

DRAFT

Minutes Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Committee By Video Conference Thursday, May 13, 2021 @ 3:00 PM

Attendance:

Chair Eben Salvatore and committee members Martha Searchfield, Eben Salvatore, Matt Hochman, Sandy McFarland, Jeremy Dougherty, Jennifer Cough, Ken Smith, Lawrence Sweet, Greg Gordon, John Kelly, Charlie Phippen, Sarah Flink, Amy Powers and Liz Graves.

Police Chief Jim Willis and Skip Strong were excused. Captain David Kerns attended to represent the department. Town Manager Cornell Knight also attended.

Jim Willis, Greg Gordon, Charlie Phippen, Sarah Flink, Skip Strong and Amy Powers are non-voting members. Liz Graves did not vote. The voting membership for the meeting was 10.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER**— 3:06 p.m.
- II. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (UP TO 15 MINUTES)**—None.
- III. **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (April 1, 2021)**

All present indicated by a straw poll vote that the minutes were acceptable. Then Mr. Smith, with second by Mr. Hochman, moved to approve the April 1, 2021 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Roll Call Vote:

<u>Searchfield</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Salvatore</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Hochman</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>McFarland</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Dougherty</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Cough</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Smith</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Sweet</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Kelly</u>	<u>Y</u>

Motion passed 9-0.
(Dr. Disney had not yet joined the meeting.)
- IV. **STAFF REPORTS**

Mr. Knight said the consultants for the cruise ship survey received 1,000 responses by mail (out of 3,000 sent out) and 500 online, so it's going to take a little longer for them to process

the responses than they originally thought. They are shooting for the week of June 14 for having a report.

Capt. Kerns said the police department is in full transition for Mr. Phippen's anticipated retirement. Sgt. Chris Wharff has been deputized as harbormaster and the harbor is going to be under the umbrella of the police department. They have hired an assistant for Sgt. Wharff who will cover the desk and some of the clerical work. He thinks the transition will work well for the town.

Mr. Phippen, in his last report before his retirement, said the reorganizing of the Harbor Department seemed like a logical thing to do. He said Sgt. Wharff is very adaptive and he's going to be a great asset. Mr. Phippen has every confidence in him.

He said another cancellation has been received for 2021, Enchantment of the Seas on Oct. 10. So, we're down to 80 ship visits officially still on the list (about 50 of those are big ships, he expects there's going to continue to be cancellations coming in).

For 2022, there are 149 ship visits scheduled. For 2023, it's down to 105. For 2024, 5 reservations have been added, bringing the total to 58. For 2025, there are 41. For 2026, 33. For each of the next four years after that, there are 16 or so each year. There's been a lot of activity on the Port Call schedule. Sgt. Wharff has smoothed out a 2021 schedule with only the booked ships. He will continue to maintain an Excel version of the Bar Harbor schedule.

He said it's been great working with everyone and he's only a phone call away.

V. REGULAR BUSINESS

a. 2021 season update

Ms. Flink said the Council voted unanimously to approve ACL coming this year. The Independence is due in Bar Harbor May 24. Federal CDC revised guidelines say fully vaccinated passengers are free to go on excursions and visit shops and restaurants. For big ships, most of them are starting in Florida or Texas. There isn't any concrete confirmation about New England, but Canada remains closed and the cruise lines would have to have port agreements in place per the CDC guidelines. The Town of Bar Harbor would have to sign off on a port agreement.

Mr. Salvatore said that the Alaska Congressional delegation is pushing for changes to the law that requires itineraries to include stops in Canada. What they're working on there could translate to here, but it would probably take some specific efforts by this market for that to happen, Ms. Flink said.

Ms. Powers said the readiness of New York, Boston and Baltimore will also impact the New England market. Mr. Flink said New York is just getting to work on its port agreements. Those are not yet in place for cruise lines to operate out of New York or Boston.

Mr. Dougherty asked about the probability that any big ships could come here in the fall. Ms. Flink said the likelihood diminishes every week that goes by, but she doesn't want to make a prediction.

Ms. Powers said even if the U.S. ports get open, we will still have the caveat with Canada. Canada has just over a million of their citizens vaccinated, they're not in a position where the Prime Minister would even consider opening the border. Europe is doing really well and the cruise industry is trying to get the word out about what's happening there.

Ms. Flink said there's no way for it to be a surprise that big ships are coming. If it's going to happen there's going to be a lot of notice to weigh in and decide what you want as a community.

b. Survey update

Mr. Kelly asked if more surveys could still be returned. Mr. Knight said the response window has closed.

c. Breakwater update

Mr. Salvatore updated Council with a memo at the last meeting. The Army Corps is already moving into the environmental study. Mr. Phippen said the big challenge with these projects is getting the funding approved in Congress, and that can take years.

d. Anchorage B update

Mr. Phippen said next step is for the letter from the Council to go to the Coast Guard and be forwarded up the chain. If it is approved, it would go to NOAA for a chart update. That can happen fairly rapidly. The last change we worked on, the extension of the recommended route, was a fast turnaround, a couple of months.

e. Sustainability projects and best practices

Ms. Flink and Ms. Powers have had two Zoom sessions with Hannah Jury, a UMass Amherst sophomore who's majoring in sustainable community development. She has some really great ideas about programming, including some that involve collaborating with the Abbe Museum. She submitted a grant application this week. The project would be an indigenous tour for cruise passengers with environmental elements. Locations and programming have not yet been decided, but she hopes that

it can explore less-publicized areas with small groups as well as educate visitors on the rich cultural history of the island. Ms. Powers said Ms. Jury has also presented ideas about an open-air market and getting people to the Schoodic Peninsula. She also connected with the Schoodic Institute.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (UP TO 15 MINUTES)

None.

VII. COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting was set for June 17 at 3 p.m. Agenda items to include 2021 season update, survey update, breakwater update, sustainability projects.

Ms. Powers asked when a ballot question would need to be ready for the November ballot. Ms. Graves said maybe August, but it will depend on what ordinance or policy the ballot question proposes to change.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT— 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Smith, with second by Mr. Hochman moved to adjourn. Roll Call Vote:

<u>Searchfield</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Salvatore</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Hochman</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Disney</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>McFarland</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Dougherty</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Cough</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Smith</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Sweet</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Kelly</u>	<u>Y</u>
<u>Motion passed 10-0.</u>	

Liz Graves, Interim Clerk