LUMMI ISLAND FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LIFAC)
Twentieth Meeting

October 07, 2014

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

ROLL CALL
Present: Mike McKenzie, Greg Brown, Stu Clark, Chris Colburn, Charles Antholt, Robert Busch and Byron Moye.
Absent: None

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES CONSENT
• Approve minutes of September 2, 2014 LIFAC Meeting

 Antholt questioned McKenzie in the section on page 4 regarding questions about the Long Range Planning Subcommittee that “to include for sure the persons in the unincorporated areas that contribute” as all taxpayers contribute to the 45%. After discussion it was agreed that the 45% is covered by the entire population of Whatcom County already.

 Antholt corrected Jim Dickenson’s comment from “widen” to “lengthen” on page 5 item k. Although Jim did say widen, the intent was lengthen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Mike McKenzie, Chair –
• On behalf of Public Works he commented on the completion of the striping for the ferry quay. James Lee communicated that some of the striping is to be done manually and will be weather dependent.

• James was questioned about dry dock next year and if LIFAC has asked early enough that dry dock could start on Thursday or Friday rather than Wednesday following Labor Day. After James presented this to the PW Staff they were resistant to Friday for a number of reasons, but felt that Thursday was amenable and PW would convey this to the shipyard well in advance. PW will honor this request and there is no further action required by LIFAC.

• Mike talked to the County (?) in regard to what the procedures and legalities are, how we communicate and so forth and found out that public comment is not required by ordinance by long established practice by the County Council. The Council and Executive request that we honor that practice in our committee and sub-committees. Other that the open public session, public comment is at the discretion of the committee chair.

Rob Ney – Public Works Special Programs Manager
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- Rob could not attend as he is out of town.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Janet Lutz-Smith wrote down recommendations (attached) from the special Ferry Finance meeting held on the island the WC Finance Director that she thought LIFAC should consider. The recommendations address reduction in fare, changes is the accounting/bookkeeping system, changes to the Motor Vehicle Road Fund, and dry dock issues.
  - McKenzie answered that LIFAC had not had any feedback from the Council. LIFAC voted on and submitted a proposal and comment about the fares would come up later in the meeting.
  - Antholt commented that LIFAC could only make the recommendation and that the School would have to lobby the Council for the change.

- Rhayma Blake questioned McKenzie as to what Web Site the recommendation to Council was on. McKenzie responded that the information is on the County Web site under the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Ferry Fares Model – Meeting w/PW and Finance
   a. Meeting at the Library w/PW & Finance September 10th.
      i. Colburn commented that Shawnda Shipman and Rob Ney were present. This was Shawna’s last week of work with the County. Antholt chaired the meeting and thought there were about 17 people in attendance. As part of his and Antholt’s work on Ferry Fares they had developed a list of questions about budgeting practices, surplus budgeting, history of revenues and how close they match the 55/45 targets, history and how the road fund pays into the Ferry Fund, etc. (he did not have the list available). As an overview Colburn said that they got clear and specific answers to most of the questions. There is some follow-up where LIFAC can get the information that Shawanda and Rob could not provide at the time. Since the meeting Rob has provided some of the missing information, but as Shawnda no longer works for the County there is still question. Colburn commented that his level of confidence on just how well they were doing things and common accounting practices were something he needed to hear.
      ii. Antholt commented that after the Shawnda and Rob had left they had developed additional questions, have submitted them to Rob and they have been answered. Antholt said that this information was on the record.
      iii. Brown asked if the concerns about where in the budget some items were located, i.e., fuel usage was discussed. LIFAC has had issues trying to figure out
where certain expenditures were located in the budget as they are not readily
defined. Antholt responded that they did not get that far. The practiced they
follow “are required by the State, Audited by the State and the County” but to
get down to these things they may need to adopt some new accounting
procedures. Colburn commented that Shawnda did have some specific answers
about what charges to a particular account, i.e., equipment rental, fuel. Brown
responded that this is what we thought we had requested back when Josh was
here for a line item look at the budget so LIFAC could review and understand
the budget.

iv. McKenzie remarked that one of the big things that he though came out of the
meeting, and one of the reasons we asked for the meeting, was that the ferry
fund was an actual item and we now may know how it works.

