

Guemes Island Ferry Operations Public Forum
Minutes from April 18, 2010

Review of the purpose of the Public Forum: Two public forums are held per year per Resolution R20100050. The purpose is to provide opportunities for collaborative discussions between the County and the public on issues relating to Guemes Island Ferry Operations; and to provide the County and the Guemes Island Ferry Committee, other organizations, and citizens at large with a public venue to discuss issues relating to Guemes Island Ferry Operations. The County then takes that information, considers and evaluates it, and gives the information to the Public Works Director for recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners as it pertains to items that are discussed in the public forum.

Ron Panzero announced his resignation from Skagit County as the Ferry Manager. His last day will be May 3, 2010. Rachel Beck, one of the Captains, will be the Interim Ferry Manager. Ron stated he was not aware of the County's plans, but that he would spend time with Rachel over the next couple of weeks to review all of the items he handles on a regular basis. Ron stated he will be moving on to King County as the Marine Operations and Maintenance Manager for the passenger-only ferries in downtown Seattle (aka: King County's water taxi). Ron has enjoyed his 22 years at Skagit County, and stated it was an honor and privilege to serve citizens at Skagit County. Ron introduced Rachel. Rachel stated that she has been working for Skagit County for about three and ½ years; in the industry for about 13 years. She stated she looks forward to learning all about the entire operations side. Stated she's originally from Vancouver, WA. She reviewed her background and experience; and where she's been. She really likes this area.

Jennifer Swanson, Project Manager at Skagit County Public Works, was introduced – currently handling the Dolphin & Wing-wall repairs as well as the Anacortes & Guemes dock rehabilitation projects.

Ferry Project Timelines and Concerns:

- The new Ferry Terminal Building is under construction; with the current pace, the building is expected to be in use by mid-August. The current building will be demolished after completion of the new building.
- Anacortes & Guemes Dock Rehabilitation Project has been delayed for a little bit. Jennifer stated that the project has had some challenges with permitting and zoning. The plan is to continue with the design, engineering, planning and permitting and although the decision was made to delay the project; it will still be put out for bid. Some of the in-water work will be performed that has to be done during certain periods of the year. Work will then be stopped, and then come back in the early spring to start tearing the docks apart. Another reason for the delay is because of an unanticipated monolithic pour that adds additional time to the project. This would have pushed the project further into November; which immediately caused concern for weather problems. When the project resumes in spring, the completion will likely take approximately twelve weeks to complete. Question received: are there plans to replace the vessel with something other than a foot passenger ferry? Ron stated "No, not at this time." Concerns raised that a number of residents work from their vehicle, and two weeks without ferry service wouldn't be a problem; but for a twelve-week period, there should be a way to move work vehicles on and off the island. Individual urged the County to put a contingency plan together to land vehicles. Ron indicated that consideration will be given to review the possibility of barge services for essential services and should be discussed. Question was raised about what the delays are about, and that starting next April seems far away and lack of planning was involved. Ron Panzero asked Ross Widener, Environmental Permitting Consultant for this project, to discuss the environmental permitting required. Mr. Widener stated that the in-water work window is from June 15th to February 15th. Mr. Widener discussed that the work that needs to occur during the in-

water work period is the pile driving for the temporary floats for the passenger service. He also discussed the various on-water and off-water work segments that can be accomplished inside and outside the work windows and around the ferry operations. Steve Orsini, Guemes Ferry Committee member, commented that historically, the emphasis has always been to try and schedule work early summer or early fall for major outages, (when vehicle ferry services would not be available), and that the most important part was to move people first and foremost. Doing this in the winter puts tremendous stress to address the ADA issues. Moving this operation to spring/summer would be better. November/December would be a challenge for anyone that had to stand out in the weather. Jennifer Swanson advised that after review of the additional time required to complete the project, it was analyzed and decided that it would be best to reschedule the work. She agreed that the construction in early spring/summer next year would be best for all concerned. Carl Cady asked if there would be two contractors (one on each side). Jennifer confirmed that only one contractor would be working, but would have barges working on both sides at the same time. Question was asked if the jobs could utilize more time in the day; Jennifer stated they'll work with the contractor on the schedule. Ross Widener talked about the cure time required to cure the concrete for the girders because this is what will take so long, no matter how many hours in a day the contractor is working. A question was raised if the girder pours are part of the in-water work. Ross Widener said no.

