

Hat Island Community Vessel and Equipment Committee

Attending:

Aimee Chambers
Kelly Dukes
Udo Gerz
John Gray
Craig Harris
Gina Jamison

Attending Staff:

Kim Gleason
Shane Dunn

Meeting:

July 13, 2021 5:00pm by Zoom

Discussion and Recommendations:

Ferry Capacity

- US Coast guard capacity is 48
- Shane recommends staying at 40 for now- revisit in a few weeks
- Recent glitch with Bookeyo has allowed more than 8 pets on a run. Several runs had 11 and 13 pets booked. The crew did a great job handling the situation and took advantage of the good weather to place some pets and their owners on the bow and several smaller pets were able to be placed in crates in the cabin.

Vessel Committee recommendation:

Maintain 40 passenger limit for now- revisit in a few weeks

Passenger limits and restrictions for guests

Current Policy

- Owners and family no limits and 4 guests
- Owners must be on the island for guests to ride (guest is non family member)
- If 50% of the boat is booked by one owner- to contact Island Manager for charter pricing

Discussion:

- Hat Express had no limits on owners, family or guests
- Another Holiday was approved prior to the pandemic and it was believed at the time that with a 48 person capacity it would be able to handle most typical rider levels without additional runs
- COVID-19 has dramatically impacted the island- extensive grown, increased property values and marina at capacity
- Ferry critical link to owners accessibility to their property
- With COVID-19 Another Holiday capacity was initially restricted to 20 owners/family members. (no guests) Some owners appeared to have worked around the no guest restriction by claiming everyone in their large party was a family member (not wide spread- but an issue that did trigger additional runs on several occasions while the ferry was limited to 20 passengers)
- Current Another Holiday capacity at 40 Persons (Owners/family and allowing 4 guests per run per household and owner must be on the island) appears to have worked well overall. There have been some issues with guest/friend behavior- treating crew badly. Kim/Island Manager has handled those incidents.
- Keep guests/friends at 4, increase to 6 or open up completely (like Hat Express)

- Desire to ensure guests follow rules/ keep island safe and peaceful is primary driver to wanting owner to be on island when guests ride ferry
- Desire to maximize ferry open capacity to generate revenue vs restricting guests and sailing with empty seats
- Concerns from those with limited or no local family do not like the guest/friend restriction
- Concerns from those who follow the rules and limit guest/friends to 4 feel singled out. While those with large families and those who aren't honest about who is truly family vs guest/friend can bring unlimited people over – it is not equitable
- Concerns from those who would like to share/offer their home to responsible adult guest/friends do not like the owner must be on the island restriction
- Frustration that some guests have identified themselves as VRBO renters and have been less than gracious to ferry crew (owner was on the island)
- Concerns that VRBO guests riding the ferry do so below the cost to transport a passenger. Thereby the owners/island are supplementing VRBO owner businesses
- Recommend tabling VRBO discussions to allow Board to address

Ferry charters

- If we open it up to everyone- when do we trigger a charter
- Does it make sense to trigger a charter (extra run for both the ferry and the crew) if the ferry was not full and could already handle the extra passengers- extra runs on Fridays increase crew labor hours
- If we open the ferry to all (no restrictions) do we change the trigger for Charter at 12 or 15 persons or keep at 50% (20 people)
- Historically charters have been \$ 650 for 2 hours (typically for memorials)
- At 40 passengers X \$9.00 a full ferry generates \$360- consider this as base fee

Vessel Committee recommendation:

- 1) Open ferry to guests/friends (no restrictions)
- 2) Owner still required to be on the island for guests/friends to ride
- 3) Charter trigger to remain at 50% of ferry capacity

Suggested motion: "I move for acceptance of the Vessel Committee recommendation to open the ferry to guests"

Ferry Fees

- Golf and Marina charge owners a lower rate vs family /guests (~25%) why not ferry? (used to be)
- Maintaining owner pricing while increasing family/guest rate would help address the concerns from supplementing the VRBO riders
- Ferry crew cannot differentiate between family and guests – too hard to manage
- Actual costs on another Another Holiday runs \$17 each way/\$34 round trip per person

Vessel Committee Recommendation:

Discussion tabled for now

Mask Policy

- Currently crew and guests are required to wear a mask
- As of June 30 Washington State no longer mandates social distancing
- Washington state is fully open and vaccinations are nearly 70%
- The CDC guidelines are recommendations not a rule or law
- The Hat Island Ferry is a private service provider not public transportation with government oversight
- Enforcing the masking mandate is a burden to the ferry crew- passengers have been pushing back
- Gatherings on the island no longer mandate masks- requiring masks on the ferry is not a consistent policy

Vessel Committee Recommendation:

- 1) Shift the wearing of masks from required to recommended
- 2) Post signs on Ferry: "Mask should be worn by those not fully vaccinated. The CDC recommends that a mask be worn while inside the cabins"

Suggested motion: "I move for acceptance of the 2 recommendations regarding masks from the Vessel Committee and remove the mandate to wear a mask while riding on the ferry"

Baggage and Cargo

- Passengers are limited to 10 cubic feet of cargo per passenger
- This has been working well

Ferry Staffing- update

- Hiring relief/back up captain: John and Ryan are in training
- Hiring deckhand: Bailey Grove to start as new deck hand (Harrison is leaving in August)

Monday Ferry Runs on Mondays in 2022

- Strong support from Vessel Committee and Community at large for adding ferry service on Mondays
- Allows additional day for shopping and Dr appointments
- Addition of Monday ferry runs allows for long weekends and those with flexible work schedules to spend more time on island/ in their homes

Vessel Committee Recommendation:

- Finance Committee investigate adding Monday Ferry runs to 2022 budget

Hat Express: Update from Captain Shane

- Compression check- TBD
- Hull out, swap out props/clean props - complete
- Paint bottom- complete
- Work parties to spruce up interior- will be booked once ferry is docked back at Hat Island marina
- Coast Guard Inspection- target August
- Internal structure assessment passed which helps marketing/desirability of vessel
- Ferry pricing and marketing update- Ferry process has been reduced which has generated interest
- San Juan Cruises in Bellingham is interested
- Plan to video the boat while out of the water for perspective buyers
- Hat Express goes back into the water for sea trial on 7/15
- Hat Express will remain docked on the island while working on sale
- Coast Guard approved removal of the step/ledge at the doorways to the cabin- work to be done in Port Angeles after Labor Day- TBD

Meeting notes prepared by Kelly Dukes

Kelly Dukes
kdukes23@gmail.com
206-947-5638