2. Special Comments from Clark –
   a. McKenzie had promised Stu a few minutes prior to the sub-committee reports to make
      a special comment in regard to recent activities. He comments on his impression of the
      Ferry HIYU and what direction he feels this sub-committee should go. (Attached)

   a. Brown reported that the Sub-committee has had two meetings. Typed minutes of the
      second meeting will be forthcoming. The second meeting was mostly data collection
      and organizing what information is required. There was also a trip to visit the Ferry
      HIYU last week with one or two additional visits planned for the next weeks. McKenzie
      asked what Brown’s takeaway from the visit was and he commented that he still stands
      with his position that the HIYU provided more opportunities for the Island than what
      they have now. McKenzie commented that what he is looking for is establishing
      documentation about its (HIYU) worthiness and Brown responded that the Sub-
      committee was working to get that information. Dickenson (Chair of the Ferry
      Replacement Sub-Committee) commented that we are finding that the hull and
      machinery is in superb condition. He is reviewing contractor repairs and costs back to
      2009 and he was shocked on how little money needed to be spent on the HIYU including
      a complete engine rebuild. It need paint as do all State Ferries as they only paint every
      10 years. The Sub-Committee has had absolutely wonderful response from the State
      employees both on the tour and from the Port Engineers on the Ferry. The engines are
      at half-life. The State has very extensive records on all of their ferries he is hoping to
      have a report for LIFAC by the end of the year. With the opportunity for the HIYU the
      Sub-committee is looking to it first and will follow up with the Chief and possibly the
      Trek. He commented that having the Trek (for dry dock?) would save the ferry fund
      about $100K. McKenzie questioned this and Dickenson responded that the cost for dry
      dock set-up would be extremely reduced and you would have revenue coming in. And
      last will be the design for a possible new ferry. There are also unbelievable county
      records (Chief?) on studies; on recommendations from Elliot Bay, Eric Anderson &
      Assoc.; and, on ground studies. He plans to sort through these. Dickenson was asked
      (Skehan?) about the engine half-life and how many hours were on them. He replied
      that they had 175,000 hours. He talked to the Caterpillar people and two engineers and
      they claim that this is about the easiest engine live they have seen. They are not run
      hard, and suggest a minimum of 300,000 hour and a maximum of 400,000 hours of life.
      They do a top overhaul every 20,000 hours and a bottom every 40,000 hours. The
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Whatcom Chief runs about 6860 hours per year, and based on this the HIYU engines would last about 25 years.

4. Report from Long-Range Planning Subcommittee
   
a. **Moyle** spoke first in regard to the outreach group which is Rhayma Blake, Rich Fey and himself. They held an organizational meeting September 29th. They are trying to get feedback from the people on Lummi Island and into other parts of the county on the needs for a ferry. They looked at some survey questions that were developed during the County Comprehensive plan from 2002. There were actually some questions from the Ferry or about the Ferry. There were about a half dozen questions that they thought they could use, although Rich is more involved in this. Moyle was personally interested in how many commute on the ferry. How many use the ferry just to go into town. He does not feel this is the same as it used to be. They plan to reach out mostly through “Lika (?)” who have a real good mailing list and through “Brown Betty”. Then they will put announcement in the “Tomb”. **Antholt** commented that the information about who rides the ferry for what was very important for making future predictions. He also commented that mail-out surveys can be very problematic. They are a cheap way to do things, but only those who want to answer will answer presenting a particular bias. He is not an expert, but he knows a lot about survey and suggest testing it at least two times prior to sending it out. Rhayma **Blake** added that the hope was to send out the survey by the end of November.

b. **Skehan** (he presented an overhead “Roadmap” w/Sub-committee minutes) commented that their work plan had been broken down into four phases and two tracks. Moyle is working on the Phase 1 of the Community Input Track and the technical side which is Beth, Chuck and himself are working on Phase 1 history and up-to-date information. Phase 2 would be future conditions to correspond to the current comprehensive plan and transportation plan. The technical side would pull in all the scenarios for peak demand, levels of service, income statements and things of that nature. Both groups will feed of each other’s output to move into the second round. In the third & fourth rounds they will start to get the draft document for LIFAC early to mid-next year. All of this will feed back into a 7 or 8 page document they are calling “Scope of Work”. On the Technical side they have broken their tasks down into population trends, destination data, etc. They are looking for a snapshot of where we have been and where we are at. Simultaneously the Outreach group are working to get surveys and some sort of platform sampling training, etc.