- Ferry Haul-Out Schedule: Glen Veal asked if the shipyard would still be taking place in October. Ron stated that the haul-out is still planned for on or about October 4, 2010 for a period of 14 days. Ron also stated that one of the ferry engines would require major overhaul and service because they are at 20,000 hours. He stated he is assisting in getting the project out for bid before he leaves with possible award in June. Steve Orsini asked about the number of hours on the engine. Ron stated the County has a replacement engine that would swap out when one engine or the other requires service; so no down-time should incur. Both engines are about five years old. Engines are rotated as needed, with the spare as a back-up. Steve Orsini asked how the gears are holding up. Ron said outdrives are in good condition due to quality of the rebuild.
- Ferry Walkway between Parking Lots: Letter was received from Anchor Cove Marina stated that they were going to replace their fence along their property line. They assumed their property line was further into the County's current parking lot. The County responded with question as to where the property line was. Anchor Cove was unable to answer that question. Skagit County is now doing a survey to determine and establish the property line. Project is still moving forward, and the final design and placement as to the walkway and Anchor Cove's fence will be determined when survey is completed. Carl Cady asked whether or not Anchor Cove thought that some of the railroad parking lot spaces are actually on their property. Ron said he cannot speak as to what they are thinking, but we will just have to wait and see how the survey comes out. Steve Orsini provided some history on the loss of parking when Kiwanis park was developed and also addressed some potential loss of additional parking from the construction of the new terminal building and the 6th Street project. In his opinion, some of the projects have hindered the ridership's ability to park nearer to the ferry when walking. It is his hope that management would keep parking in mind as they move forward.
- Various topics discussed: Concern regarding walk-on service, Joan Palmer from Guemes Island reviewed a few incidents when it has been extremely difficult in locating any parking, and the additional time required to get on the ferry has caused some to miss the ferry. She would like walk-ons to be given more leeway and an extra 30 seconds or so to get to the gate if they are running late. Wanted to bring attention to those that are disabled and how difficult it is to get down to the ferry and purchase a pass if they are in line way up 6th St. Glen Veal asked about providing a check to the purser and then getting the ticket at a later date. Ron explained the situation about audit

requirements when ferry personnel take money; they're required to give something in return (issue a ticket). Ron reviewed the problems with issuing tickets and the challenges involved. Joan Palmer shared an idea about getting a phone number in the County and providing a credit card, and then being issued a ticket book in advance. Steve Orsini suggested a ticket issuing machine independent of the purser. Ron stated that an RFP has been reviewed for the ticket machine, and is hopeful that the RFP will be issued early May, and then evaluate the responses, and hope to get a ticketing machine by mid-August into the new building. The new building already has conduit in it so it will be easy to add this machine. The intent is that this new ticket machine is anticipated to issue any tickets that are currently sold to be able to be issued through this machine. Ron also stated camera installation starts on Monday, April 26th. Locations are two in the K Avenue parking lot, (one pointing NE and the other SW); to view vehicles coming in and out of parking lot. The third camera on County property will be pointed towards the Kiwanis Parking Lot and the fourth camera in towards lot two (the Railroad Parking lot), and one remote camera (temporarily installed at Rachel's office and then moved onto new building). A total of five cameras will be installed. Ron discussed various options and controls of the camera operations. Dyvon Havens inquired as to why we will have a camera facing Kiwanis when we don't use that lot for ferry. Ron's response was that it was a requirement as part of the funding for our terminal. Ron is not sure the specifics of exactly how the cameras will be programmed, that will be for Rachel to decide. Bob Anderson requested comments on the elevator and wanted to know why it was required. Jennifer Swanson stated that in order to obtain the Federal funding, ADA requirements require ability to access the second floor. Steve Orsini commented on two parking items: he mentioned he believes that even when the K Ave parking lot is not full, islanders still continue to park on 6th St. He also believes that the reason a camera will be pointed at Kiwanis parking lot is because they will tow any cars left there after hours. He also mentioned that tires are being marked in the K Ave parking lot. Ron stated that the marking of tires is done by ferry staff once per week. It is a 72 hour parking lot; and towing can be done, but it is not currently being done. It is not intended to be a long-term parking lot. It is just meant to bring attention that this is a short-term parking, not long term. Ron is asking everyone to consider those that walk a lot and utilize that parking lot every day. Bob Anderson wanted to know the update on the final plan for the 6th Street improvement; and the parking lot on Guemes side. Ron stated the 6th Street project is the City's project; and stated that there are not a lot of changes, there will not be a crosswalk at 6th & I Avenue, but there will be a crosswalk further down on I Avenue. Ron stated there are no plans for a reconfiguration of the Guemes Island parking lot to provide more parking, and it is currently not a project and not part of any plan. Ron will look into this as a potential project and seek some direction on which way to go. Ron stated that the County does have a glass bus shelter and that the intent is to install it on the West side of the dock during the dock reconstruction project.

