

MINUTES

Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Task Force

February 14, 2008

8:30 AM

Council Chambers

Municipal Building

93 Cottage Street

I. Call to Order at 8:34 AM

Members Present: Paul Paradis, Chair; Chris Fogg, Vice-Chair; Anne Krieg, Secretary; Nate Young; Charlie Phippen; Greg Gordon; Amy Powers; Mary Opdyke; Fred Cook; Greg Veilleux

Also present was Eben Salvatore from Ocean Properties

II. Excused Absences

By a motion made by Krieg and seconded by the Chair, with no one opposed, both George Seavey and Bob Bahr were excused from the meeting.

III. Minutes

By a motion made by Opdyke and seconded by Fogg, with a denial by Phippen, the January 24, 2008 minutes were approved.

IV. Staff Reports

A discussion on methods of beginning dialogue with the cruise ship industry was tabled to allow for Powers to participate.

When the group returned to this item, Powers provided an update on customs rulings and regulations and Paradis updated the task force on recent Council actions.

Phippen indicated that he typically notifies concerned parties of a potential fee increase. Then when a decision is made, he notifies the contacts. He likes to work directly with the users.

V. Regular Business

A. Discussion with Ocean Properties on future plans for West Street and service to Cruise Ship tenders and passengers

Salvatore reviewed the operations to date at the Ocean Properties' facilities on West Street. He noted that a port facility would save time for passengers disembarking because they could clear customs as they land as opposed to on the ship. He indicated that Harborside is the preferable location for this facility. He would be able to load and stack buses on-site; however use of Agamont Park would still be necessary to stack buses in queue. Harbor Place remains an option and could be used as a means to split tender operations on a 2-ship day. He also noted that the pool use is not at a peak in the morning during the morning loading times and they are planning to screen it off for the afternoon peak pool usage by guests. He also stated he is waiting for customs approval of the facility.

Gordon noted that the Portland facility is small; thus Ocean Properties may not need the space they think to accommodate passengers and customs.

There was question as to whether taxi's or Ollie's Trolley or other similar operations would be allowed to come onto the facility. Salvatore noted that there is a space factor with that decision.

Young expressed concern with spreading operations between Agamont Park and Harborside. Krieg added that we should coordinate bus operations with Salvatore.

Young and Gordon moved to add the agenda item for a check in with Ocean Properties again for the next meeting. All were in favor of the motion.

B. Reporting on a request to the Town Manager for staff to research the cost and feasibility of the Town becoming Coast Guard T105 compliant to receive cruise ship passengers on Town docks.

Young reviewed the Homeland Security grant he is working on with staff. He is planning to seek funds for a T-105 facility. The revenue from the cruise ship operations passing through the facility could fund infrastructure projects. He noted that the Police Department already holds security risk individuals as well as a passenger or crew that breaks the law. He feels this facility provides basic security to the town's visitor like any other service to the visitor. He feels this service is in the public interest.

Phippen added that prior to September 11, 2001, the Town did provide this service at the Town Pier. He also noted that a full building is not required to receive security clearance for passengers. He is meeting with the Coast Guard to coordinate what facility is necessary.

Young added that the grant can be a public/private partnership but also noted that the deadline to submit the application is approaching quickly. He stated that the town needs to enhance its security at the Town Pier regardless of whether we provide service to cruise ship tendering operations.

Phippen noted that yachts of a certain size would use this facility as well, including charters and foreign vessels.

The 1998 Waterfront Master Plan was requested to be copied to the task force members in their next packet.

Gordon and Opdyke moved to endorse the Homeland Security grant application to secure funds to enhance port security at the Town's waterfront. All were in favor of the motion.

Phippen stated the facility would likely be located at the east side of the Pier where the floats are and that buses would queue at the edge of the pier.

C. Discussion by Chair Paradis and Member Powers on Cruise Ship Convention in San Francisco, CA February 5-6, 2008

Paradis said it was extremely helpful to sit down with individuals in the cruise ship industry. He was pleased to have the opportunity to commence a dialogue with them. He also noted that Powers is considered a leader in the profession and she was extremely helpful in establishing relations with the cruise industry executives.

Paradis told the group that he learned that Bar Harbor is one of the few ports that have spent little to cultivate the cruise industry yet the market is there for them to come here. He said the industry is extremely competitive and many other port operators attempt to get into our market by telling cruise industry representatives that Bar Harbor does not want them.

Phippen reminded the task force that the 1993 Comprehensive Plan set a policy to neither encourage nor discourage the cruise ship industry in Bar Harbor. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan currently speaks to monitoring and coordination. The creation of this task force to work on the Destination Management plan was the first time a policy to dedicate resources has occurred.

Powers added to Paradis' comments to say that the cruise lines want a bundled fee from certain ports and that they are interested in partnering with the Town. They fully understand our need to make improvements to our infrastructure to serve their customers.

Paradis added that he spoke with the industry about some of the infrastructure needs the town has to serve their use and they were receptive to working with us. He opined that it is important for the industry to see the town as an entity that wants to work with them.

Paradis reviewed some options of working with the industry as contractual agreements for fees based upon how many passengers a year. It is important the industry sees some continuity in leadership and with who they are they are working. He also noted that the Town should always be represented at certain events and conventions during the year.

Gordon and Fogg moved to recommend that staff and a Councilor attend the June 2008 Cruise Ship Symposium and any available industry events. All were in favor of the motion.

D. Cruise Ship Fees

Paradis noted industry leaders had indicated they are more receptive to paying directly for improvements as opposed to a port development fee. Port development fees are more difficult for the industry to grasp. They expressed some interest in a hybrid of the 2 approaches.

Fogg felt we should do a fee comparison to determine the threshold. He noted it is important to remain competitive.

Powers offered ideas to consider for funding as: bathrooms, informational kiosks or offices, security clearance provision, operational issues, management and staffing. She cautioned that the Town has to be clear as to where the funds are going.

Krieg opined that the capital projects we choose should meet criteria that the project benefits a greater population than merely the cruise ship visitor.

The group continued discussion on separating fees to cover costs and fees to cover costs of capital improvements.

Paradis offered that he and staff will prepare a document to react to for the next meeting.

Krieg and Phippen moved to place this agenda item for fees on the next agenda. All were in favor of the motion.

VI. Public Comment

There was no comment.

VII. Items for next agenda were previously noted.

VIII. Set next meeting time, date and place – due to staff schedules, the next meetings was set for February 26th, 2008 at 11:00 AM

IX. Adjournment at 11:03 AM was unanimously passed by a motion made by Krieg and seconded by Fogg.

These minutes were prepared by Anne Krieg, Planning Director and Secretary/Staff to the Task Force for distribution on March 21, 2008.