c. **Busch** asked about the two loading docks, mainland and on the Island, if the HIYU would fit in them right now. Dickenson answered saying that the Gooseberry point dock violates a County Council resolution in 2007 that said new dock work should be done in order to accommodate a new larger ferry and did not do this with the recent dolphin improvements.

d. **McKenzie** commented that the County commissioned Elliot Bay to look at the Trek and was expecting a report. He also talked about the “Open House” at the Planning Commission Meeting on Thursday evening at Council Chambers to review the updated Comprehensive Plan.

e. **Pierce** commented that he had worked for Western Airlines who did millions of surveys. After years and years of passing out paper surveys the found out that they were garbage and a waste of time.
5. LIFAC Recommendations to Council
   a. Draft Proposal to County Council: Amendment to Fare Schedule Structure (attached)
      i. Colburn comments that this proposal is the product of his and Antholt’s work over the last 5 or 5 months. They provided a PowerPoint presentation in June demonstrating how they were using the Model. That work produced some of the questions that came up at the Library Meeting. Colburn made the following motion: To move that LIFAC forward this recommendation to County Council. Clark seconded the motion. In discussion Colburn commented that the first matter is that the recommendation is to make some modifications to fares in three categories, to discount multi-ride punch cards, i.e. Passenger/Pedestrian 25-ride RT, Vehicle & Driver 25-ride RT and Vehicle & Driver 10-ride RT. These are fairly significant discounts. They estimate these discounts would apply to about 107,000 trips annually. Colburn commented that he got the answer he needed from Saundra and Rob was “yes, the way they budget in the last couple of years has showed roughly a couple hundred in surplus for expenses for the 55% share”. In other words the 55% was net with money left over. This meant that he could go back to the model projecting without having to worry about that surplus (10%).
      ii. From this information Colburn recommended the following:
          1. Passenger/Pedestrian 25 ride ticket goes from $150 to $81
          2. Vehicle/Driver 10 ride (<8K veh) goes from $102 to $78
          3. Vehicle/Driver 25 ride (<8K veh) goes from $235 to $163
      iii. McKenzie commented that there was one e-mail (attached) to LIFAC from Lummi Island resident Wynn Lee opposing any kind of fare change. He also commented that this recommendation is very preliminary and he has requested a meeting at the Public Works Committee chaired by Councilmember Brenner. The response was that the Council was buried in Budget stuff and asked the Clerk to schedule the next opportunity. This would be at least a month long process and would require a public hearing. Therefore it is not necessary tonight for LIFAC to take this forward.
      iv. Antholt suggested that LIFAC should vote on this. He said there was a motion (recommendation) on the floor and seconded (?)
      v. McKenzie called the vote and it was unanimous for sending this recommendation to Council. (Draft attached)
   b. McKenzie wanted to read a letter into the record and e-mail (attached) from Lummi Island resident Samua Lutz for LIFAC to consider. McKenzie will send it around for comment and something that can be added to “open session”.

NEW BUSINESS

1. McKenzie asks if this group had a discussion about having our own web site. There was mixed response and there is not record in the minutes. He went to that we now have a bare bones web site where we can put documents where everybody can see and download them. LIFAC would control what goes on it and it is not a discussion site. McKenzie was looking for a committee volunteer who could put out information on the site. Information can be sorted into folders and they can all be searched. Antholt commented that the downside is that someone
has to manage the site. Colburn commented that it needs to be complete enough so we did not spin off onto other sites because the information was not on our site. McKenzie commented that we could link to certain things or places on the County site, Ferry Forum, etc. Colburn comments that the purpose is to have a central single repository for any LIFAC documents, access to LIFAC related documents, or public records. McKenzie said that examples from this meeting would be Janet’s comments and Clark’s statements. There was quite a bit of discussion and as there was no objection McKenzie said he would go forward with this. The site is called lummiislandferry.weebly.com

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT WORK SESSION

The date for the next meeting is Tuesday August 5th

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES CONSENT

PRESENTATION

Mike McKenzie – General Update

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Fare Analysis Study – Mtg with PW/Finance
Letters of Recommendation to Council
Update for Long-range Planning Subcommittee
Update for Ferry Replacement Subcommittee

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The Committee approved these minutes on ____________________, 2014

ATTEST: __________________________________________

Michael McKenzie, Committee Chair