- Guemes Island Ferry Operations 2010 Work Plan: Ron discussed the ferry ticket fare recovery model, which was done by Resolution, and was re-done again on February 16th. All the ferry operations and maintenance expenditures are added up, then ferry deficit reimbursement monies and portions of fuel tax revenue are subtracted. The balance is multiplied by 65%, which is what is needed to recover from the fare box. Ron is looking for feedback on making ticketing faster, easier. Ron discussed the random audits done on the tickets and how the counts are compared to tickets taken. He discussed various years from 2008 through this year as to ridership vs. revenue and how the fare structure is evaluated. Comments were made to try and keep fares as fair and reasonable as possible so they don't increase. Ron stated he is looking all the time for all kinds of ways to incorporate various methods into consideration to try and evaluate fares. Comment received about utilizing a credit card system to charge ferry tickets. Comment was received that requested a 20-punch rather than 10-punch car ticket that might be more deeply discounted. Another suggestion was received to try and discount

the fares to those that are in frequent use of the ferry, rather than the occasional user. Suggestions and comments received to utilize best system possible for long term solutions. Ron explained that most of the systems he looked at included both the ticketing machine and a purser in a booth. Skagit County does not have a full-time purser available due to personnel expense. This would require further administrative review by management as to whether or not this would be added. It is Skagit County's hope that utilizing a ticketing machine/vending machine will speed things up. Ridership utilizes about 50% cash and 50% tickets to cross.

- Ferry Schedule: Currently, the Board of County Commissioners will not be making any adjustments to increase the schedule at this time. If and when they do, they will likely ask: "How do you want to pay for it?" Ron stated that this should be considered in advance, because it will be something that would require attention. He asked if there were any other issues. He stated that it is important for everyone to plan ahead and try and get to the ferry a little earlier. He also stated that it is important to realize that if you are not going to make the ferry, please slow down. It becomes very dangerous if you're traveling too fast. Please remember, no money sales on the boat. The plan is to stick to the schedule, and to not delay the ferry. Comment was received about weekend late runs; hard to see late shows, etc.; and that hotels are expensive. Late ferry runs per Ron are not at the 11 p.m. runs are not full. It was a financial decision by the Board to discontinue later runs. Until these runs can be justified, the schedule remains as is. Bob Anderson commented on the loss of midnight ferry on Fridays and Saturdays, and the 10 p.m. ferry on Sundays, options for additional runs, and to have Skagit County not eliminate any more parking, create further walks to the ferry from the parking lots, or making it more inconvenient or a burden to riders. He continued and stated that he'll continue to work with the Commissioners to add these runs back. Ron reviewed the ridership statistics and where the data comes from. Carl Cady requested USCG ridership data (Rachel Beck sent past records). Rachel Beck reviewed how the passenger counts were conducted; and feels that the count is fairly accurate. Ron asked for any additional questions. Julie Pickert, Guemes Island, suggested crew name tags. Ron covered the purpose and difference between the Guemes Island Ferry Committee meetings and the Skagit County's Public Forum meetings. The committee meets and is elected. The public forum meetings are conducted by Skagit County to discuss various issues. A suggestion was made to consolidate the meetings. Since this is the first meeting, schedule can be considered.

Rachel Beck concluded the meeting and stated she looked forward to working with everyone and appreciated the patience they would give her. Ron Panzero's last day is May 3, 2010. He adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.