Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC)
Long Range Planning Sub-Committee
Special Meeting
Minutes
August 26, 2014

Call to Order
Sub-Committee Chair Mike Skehan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

In attendance were: Chuck Antholt, LIFAC Member; Mike Skehan, Sub-Committee Chair; Rhayma Blake; Rich Frye; Beth Walukas;
Absent: Byron Moye

Mike stated that this meeting of the Long Range Planning Sub-Committee was a special meeting to discuss the Draft Scope of Work. Minutes from the last meeting and this meeting will be on the agenda for approval at the next regular meeting in September. Mike stated that he, Rhayma and Jim Dickinson went to Skagit County to attend the Guemes Ferry meeting and that binders containing the Ferry Advisory Committee work products and minutes over the last five years are being assembled and will be shelved at the Library in this meeting room. The historical information contained in them will serve as reference and resource for our work.

Public Comment
Members of the public were given 3 minutes each to address the Sub-Committee.

Mike asked the three guests in attendance to introduce themselves: Janet Lutz Smith, Ken Swansen, and Ben Frerichs.

Janet expressed interest in the Sub-Committee’s decision-making process. Mike explained that we are required to follow the same rules as LIFAC.

No other public comment was received under this item.

Adopt Scope of Work
Mike restated that the sole agenda item for tonight’s meeting was to discuss the draft scope of work and hopefully come to agreement on it so that it can be forwarded to LIFAC for acceptance. He invited comments and suggested the discussion start where we left off at last week’s meeting.

The Sub-Committee discussed a range of issues including what the Sub-Committee’s mission and direction from LIFAC/County is, what is needed to be covered in the scope, how scope items should be prioritized and conveyed in a meaningful way, and next steps for moving forward.

There was much discussion about what the Sub-Committee is tasked by LIFAC to do. On the one hand, Chuck stated the Sub-Committee’s task was to determine what capacity is needed to replace the Chief and how to fund it. Mike stated that he had based the draft scope specifically on the Whatcom County Council Resolution #_2012-005 Item E, which states the task as “E. Research, review, and make recommendations regarding ferry replacement, long term planning, transportation to and from ferry docks, alternative docking locations, alternative funding sources, and other major capital and operational issues regarding ferry service to Lummi Island.” Everything in Item E with the exception of the Technical Sub-Committee’s work is in the draft scope. Mike
shared the Statement of Purpose that the Technical Sub-Committee drafted for their work and asked if we should craft a similar statement of purpose. The Sub-Committee was not ready to address this question and it was suggested that clarification from LIFAC may be needed before a statement of purpose and scope could be agreed upon.

Rich stated that given (1) Lummi Island doesn't have its own government or a voice that anyone has to listen to because we don't have legal standing and (2) the ferry is important to us as more than a transportation link because it serves as a lifeline to the community and (3) at the County level the ferry is a political football over which we have little influence, it is important to convey to the County why the Ferry is important so they can make better and informed decisions. The ultimate question before us is not just the capacity of the Whatcom Chief, but also how it impacts the Lummi Island community. Mike's statistics that he presented at the last meeting about how Lummi Island residents' average age has increased from 35 to 55 years over the last 20 years has implications for taxes and how the ferry is used and other things. For Rich, to answer the ferry question and what it should be, he has to know the Lummi Island community narrative, which translates into not just what the capacity of the Chief is, but where and how we live. He would like to start with community input, perhaps in the form of focus groups targeting specific types of ferry users (e.g., children, ferry workers), and then develop answers about ferry, pricing, schedule, flexibility and characteristics of service that are important to the type of community we are. This should be more than an exercise about facts and figures, as presented in the M/V Guemes Ferry Replacement Plan, but a process appropriate to the community.

The Sub-Committee Members discussed the value of this approach and Rhayma and Beth stated that the draft scope of work in its current form and doing a public outreach process in which to develop and deliver a message did not have to be mutually exclusive. Rhayma stated that the draft scope could be used to structure the focus groups and formulate questions for them; otherwise we would not get a good foundation of community need and priorities. She stated that Rich was describing a process of how to get to this in a meaningful way. She also added that needs based populations should also be included. Beth stated that there were other ways to gather data in addition to focus groups, such as open houses and surveys.

Mike asked how this input would be gathered without it becoming an advocacy piece as opposed to data collection to support the work we are doing. Rich stated that that part was unknown right now, but he thought there were people on the Island who could do it. Beth stated that she thought it would be possible to integrate a more robust public outreach and messaging piece with the draft scope, but cautioned that we need to be careful not to drift too far from ordinance direction, if that indeed is the basis of our work. Ben Frerichs pointed out that Item H of the draft scope already provided a way to do this: “H. Other Issues as assigned (survey of travel patterns, needs, opinions)” and suggested it be moved up to be the first item of the scope.

There was discussion about timing and priorities of items contained in the draft scope. Mike would like to see the work done in about a year's timeframe so that projects can be included in the County's work plan and funding cycles as soon as possible. Chuck felt that there was no rush and we would be better off taking the time we need and getting into later funding cycles and that the focus should be on capacity and potentially using Rich's approach to
collecting data. Beth suggested there was a middle ground where the urgent capacity question could be the item focused on first with other supporting infrastructure and service needs coming later.

Rhaya expressed concerns with the charge of this Sub-Committee to find a ferry replacement after seeing an email about a 2008 report where L. Paul Zankich stated that the Chief is good for 20 years or more. She requested a copy of that report. Chuck clarified that this information was shared as documentation of the last credible report on the Ferry's condition and was not meant to say that a ferry replacement is not needed. Rhaya stated that with this information out there, then a narrative saying why a replacement ferry is needed becomes doubly important.

Ken Swansen stated that he has been hosting a real estate booth at the Saturday Market for a while now and he estimates that 70 percent of the people he talks to are first timers to island. They think the ferry is great deal compared to Washington State Ferry. He also talks to local residents and hears that they feel they are being priced out and that we seem to be becoming more of a destination/vacation center.

Mike stated that he felt he had put a fair amount of work into developing the scope and would like an up or down vote on it. After some additional discussion, the Sub-Committee was unable to finalize the draft scope and a vote was not taken. Chuck suggested that Rich redraft the scope. Beth stated that she would take a first cut at integrating draft scope presented by Mike, which addresses the planning steps needed to achieve our task, with Rich's suggestion for a more robust outreach process, which will help define the narrative and message about why the Ferry is important. Mike asked that this be done in the next few weeks.

**Adjournment/Next Meeting**

Mike stated that the agenda for the next meeting will continue to focus on finalizing the scope of work and perhaps the work plan. The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 17, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

**Attachments:**

None

Adopted Sep 16th, 2014 MS    Recorded by: Beth Walukas Louis