

PLIC 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2014
Lummi Island Grange Hall

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by president Rhayma Blake. Board members Rhayma Blake, Mike Kmeicik, Jansen Pierce, and Dave Wing as well as 25 other members were in attendance.

Rhayma highlighted **PLIC accomplishments for 2013:**

Maintained Needs-based Ferry Fares. Recommendation approved at the May 28th General Meeting and formally adopted by the county October 1, 2013. Moved application processing to the Opportunity Council and raised the income levels to HUD Very-low Income. Betsy Schneider reported at the Opportunity Council has only had 5 applications so far this year.

Provided an overview of the possible purchase of the Plattsburgh ferry from the Lake Champlain Transportation Company on May 28th to islanders. 24 out of the 25 surveys completed at the meeting encouraged further investigation. The Plattsburgh has since been pulled off the market.

Promoted acceptance of credit cards on the ferry and stopped the implementation of penalty fee for non-payment. Credit cards can now be used for payment both by mail and on board in 2014.

Evaluated availability of Disabled Parking during dry dock. Nineteen slots were available and Public Works has been notified that more would be beneficial if space allows.

Mike McKenzie, president of LIFAC, provided a **LIFAC update**.

Josh Zender has resigned because of other commitments.

LIFAC priorities for 2014 include developing a "Plan B" for any unexpected ferry service outage, creating a long-term strategic plan for ferry replacement considering both new and used options, and studying whether ferry fares could be made more equitable.

Mike reported that Public Works Director Frank Abart had assigned responsibility for ferry operations to **James Lee**, who is new to ferry issues.

Mike emphasized that **PLIC represents the island** on ferry issues while **LIFAC has been charged with providing recommendations that are best for the county**. Bud Jewell asked whether Public Works administrative costs had increased more for the ferry than for administration of other parts of the county. Since the ferry is the only part of the Public Works budget that generates revenue, it may be treated differently.

2014 Issues were reviewed.

Children riding the ferry without supervision: Kathy Thurber, school secretary, explained that the district has discontinued bus service, and school enrollment has declined to levels that jeopardize its existence. At the beginning of the year, 6 children from 4 families on Gooseberry Point were recruited to transfer to Beach School. Beach School's enrollment would only be 22 without transfer students. Kathy rode with them the first month to teach them ferry procedures. The 4 families have signed a Hold Harmless agreement to allow them to ride unsupervised. Kathy encouraged islanders to report instances of misbehavior directly to the school, but acknowledged it would be best for small children to ride with a parent. She says that \$14/day is prohibitive for low-income families on Gooseberry Point. The school needs 18 off-island children to meet its goal of 40 students. Ferndale Schools superintendent Linda Quinn has been made aware of the issue, but current policy provides no transportation funds for transfer students. Kathy suggested that the upcoming bond issue may be an opportune time to readdress the issue with the school district. Bud Jewell wondered if PLIC could help. A subcommittee to address the issue was formed to provide a recommendation: Rhayma Blake, Lis Marshall, Doreen Richmond, Kathy Thurber, and a current transfer student parent.

Queuing at Gooseberry Point: Jansen Pierce reported that he was working with Michelle Morrissey to provide a recommendation to simplify vehicle line-up at Gooseberry Point and minimize traffic on the road itself. It was commented that signage should be repositioned nearer the road.

Ferry Rate Revisions: Mike McKenzie reported that LIFAC has been asked by County Council to provide a ferry rate recommendation than is more equitable than the current \$3 surcharge. Jim Dickinson suggested that rates are too high and the ferry is underutilized. Other comments suggested that there should be closer to a \$2 gap between passenger and vehicle fares to encourage more car traffic. This might be appropriate since there is no longer a Gooseberry Point parking lot.

Plattsburgh Update: Jim Dickinson reported that he and Greg Brown had verified figures presented in the May 28th PLIC meeting. but Lake Champlain Transportation has decided not to purchase a new ferry since its price has been raised by \$1 million, and is taking the Plattsburgh off the market. Jim suggests that the Whatcom Chief is beginning to experience metal fatigue and maintenance costs are increasing. He is forming a Technical Subcommittee to advise LIFAC on appropriate designs. Members are Jim Dickinson, Greg Brown, Bill Fox and Jansen Pierce.

Communications on Ferry Issues: Both Nextdoor Lummi Island and Ferry Forum were discussed as vehicles to increase awareness of and promote discussion of ferry issues. Lis Marshall said Nancy Ging has volunteered to post items on Ferry Forum. Jerry Anderson spoke to Nextdoor's wider readership.

Officer Elections: Megan Crouse moved to re-elect the current PLIC board members. Jerry Anderson seconded. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Mike Kmiecik reported that PLIC currently has \$3,094.42. Expenditures in 2013 were approximately \$600.

The date of the next meeting will be announced once there are subcommittee findings to share with the general membership.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Protect Lummi Island Community Purpose

1. Preserving vehicle and passenger ferry service between Lummi Island and Gooseberry Point.
2. Providing Lummi Island residents and property owners with information concerning the Lummi Island ferry.
3. Fostering respectful and informed discussions within the community when issues arise regarding the ferry service. Striving to develop a consensus whenever possible, and ;
4. Advocating for beneficial long-term ferry related transportation plans.