LUMMI ISLAND FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LIFAC)  
Thirteenth Meeting (Work Session)

January 07, 2014

CALL TO ORDER
Committee Chair Mike McKenzie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Lummi Island Fire Hall, Bellingham, Washington.

ROLL CALL
Present: Mike McKenzie, Greg Brown, Charles Antholt, Robert Busch, Stu Clark, and Crispin Colburn.
Absent: Josh Zender (note: per e-mails from Josh dated 1/8 and 1/11, he will not be able to continue his position on LIFAC due to a new job opportunity.)

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES CONSENT
1. Approved minutes of November 19, 2013 LIFAC Work Session (Antholt abstained).

ANNOUNCEMENTS / SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

McKenzie discussed various things that had transpired since the last LIFAC meeting. He pointed out concerned he is with the lack of communication that takes place between the Council, The Executive, Public Works and LIFAC.

- Director or Public Works Frank Abart has been away on training for about 3 months and he appointed Chris Brueske to address the Ferry issues. Chris left a couple of weeks ago for a new job and he has been replaced by Gary Stoyka. Now there is an individual named James Lee who has been directed to address the Ferry issues. LIFAC will look forward to working with Mr. Lee.
- McKenzie was contacted by Karl (works for James Lee) form Public Works last Wednesday (1/1/14) asking that LIFAC put out a notice to the Island residents addressing citizen complaints regarding cars parked in the public lot at the ferry landing. McKenzie sent out notices every way he knew how to let resident know that Public works had marked vehicle tires to identify those abusing the parking and that today, Public Works was supposedly sending tow trucks to remove offenders.
- McKenzie commented that there seems to be some issues with the communication on the LIFAC7@gmail.com. It appears that folks aren’t checking it on any regular basis and some correspondence is being missed. Many felt that if something is sent to LIFAC7 that each of the committee members will receive a separate copy on their personal e-mail and that LIFAC7 was just a repository for the general public. McKenzie and Clark are going to look into this.

McKenzie commented that he had communications with some of the Chief crewmembers regarding the electronic ticketing devices being used on the boat. It appears that Public Works is testing the device that was discussed in previous LIFAC meetings. Comments are that it is too early to tell but it has gone well. They had a breakdown of one of the devices but it was replaced.
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There is still concern about the salt water conditions. A very positive response from a crewmember last evening was that it was working very well and that it was a plus. He was not concerned with the equipment, but with the County administering the program well. There were other comments that were not totally negative but not as positive. In general it is going well.

McKenzie commented that the budget data information from the LIFAC public work request seemed to be good. He introduced Diane Harper. She handed out budget data (attached) that she had put together earlier in the day. She also said that the data was good information that we needed. The ridership information that was sent is what the ferry crew reports to the Coast Guard. Harper said that we actually need the “ticket sales” data as the two sources of information are different. If LIFAC is going to be talking about revenue, it must include ticket sales. The ferry crew report has a lot of undercounting and double counting and really can’t be used for much. We need how much money is being taken in not how many people. McKenzie asked Harper for a follow up e-mail asking for what the records request should be for the rest of the data LIFAC needs.

PUBLIC COMMENT: (There were 10 people from the Island at the meeting)

- Judy Thomas, Teacher at the Beach School, expressed concerns about the five (5) students ranging in age from 5-11 yrs., who are coming back and forth to the school from Gooseberry Point. Currently the School Administrative Assistant is meeting the students and riding to and from with them. This is not the job of the Administrative Assistant. She was asking the Committee for some type of assistance to make arrangements for the parents of the students to take turns to bring the students to and from school.

- Kathleen Thurber, Administrative Assistant at Beach School, joined Judy in commenting that the ferry issue is that the parents are charged and not the students. The reason that they are at the meeting is that they had written an e-mail to Frank Abart about how they could get permission to not charge whoever is supervising the children in the morning 7:50 run and one in the afternoon. There is no bus on the Island so they need a person to drive them to the school. All of the children have signed waivers to be able to ride without parents. Response back from Frank Abart was that this issue was up to LIFAC. So, they were her asking LIFAC to make a proposal to address this. The ladies commented that this was also a safety issue as these students need supervision as they are not normally ferry riders and are not always aware of the rules. Antholt asked why the students come to the Beach School rather that to Ferndale. He was told that it is due to the new open enrollment programs that allow off-islanders to attend the school. This becomes attractive because the ferry commute is much shorter that the bus rides to Ferndale schools (45 min. each way). It is also beneficial to Beach School as it keeps the student numbers up. Cost for the parents to supervise is $14.00/day as it requires two trips from Gooseberry. Ferndale will not provide transportation for “transfer” students. At this time there are three (3) families involved. There was some general conversation about if it was an option for these families to buy ferry passes which would be a reduce rate without any conclusion. McKenzie asked that the ladies send a copy of the letter to LIFAC, as well as PLIC, that was sent to Abart. He would distribute the letter to the LIFAC members for advisement.

