

Minutes
Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Committee
Thursday January 9, 2020 @ 1:00 PM
Bar Harbor Municipal Building — Council Chambers

Attendance:

Chair Eben Salvatore and committee members Stephen Coston, Prentice “Skip” Strong, Jeff Dobbs, Jim Willis, Sandy McFarland, Sarah Flink, Amy Powers, Charlie Phippen, Martha Searchfield, Jane Disney and Katie Rodgers.

Katy DeGrass, Greg Gordon and Ken Smith were excused.

Presently, there are two vacancies on the committee.

As of August 1, 2019, Skip Strong and Sarah Flink are non-voting members. Katie Rodgers did not vote. Therefore, the voting membership for the meeting was nine.

Town staff in attendance included Town Manager, Cornell Knight and Finance Director, Stan Harmon.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Salvatore called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (UP TO 15 MINUTES)

James O’Connell spoke about the mathematics of cruise ships in the industry.

Mr. Salvatore welcomed Jane Disney as a member of the Cruise Ship Committee.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (December 10, 2019)

It was identified that the non-voting members were listed incorrectly on the December 10th minutes, which affected all the following votes.

Mr. Dobbs moved to adopt the **amended minutes** from the December 10, 2019 meeting. Mr. Willis seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Phippen moved to adopt the agenda as prepared. Mr. McFarland seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

V. REGULAR BUSINESS

a. Updated SOP

Mr. Salvatore informed the committee that maps are still in the works for the SOP. There is a focus on the transportation plan and studies. Mr. Willis reported that the

police department will update documents regarding cruise ship policies and tour bus set-up. Loudspeaker concerns were also mentioned and Mr. Phippen vocalized there are federal rules regarding fog horns specifically but, this may be a good topic for the operating corrections in February. Ms. Flink commented about potential decibel benchmarks for noise control near the port and tenders.

b. CCNE update

Ms. Flink provided a handout. Ms. Flink presented an update on CCNE's end-of-year, organizational meeting mid-November which focused on sustainability and brainstorming objectives for 2020 based on operator feedback. This exercise incorporated 38 ports. Projects reported to be important going forward included travel agent training, seasonality, increased marketing, sustainability (guidelines and benchmarks), as well as investment of infrastructure and development plans to change with industry trends. A combined effort to set guidelines and benchmarks for sustainability, while investing in infrastructure and long-term development plans, was ranked most important by the committee upon a show of hands. Ms. Flink spoke to the number of new ships on order and the impact that may have on the industry, specifically Bar Harbor. 110 new ships are currently being built. New ships generally take less than three years to build as mentioned by Ms. Powers. Mr. Coston and Mr. Salvatore stated it would be helpful to see the gain or loss of ship numbers. Ms. Flink mentioned that 46% of CCNE's 1000-2500 passenger ships are phasing out and only 2 of the 110 new ships are within that size range.

Mr. Coston stated that while we need to learn to accommodate the changes in passenger ships, other ships, such as boutique ships, will not visit Bar Harbor on a regular basis. Therefore, the question is how will we account for this in the future to stay sustainable?

Mr. Salvatore confirmed industry projections have been correct regarding changes from even a few years ago. Ms. Powers pointed out that not all ships are phasing out but, many are being refurbished.

Mr. McFarland expressed discontent that there is miscommunication about tours and attractions to ship passengers. Ms. Flink would like to work with the Chamber and others to provide content in a presentation in the auditorium of the ship to help avoid passenger confusion at port.

c. Final budget

Mr. Knight referred to the budget handout regarding 13% less ships and 10% less passengers, as well as a 7% decrease in revenue. Mr. Salvatore pointed out that this is for the fiscal year.

Ms. Powers mentioned the projects from the December 10, 2019 meeting, pointing out that Harbor Place amenities, solar panels at the visitor center, a charging station, an iPad or concierge, water bottle filling station and story boards regarding

redeemable items are among the important projects to start implementing with available budget amounts. Mr. Knight commented that there is approximately \$115,000 available for projects upon committee recommendations. Ms. Powers also spoke to operational issues of reconfiguring the mooring field and extending Harbor Park which should be discussed with Harbor's SOP. Non-reliable communications were also noted as an issue. Mr. Harmon informed the committee that the budgeted \$6,000 Wi-Fi park plan last year ended up being an expense of over \$22,000. Mr. Salvatore encouraged Ms. Powers to send a letter to AT&T in conjunction with CLIA to help resolve further communications issues.

d. Draft of year-end review report (to include environmental monitoring and Professor Gabe's report)

Committee consensus to submit the final report to Council.

Mr. Coston commented that Professor Gabe's baseline presented creates many opportunities going forward, especially with visitation numbers changing.

Mr. Phippen reported they are still waiting to hear back regarding the breakwater repair vs. rebuild with hopes of repair only, as well as a change to the existing shipping channel with a 10 mile Southern extension and a 3 mile Eastern extension.

e. Air monitoring recommendation to Town Council

Ms. Powers and Ms. Flink pointed out that there is an air quality report being released mid-January that was requested over a year ago from the Maine Marine Vessel Legislative Committee. Mr. Salvatore agreed a copy should be obtained upon release to be reviewed. Town Council will be given an update to this with no current recommendations.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Disney proposed a social study as a follow-up to Professor Gabe's study in order to gauge how people perceive crowds. Mr. Salvatore added that when Professor Gabe's study is accessible to the public, the committee will explore further recommendations to council through an amended final report, as well as press releases to educate the community about air quality reports and Professor Gabe's study.

Mr. Dobbs moved to present an amended final report to Council at their February 4, 2020 meeting. Ms. Searchfield seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

Ms. Karlson inquired about air quality monitoring in relation to the pier. Mr. Knight explained that the pier was too close to lobster boats for valid results. James O'Connell commented on the right whale situation in relation to the cruise ship industry and the negative impacts associated. Dessa Dancy asked to confirm that there are no recommendations to council at this time. Mr. Salvatore confirmed there are not.

Mr. McFarland voiced his concern that the committee's National Park seat continues to be vacant and that there is a large need for the park to be partnering with the committee. Mr. Salvatore responded that he is working on filling the seat. Ms. Searchfield confirmed that there is a Harborview Place layout coming out in February.

VII. COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Next meeting scheduled for February 13, 2020 at 1:00 PM

Future Agenda Items:

1. Final SOP
2. Press release
3. Goals for 2020
4. Review Air Quality Report

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dobbs, with second by Mr. Willis, moved to adjourn at 2:41 PM. Motion passed 9-0.