

AICAB REGULAR MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES
April 11, 2014 @ Anderson Island Community Clubhouse
(AICAB Approved)

Members Present: Joe Howells, Rich Sullivan, Dave Jacobsen, Ann Dasch, Dr. Charlene Holt, Pat Owen, Bobbi Sullivan, Dave Albertson. **Members Absent and Excused:** Carol Paschal, Ed Stephenson.

Call to Order and Verification of Quorum: The Secretary called the roll and a quorum was declared. The Regular Meeting was called to order by the Chair at approximately 7:02 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was observed.

Adoption of Agenda: Because of the ferry trip cancelations affecting the attendance by Ferry Administrator Deb Wallace, the Chair revised the proposed agenda to move up the presentation on the Park & Recreation District's Comprehensive Plan on the agenda. Member Dasch asked whether the report to the Board on the planned ferry schedule changes should be rescheduled. The Chair indicated we would proceed with a report from the AICAB Liaison to the ferry system, and schedule a subsequent special meeting with the Ferry System Administrator if necessary. The revised, proposed agenda was unanimously approved as written.

Approval of Prior Meetings Minutes: It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2014 Regular Meeting as written. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2014 Special Meeting as written. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2014 Special Meeting as written.

Reports to the Board:

Treasurer's Report. No report.

Public Forum – A.I. Park and Recreation District Comprehensive Plan: Commissioner Rick Anderson noted that the District's Comprehensive Plan was last revised in 2010 and it is time for an update. The process begins with a survey of Islander's opinions and concerns regarding the adequacy current activities and any changes they would like to see with their parks. Folks can go onto the District's website and download a copy of the survey, fill it out and return it to the District by e-file, mail, or dropping it in the green A.I.A. box at the Island General Store. Rick did pass out blank survey forms to those in attendance. Survey responses are due by the end of April. In response to a question, Rick indicated that over that last several years the Park & Recreation District property tax assessment has gone primarily to maintenance and Operations, with the purchase of property primarily through grants.

Reports to the Board (Continued):

Ferry Schedule Change Recommendation and System Update. The Chair indicated that Ferry System Administrator Deb Wallace had indicated that she had intended to give an overview of County-planned interim ferry schedule changes this evening. The Chair asked AICAB Liaison to the Ferry System, Dave Jacobsen to share those plans that Ms. Wallace had shared with him.

Member Jacobsen noted that the Ferry System planned to make a couple of ferry schedule adjustments effective May 1, 2014 to coincide with the start of the Peak Season schedule. These changes are primarily in response to community feedback through the recent Pierce County Ferry – 2014 User Survey

conducted in February, some of the results of which he shared via overhead projection. There were 233 responses to this survey. Starting May 1st, the Monday through Saturday first ferry departing Steilacoom at 5:45 a.m. will run directly to Anderson and back to Steilacoom without a Ketron stop. The ferry will leave Anderson at 6:15 a.m., fifteen minutes early than current, and arrive back at Steilacoom fifteen minutes earlier than current. This will be of particular advantage to I-5 commuters in getting ahead of the morning traffic. This change was also endorsed by the Steilacoom School District. There is no additional expense from this change. The extra, Non-Peak Season 8:40 p.m., Thursday evening run will be extended to year-round. The additional cost of this service expansion will be offset by the elimination of the lightly-used, Peak Season only 10:00 p.m. Sunday night sailing. The County is aware there is interest in other schedule changes, and those will be evaluated as part of a new Waterborne Transportation Study to be conducted yet this year. It has been 10 years since the last Waterborne Transportation Study was conducted.

Dave introduced Chris Frye to comment on his evaluation of the need for an even earlier weekday ferry. Chris had previously presented his ideas at a meeting sponsored by the Riviera Community Club Board of Directors. Chris handed out his position paper titled "Ferry Service Extension Proposal CCF445", noting that his proposal for an additional ferry leaving Steilacoom at 4:45 a.m. was a "personal" proposal and did not represent the position of any Island groups. His stated objective is to "increase the economic stability and population of Anderson Island by making the ferry schedule more suitable for working families and bringing it in line with other WSDOT ferries." He has previously presented this proposal at a Pierce County Ferry Committee Meeting as well as the special meeting sponsored by the Riviera Board. The County estimates that the annual cost of such an extra weekday run would be \$67,129.00, an amount that Chris calculates would be offset by fare revenue from just 20 additional working adults commuting daily by car on the ferry. This should be viewed by the County as "an investment, not an expense".