- Rhyma Blake commented that she had finished follow up on handicapped parking during the ferry dry dock that has been brought up at a previous meeting by Candy Jones. She indicated that
she would pass this information on to LIFAC and that the letter indicated that there were 19 spots dedicated for the last dry dock. Karl (who works for Lee) said if any other parking spots became available near the ferry docks that he would keep handicapped parking in mind as a priority. **Brown** asked about a drawing that supposed to exist showing these parking locations. Rhayma said that she would find this and include it with the information from Karl and would share with LIFAC.

- **Michele Morrissey** came to express her same concern that she addressed in the LIFAC October meeting regarding the ferry queuing lines. In October LIFAC had recommended that she forward that letter to the Public Works. Her recollection is that LIFAC would also pass that information along. She asked if LIFAC had indeed passed the information along to anyone. **McKenzie** answered her “no” that he had not. **Antholt** commented that we haven’t actually discussed it and that we really haven’t had a meeting since. Michele commented that she wanted to keep this issue alive and was willing to put some time and effort into it and if there was a LIFAC member that could be her contact to pursue this and/or if LIFAC had a recommendation of who she should be speaking with. McKenzie asked if she would e-mail the letter to him and he would share it with the committee members for review and advice. **Colburn** asked what the concern is. Michele responded that there were two things. The first and simplest would be to paint a “stop” or “end” or “no parking past this point” on the outside line where the ferry lines meet the roadway. This is on the Island side. Currently there are two lines forming into the roadway that is dangerous. **Antholt** commented that he had also seen this happens on the Haxton Rd. The second issue is that the current system does not take into consideration different sizes of vehicles so that going chronologically does not always keep the system fail. Michele proposed that it should go by lanes. Identify lanes one and two and make it clear that lane one goes first and then lane two. As the ferry fills and lane one is loaded, then lane 2 and then those remaining move to fill lane one. **McKenzie** asked that she e-mail her information to him and promised to pursue the issue internally and externally. **Bill Scott** commented to clear up which would be lane one and lane two.

- **Bill Lee** commented that the County may have standards as to what they can put on a roadway but we should press them to tell us why they may not be able to paint such a sign on the roadway. Bill said when we think of ways to resolve this problem we need to think about two types of users, i.e. Islanders who understand what the situation is and for the most part respect each other and then people who have absolutely no idea.

- **Jansen Pierce** went to the white board and drew out what he thought was being discussed. He tried to explain what Michele was proposing.

- **Jim Dickenson** asked to reserve comment until the discussion on the Plattsburgh and was granted so by **McKenzie**.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **Replacement Ferry** –
   a. **Brown** passed to Jim Dickenson who said that he had received a phone call from Heather Stewart from the Lake Charles Transportation System confirming all of the data that they has supplied to us (i.e. depth, fuel use, cost of delivery, the cost, etc.) But, because of shipyard market conditions and the possibility that there may be some local bridges replaced that the Plattsburgh was no longer for sale. It may
come back at some later date, but not right now. After some general comment that we will still be have to deal with a 50 year old ferry Dickenson pointed out the continuing concern with access and egress issues with the current ferry loading operations. He suggests that LIFAC run some type of program to explain what would happen if the Coast Guard decided to enforce parking safety regulations. Jim also suggested that a sub group be formed to start ferry planning immediately. **Antholt** agrees and suggest that LIFAC get the County moving on planning.

b. In regard to sending a letter to Public Works, Health and Safety Committee regarding the Lummi Island Ferry there was much discussion and it was agreed that it was even more important to get the County to make a plan for a replacement ferry now that the Plattsburgh was off the table. **McKenzie** he would redraft the letter and send it out for comment.

