 1/5/18 and will be missed.
- b. A bid package is being prepared to repair the dolphins on the south side of the Lummi Island dock. They will be repaired with timber, not replaced with steel in light of the unknowns inherent with the ferry replacement project.
- c. A three-week 2018 dry dock was reconfirmed.
- d. Steel fittings will be replaced on both the Gooseberry Point and island docks during the 2018 dry dock. Full prime and paint of the docks is scheduled for 2019 dry dock.
- e. Delays in January 2018: 2 hours on 1/21 due to weather and 1 hour on 1/24 due to the need to replace the starter.
- f. Dunn complimented Hudson on operations and suggested using social media for status updates. Hudson said he posted the service interruptions on the county Twitter account within five minutes of receiving the phone call. He has also advised the on call staff to walk the ferry lines to update those in line of any service interruptions. The ferry also has a contract with the Islander to post Twitter updates on their reader board.
- g. Hudson confirmed that the nature of the 2018 and 2019 dock repairs preclude the use of a vehicular ferry both years.
- h. Ging wondered whether ferry departure times were more prompt recently. Hudson has been urging the crew to load earlier, and captains have been more precise in leaving because the new radar screens have the time prominently posted.

2. PLIC Annual Meeting – Mike Kmiecik confirmed that notes on that meeting would soon be available on the PLIC website.

3. Update on Ferry System Improvement Project – Middleton clarified that the upcoming meeting on 2/9/18 is primarily between the Public Works engineers, the operations staff, and technical consultants that will lead to a technical memorandum which LIFAC will review and comment on at the March meeting before the alternative discussion at the next public input meeting.

4. Update on Consulting Work – Shoemakers

- a. **Existing Conditions Memo is completed** with final comments being collected now before it is posted online. Colburn clarified that page 10 should specify that data is collected one full week (not day) per quarter.
- b. **Ridership Forecast** has some preliminary numbers. It indicates a 1.54% annual growth rate for pedestrian/passengers and .76% annual growth for vehicles. This reflects baseline growth, not peaks in ridership. 60 vehicles per hour is our current capacity. Trip data (one-way Mainland to Island) indicates the highest numbers were weekdays in April, but weekends in August. Middleton added that the LIFAC two-way data will be compared to these figures. Dunn requested the assumptions used. Bailey requested access to the model to investigate other possible scenarios. Further questions should be forwarded directly to Middleton.
- c. **Capacity Alternatives** will be discussed at the next LIFAC meeting. Blake asked that the draft be provided well before that meeting.

5. Modification of Meeting Schedule – Bailey moved and Dunn seconded a motion to delay the change in the LIFAC meeting schedule one month and meet in town at 6 PM on 3/6/18 instead of 3/14/18. The motion carried. Donovan suggested a presentation to the Public Works Committee. Middleton suggested that an update presentation on Level of Service (LOS) be presented to the Public Works Committee on 5/22/18 or 6/5/18 since the LOS

must be approved by County Council in July. Middleton can then present the appropriate budget numbers for Council's consideration in September. Donovan agreed that brief bullet-point summaries of our meetings would be helpful in keeping County Council members apprised of our progress. The secretary will be responsible for those updates.