In response to a question from the Chair about the need for upfront initial fare increases to fund the proposal, Chris suggested that the County has \$1.5 million in "unallocated" State funds it could use. He stated that the \$67,129 in increased cost is equal to about 4 percent of the current budgeted fare box revenue. In response to a question about the lack of additional revenue if current riders just shift between runs, Chris indicated that the intent is attracting new Island residents who could not otherwise live here without the 4:45 a.m. ferry service. He wants the new schedule in place for fourth quarter, and does not feel we should wait for the results of the Waterborne Transportation Study to implement the change. Member Albertson noted that he feels the population growth the Island has experienced since the mid-90's was a result of increased ferry capacity, so he feels the proposal for an additional run to encourage more growth "makes sense". An audience member expressed concern that raising fares to pay for an additional run would be counterproductive as higher ferry costs will actually drive people off the Island, so the County, not ferry riders really needs to fund the initial cost.

The Chair recognized and introduced the new Riviera General Manager, John Baird. John noted that as the Island population "ages", we need to attract younger, working families to replace them for the sake of the Island economy. It has to be a long term commitment from the County. He referenced signatures on a petition in support extended the ferry service day by both earlier and later boats.

(Note: After the AICAB meeting adjourned, the AICAB Secretary was provided with the petition sheets signed by 43 individual Islanders seeking "To extend run times Monday through Friday to include both earlier and later runs" to forward to the County.)

The Riviera Community Club Board President, Phyllis Zander-Brown noted that there are 25 homes for sale on the Island for between \$100,000 and \$200,000. These are ideal starter homes for young, working families. Older children want to be involved in after school activities, which can be difficult with the current ferry schedule. So we have to not just think about getting people to work earlier, but also accommodating activities that require later ferries as well.

Member Dasch handed out and read into the record a letter “To AICAB and Anderson Islanders” from Island property owners and former residents John and Donna Mollan. The Mollans are trying to sell their Island house. They feel that the current “limited” ferry schedule “makes it difficult or impossible for many to commute to jobs on the mainland.” They ask “(P)lease do not disregard the economic and social impact of the present ferry schedule.”

Nori Hashibe expressed his concern that through a restricted ferry schedule, the County is dictating how we live on the Island and work. There is a lot of hard work ahead of us to change that.

The Chair observed that expecting the County to fund enhancements to the ferry schedule may be unrealistic. We may need to look at this “investment” as individual Islanders and what we are willing to pay for additional services that benefit us. If we express a willingness as a community to contribute to the funding of these enhancements rather than demanding the County find other ways to pay for it, we will have a much better chance of getting support for the changes. The Chair called for a show of hands of those in attendance who would support the addition of an earlier morning weekday run. Initially, he added the proviso of “if it were to cost an additional 4 percent on your ferry ticket”, but Chris Frie asked that the show of hands be just of those in favor of the proposal of an earlier ferry without “clouding the issue” with the question of how it would be paid for. Support by show of hands was unanimous. An audience member posed the question of whether Islanders who use this earlier run would be willing to pay a surcharge when they do so. Member Dasch suggested that previously budgeted funds saved from not have to drydock the Steilacoom II could be redirected to funding service increases. A member of the audience suggested that the money previously paid by the State for the rental of the Steilacoom II could be used. Member Jacobsen suggested that AICAB needs to simply advise the County of this as an identified need, and ask the County to give it careful consideration. “There is a need, there is an interest, and we would like you to pursue it”. Then we can address the County response once we know what it is, for example funding alternatives.

Member Dasch made a motion that we recommend to the County – to include notification to the Ferry Administrator, the County Council, County Executive and The Deputy Director for Public Works and Utilities – that an additional 4:45 a.m./5:15 a.m. weekday ferry run be established. The motion was seconded by member Jacobsen. Amendments were proposed and agreed to noting our expectation that this would improve the livability and economic viability of the Island; the Chair’s request that we attach Chris’ proposal position paper to the recommendation; and that we indicate we view this as an investment for both the community and the County. The final motion, as amended, was approved unanimously by voice vote of the AICAB membership.

Unfinished Business:

Update on Revisions to the Shoreline Master Plan. The Chair previously contacted Debbie Hyde with Pierce County. She indicated there is nothing new to report.

Update on Revisions to the County Comprehensive Plan. The Chair previously e-mailed Toni Fairbanks and it appears that the date for hearings and final Council action will be pushed out.

New Business: None identified.

Issues and Comments for the Floor:

Daryl Beck complimented that work of the AICAB on the ferry schedule expansion question this evening.

Announcements and Adjournment:

The AICAB April 11, 2014 (2nd Quarter) Regular Meeting was adjourned by the Chair at approximately 8:22 p.m..

The next AICAB Regular Meeting (3rd Quarter) is scheduled for Friday, July 11th beginning at 7 p.m.