2. **Review of Electronic ticketing** was briefly discussed.

a. **Brown** pointed out that at the last County Council Public Works Committee Meeting, Chris Brueske, had made a presentation (AB2013-430) an update on the use of the ticketing devices. The main subject of the meeting was how to administer the credit card charges for their individual use. The recommendation was to “temporarily waive the convenience fees on single-ride transactions from Gooseberry Point to Lummi Island until the Technology becomes available to automatically calculate and add the fees into the fare. Further, Public Works recommends that the current convenience fee rate of 2.35% be applied to multi ride fares purchased on the Chief...” There was conflicting comment from LIFAC members regarding information they had heard on whether or not the transaction expense was being charged to the ferry user. **Brown** thought that what he had understood was that the Committee had recommended to waive the charges for 6 months until they could figure out what the actual charges would be and how they could be assessed. Public works would come back with an ordinance to further address this. **Brown** offered to send out an audio copy of the subject Committee meeting if anyone was interested.

3. **Regarding Ferry Fares and Costs**, **Diane Harper** made the following points.

a. She asks the question regarding the budget data sheet she handed out, “where is 2010 final, 11, 12 and 13.” This information is in the Public Works budget, so you have to go through them to get this kind of detailed information. She recommends that LIFAC request this budget final data and that she would input it into the data we have. She says the summary doesn’t show that there are about 14 associated spreadsheets that make up this budget roll-up. The Equipment Rental Interfund, which they are predicting at $650,000 next year includes dry dock. There are four (4) separate categories under that are of interest. One is the actual annual fuel cost. The fuel costs on the budget sheet are for the substitute ferry. She said that she would send **McKenzie** as list of what exactly we need and the point is that LIFAC really has to get this information and track it by detail.

b. The second minor point **Harper** made was on ferry fares. The data we need is the ticket sales. She made the example where an individual may buy three passes in
October and use them throughout the year. But, because of the way that the ferry crew reports passages, i.e. they report vehicle punch cards. They don’t identify it as a needs based, a ten-passage, a 25-passage, etc. and each of these has a different dollar cost per trip. So if you really want to relate ferry fares to budget goals, you have to know by ticket category what the sales have been. Ferry crew county cash fares and enters this into a book, and this generally matches very well as this is closely audited and they are accountable. Punch cards are reported by memory. This is a manual tally at best, after the fact and based on memory. She points out that LIFAC will see that nothing much really matters much when you deal with truck fares, and with needs based fares. What really matters is what you do with pedestrian cash, pedestrian punch cards, passenger vehicle punch cards and passenger vehicle cash.

c. Harper said that if we bring a projector to the next meeting she would review the model with LIFAC.

4. Contingency Planning-
   a. **Antholt** commented that in brief “#*?! Happens”. He distributed his draft of “planning for disruptions of Lummi Island Ferry Service”. He feels that this is a start to beginning to think about this issue. He suggests that may not be the actual right way to do it, but that some kind of decision tree needs to be used. **Antholt** thinks that the first thing to be done is for LIFAC to talk to the County and find out what kind of contingency plans (Plan B?) they have. He believes, but is not sure, that all the County has is the Whale Watcher walk-on vessel on a standby contract to replace the Chief in emergencies. LIFAC should say that we feel this is inadequate and that we would be willing to work on a contingency plan. **McKenzie** commented on a recent phone conversations with **Abart** that he needed clarification, as it comes up often, on a “Plan B” for the Chief. The response is kind of a broad thing that it probably involves trips to Fairhaven. It appears that “there is no Plan B, because it is all dependent upon what happens, the way it happens, and...” **McKenzie** then asked what would happen if the ferry went down and can’t come back. **Abart** then went into a spectrum of stuff. McKenzie said that it sounded like this item should be a point of discussion between LIFAC and the County Council. **Abart** agreed with this and said that he would push to get the meeting together. **Clark** comments that we should also ask what the Ferry Crew thinks the options are for a Plan B.

   b. **LIFAC needs to know who do we talk to and what is the Process?**

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business
TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT WORK SESSION

The date for the next meeting is Tuesday February 4th

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES CONSENT

PRESENTATION
  - Diane Harper – Review Budget Model

OLD BUSINESS
  - Letter to Council Committee on Public Works
  - Contingency Plan
  - From Open Session:
    - Beach School Students
    - Handicapped Parking Update
    - Ferry Lines and Loading

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

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The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The Committee approved these minutes on 19 Feb 2014, 2014

ATTEST:

Michael McKenzie, Committee Chair