6. **Traffic Data Status** – Bailey thanked ferry crew members and Public Works for their help collecting first quarter two-way data this week. Ging shared that Mike Skehan has volunteered to continue to input and analyze that data with Bailey this quarter. Bailey suggested the presentation should be available for LIFAC's meeting in April.
7. **Public Ferry System Improvement Project LOS Survey** – The committee reviewed and voted on changes to the most recent draft prepared by Ging and Beth Louis. Those changes are reflected in the final copy attached to these minutes. The committee also agreed to distribute the survey using the online and hard copy methods used by PLIC in its most recent survey in October 2017.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Ferry Queuing Slide Show** – Bailey moved and Blake seconded a motion to postpone this presentation until the LIFAC meeting in March for greater mainland participation. The motion carried.
2. **State Legislation** – The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) provides some funding for ferry and dock capital projects. Only those entities with established ferry districts and passenger ferries can apply. Recent bills have called for allowing districts with a vehicle ferry to also apply. These bills have languished. On 1/12/18, Sen. Doug Erickson introduced **SB6354** which allows counties to apply for funding without first establishing a ferry taxing district since the county itself is already a taxing district. Dickinson commented that cities such as Bellingham do not participate in the county road fund taxing district and an all-county taxing district may be a more appropriate solution for Whatcom County. Dunn commented that this bill focuses solely on the CRAB application requirements and that creation of a ferry taxing district also requires administration expenses. Dunn moved and Dickinson seconded a motion that the committee write Erickson a letter of support. Ging offered an amendment to also write Whatcom House Representatives to draft a similar measure in the House. The motion carried. Dunn suggested personal letters of support also be written.
3. **New Subcommittee on Replacement Ferry Conceptualization** – Dickinson suggested the formation of a new subcommittee to provide input on the replacement ferry design. Ging said that only committee members can populate a subcommittee and if there are more than three in attendance, meetings are subject to OPMA rules.

ADJOURN – Dunn moved and Bailey seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:09 PM. The motions carried.

Whatcom County Ferry System Improvement Project: Public Input Questionnaire

The Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC), in partnership with Whatcom County Public Works and KPFF Consulting, is conducting a study to enhance the current Whatcom County Ferry System. The study will develop alternatives and recommendations to inform long term planning decisions and identify capital improvements and funding. This study is the first step in helping us achieve the long-term goal of having the Gooseberry Point dock and the nearly 60-year-old Whatcom Chief replaced within the next ten years.

Progress to date includes drafting an Existing Conditions memorandum and gathering and analyzing two-way data to developing a ridership forecast.

Formal public input began in November 2017 with questionnaires introduced at the LIFAC meeting at the Beach School (hosted by PLIC). You can review the responses at: <http://bit.ly/2mxdeXg>

This questionnaire is the next step in gathering public input and focuses especially on ferry wait times and how you use the ferry. Please take a few moments and complete the questionnaire below with responses that most closely match your typical experience in the past year. If you prefer, you can complete the questionnaire online at: <https://tinyurl.com/lifacsurvey2>

Completed questionnaires are due by Sunday, February 25, 2018. Return them to the box in the Islander grocery store. If you have any questions, contact LIFAC at: lummiferry@googlegroups.com or phone any LIFAC officer (Nancy Ging, Cris Colburn, or Rhayma Blake).

Next steps and additional information about the study are provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for helping to shape the future of our ferry system.

THERE ARE 14 QUESTIONS IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

General Questions

1. I am currently _____ on Lummi Island (check all that apply):
- A full time resident
 - A part-time resident
 - Own/operate a business on the island
 - A visitor or an off-island service provider on the island
 - Other:
-

2. I currently am _____ (check all that apply):
- Employed full or part-time off-island
 - Employed full or part-time on-island
 - A student attending school off-island
 - A student attending school on-island
 - Unemployed
 - Retired
 - Other:
-

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most positive, what is your current level of satisfaction with the Whatcom County Ferry: (circle only **one** number)

Ferry Use Questions

4. In a typical week, how often do you ride the ferry? (mark only **one** answer)
- I use the ferry regularly (3 or more times a week)
 - I use the ferry occasionally (less than 3 times a week)
 - I rarely use the ferry (less than once a week)
 - Other:
-

5. For a typical weekday ferry trip: (mark only **one** answer)
- My departure or arrival time is fixed and I have little flexibility to change it.
 - I have a lot of discretion about when I make my trip and can easily leave earlier or later.
 - Other:
-

6. If you have regular off-island commitments (work, school, etc.) do you typically make your trip on the Whatcom County Ferry between the hours of 6-9 am and 3-6 pm? (mark only **one** answer)

- Yes, I drive my vehicle.
 - Yes, I walk on and take the bus.
 - Yes, I park at the Lummi Island parking area, walk on, and drive from Gooseberry Point.
 - Yes, I carpool with someone.
 - Yes, I bicycle.
 - No, I do not typically take the ferry during these times.
 - Not applicable, I do not have regular off-island commitments.
 - Other:
-

