

Minutes of the HICA Special Board Meeting on 3/31/2020

Darla Younce, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. Present were Erik Smith, Vice President, Kurt Kassahn, Treasurer, Scott Holte, Secretary, and Paula Bafaro, Udo Gerz, and Kevin Smith, Trustees. Also present was Kim Gleason, Island Manager.

The President discussed the recent change to ferry ridership, limiting riders to only owners and their dependents. In a recent crossing an adult, alone, claiming to be a dependent of owners, presented a difficult situation for the ferry crew. The Island Manager anticipates more such situations will arise in the future, and noted that recent ferry reservations are raising these same issues.

The Island Manager requested some guidance from the Board so that the ferry crew and owners will not be put in situations and at a disadvantage because of unclear guidelines.

Scott noted that the definition of a dependent, regardless of age, means living in the same household. This requirement is consistent with federal, state, and local orders to shelter in place and limit social gatherings to family members. Family units, regardless of age, living together are at a much lesser risk of infecting each other with the COVID-19 virus. A family member living separately presents a much greater risk. We hope the Community recognizes this and responds accordingly. Family members who don't live with you should not come on the ferry.

Udo pointed out Governor Inslee's latest order that everyone should stay home. If your home is on the mainland it is the wrong time to come to Hat Island.

Kim noted that we simply can't have random people ride the ferry without an owner confirming the person is a dependent. She proposed that the only way to accomplish this is to require the owner to ride with his/her dependents.

Paula stated that it is important to understand that this is just a temporary situation, and that it is very, very important to limit exposure to the ferry crew.

Kurt proposed that the reservation system be used as a solution, requiring only owners to make reservations, providing name and lot number. Perhaps if the owner is on island, allowing him/her to ride free to the mainland to pick up a dependent.

Erik stated that he thinks that is unnecessary. It would take up ridership space and perhaps create unnecessary risks. A dependent should be able to ride over without the owner present.

Kim said that although the reservation system is not perfect, it is working and as a result ridership is up.

Udo said, with apologies to the lawyers on the Board, the whole discussion about dependents is wrong and lawyers sometimes talk in terms that a non lawyer cannot understand. The objective is: Don't spread the virus. If you don't live on the island, obey Governor Inslee's order and stay home! If you have a house on the mainland stay there. If your house is on Hat stay on Hat. The only exceptions should be getting groceries and doctor appointments. This is not the time for socializing and when that time comes, hopefully soon, when we can all get together again and have a Party, I will be paying for the first keg of beer!!

(Erik and Scott said no offense was taken about the lawyer comment, but they really don't like lawyer jokes.) Erik said he agreed that ridership should be limited to owners and dependents.

Darla pointed out that many on Hat have homes on the mainland, but have chosen to shelter in place in their homes on Hat, like she and Dave have, for very good reasons. They should be able to choose where. She also noted that all this discussion does not apply to those owners who travel in their own boats. We have no way to limit their access, but the ferry presents a different situation, particularly with respect to the crew's safety and health.

Kim said we have the policy in place, but we may need to define "dependent," perhaps consistent with federal definitions, including length of residency, amount of financial dependence, etc. And it would be easy to require owners to travel with dependents, but she could work with a reservation system as Kurt suggested.

Paula said she agreed with the owner reservation requirement.

Kurt added that at some point the Community needs to know that you need to make a choice, with respect to riding the ferry: live on the island or live on the mainland, at least for the next 30 days.

Scott pointed out that at the beginning of the pandemic Dr. Fauci said that it is much better to enact strict safety measures now, instead of waiting and then wishing we had. The news just reported that even with the shelter in place orders in effect, models suggest that the national death toll could be between 100,000 and 240,000 deaths. Hat Island should not resist Draconian measures now, and then in 30, 60, or 90 days look back and wish we had enacted them.

Kevin said he thought that Draconian measures are misplaced. The premise that we can make it easier for the crew with additional requirements, regardless how you define it, is not going to make it easier or safer. The reason is that the issue is not about location, it's more about behavior. He's against requiring owners to pick Hat or the mainland. Everything will work fine with the 25 limit of passengers and the required social separation. But, as always, the problem is enforcement. The Community doesn't need Draconian measures, they just need to use their heads and common sense and behave accordingly.

Erik said he agreed. If we all follow the protocols on the ferry, regardless whether an owner or dependent and use the reservation system, assuming it can be relayed to the ferry staff, a dependent can board without an owner being present, but the owner who made the reservation should meet the ferry to confirm and pick up the the dependent as he/she disembarks.

Kim said we can verify who is an owner with the reservation system and thereby confirm who are dependents.

Kurt added that he agreed with this direction, and that the Board will stay involved. We can try it for a week, if there are significant ongoing problems then the Board can reconvene to address them.

Udo added one note: We currently don't have a relief captain. If just one member of the ferry crew gets sick, we have a real problem.

Darla then asked if we need a motion from the Board. Scott responded that we don't. It appears that a majority of the Board supports the Island Manager implementing the previously

approved policy of owners only with dependents, by requiring owners to make the ridership reservations. The Board members voiced their agreement.

Darla called for a motion to adjourn into executive session to discuss legal and personnel issues without reconvening into regular session. Erik so moved, Paula seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Scott Holte, Secretary*

*These minutes are not intended to be an exact recitation of all that was said, but do contain all Board actions, if any.