7. For a typical weekday ferry trip that you make, what is the maximum time in minutes that you are willing to wait for a ferry before you start to feel that your ferry experience is deteriorating? (mark only **one** answer)

- Up to 30 minutes (1 missed sailing)
 - 40 minutes (2 missed sailings)
 - 60 minutes (3 missed sailings)
 - 80 minutes (4 missed sailings)
 - 120 minutes (6 missed sailings)
 - Other:
-

8. Are you willing to wait longer during certain times of the year (e.g., summer) or during special events? (mark only **one** answer)

- Yes (*skip to question 8-A*)
- No (*skip to question 8-B*)

8-A. How much longer are you willing to wait (in minutes) during certain times of the year (e.g., summer) or during special events before you feel your service would deteriorate? _____ minutes (*skip to question 9*)

8-B. If "no", why?

9. Thinking back to last summer (June – August), what is your opinion about how often you had to wait at least 40 minutes (2 sailings)? (mark only **one** answer)

- Never
 - Less than 3 times per months
 - 3 or more times per month
 - 1-2 times per week
 - Not applicable (have not ridden the ferry during that time)
 - Other:
-

10. For other times of the year (October – May), what is your opinion about how often you have had to wait at least 40 minutes (2 sailings)? (mark only **one** answer)

- Never
 - Less than 3 times per month
 - 1-2 times per week
 - 3-4 times per week
 - Not applicable (have not ridden the ferry during that time)
 - Other:
-

11. If you were able to gauge expected wait time by viewing a live camera feed of the vehicle lines, checking for updates on a website or social media feed, or seeing expected busy sailings marked on the schedule, how likely would you be to schedule your ferry trips to avoid busy times? (mark only **one** answer)

- Never
- Sometimes, when convenient
- Always

12. What would be your preferred method to be notified of busy ferry periods and anticipated wait times? (mark only **one** answer)

- Live camera feed
 - Updates on website or social media feed
 - Expected busy periods marked on the sailing schedule
 - Other:
-

Additional Comments

13. (Optional) Any additional comments or thoughts on wait times or ferry experience?

14. Would you like to receive email updates about the Ferry System Improvement Project? (mark only **one** answer)

Yes – Send to this email address (please print clearly):

No

Thank you for participating!

Please return your completed questionnaire to the box in the Islander grocery store by February 25, 2018.

SEE BACK OF THIS PAGE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND NEXT STEPS

Additional Information and Next Steps

Community input is critical to the success of this study. There are many ways you can provide input, including in person, in writing or at a public meeting. Please see below to select the one that best suits you:

- **Monthly LIFAC meetings:** 1st Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at Lummi Island Fire Hall on 3809 Legoe Bay Road. (Please note that once a quarter meetings are held in Bellingham at 322 N. Commercial Street.) In April, 2018, LIFAC will begin meeting on the **2nd Wednesday** of each month. Agendas are posted approximately 72 hours before the meeting and can be found online at: <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/AgendaCenter/Lummi-Island-Ferry-Advisory-Committee-8>
- **Contact all LIFAC members** via an email to: lummiferry@googlegroups.com
- **Contact a LIFAC member directly:**
<http://www.whatcomcounty.us/521/Lummi-Island-Ferry-Advisory-Committee>
- **Contact County Staff:** Roland Middleton, Specials Program Manager, Whatcom County Public Works, rmiddlet@co.whatcom.wa.us, 360/778-6212.

Participate in Community Outreach Activities:

- November 16, 2017: Study Kickoff. Comments sought on overall goals and objectives, desired service level, challenges with current system, and priorities.
(Completed)
- **February 11-25, 2018:** Community Questionnaire to gather public comment on specific issues, including wait times and individual ferry experiences
(In Progress)
- **March 14, 2018:** Ferry Operations Alternatives Refinement. LIFAC will be hosting a public meeting to consider dock and vessel alternatives to recommend for our future level of service. Watch Brown Betty, Nextdoor, and bulletin boards for announcements with details about this public meeting.
(Coming Soon)
- **Spring 2018 (Date and Time TBD):** Draft Recommendation