

French Creek Harbour News

Hello Lasquetians,

The Lasqueti Community Association (LCA) holds one seat on the Harbour Authority of French Creek Board of Directors. This past May, at the LCA AGM, Vic Downard stepped down as the LCA representative and I was appointed. I have attended a couple of Board meetings and reviewed various policies, plans, and reports and such as would be expected by a new Board member. Along the way I've learned a bit about the governance of the harbour and how that affects Lasqueti.

In brief a harbour authority is a non for profit locally oriented organization that exists for the management and maintenance of a harbour facility. The Federal Government continues ownership of the properties and is responsible for major maintenance. The Harbour Authority Association of B.C. website has more details in an readily accessible format. <http://www.haa.bc.ca>.

The majority of the Board of Directors are commercial fisher people, and the mandate of the harbour is that its primary purpose is to provide a fishing harbour. Other stakeholder groups such as recreational boaters and Lasquetians have Board seats and their "interests" must always be balanced with the needs and wants of the commercial fishing community.

Our community interacts with the Harbour in two major ways, as ferry passengers, and as boaters. French Creek is home to Lasqueti's Vancouver Island ferry terminal and long-term parking lot. Most of the concerns I've heard about the Harbour concern security in the parking area and the use of the float by others, especially at ferry times. I also heard concerns from many local boaters.

Parking area – I have heard anecdotally (lots of reports to me and to the harbour office) that gas theft is on the rise. It turns out that the security cameras are doing their job; they caught the culprit on tape. Unfortunately the culprit was doing their job too and they are unrecognizable in their hoodies.

If we want to have more RCMP presence in the harbour – maybe the Mounties are a better deterrent than cameras to the well cloaked – they must be made aware that theft from vehicles is an ongoing problem at the harbour. The best way to do that is to file a police report when your car is broken into, vandalized or gas is stolen.

Use of float – The drive on float is a shared facility. In addition to serving our ferry it also is used as a work float for boats undergoing minor and major repairs/overhauls and for fish sales.

For the most part it all works pretty well on the float, the work trucks tend to stay off to one side close to the boats being worked on and most Lasquetians tend not to dally with respect to getting on and off the float – which, of course, allows others to get on and off. Officially the rules are that there should never be more than four vehicles on the float and no vehicle, unless actively involved in work, should remain for more than ten minutes. Thankfully the rules are managed with some flexibility and things will likely continue this way providing everyone that uses the float is also flexible.

Sometimes things don't work as well as might be hoped. Stuff happens, people get in each other's way, and everyone gets grouchy. Please be patient, understand that the other users of the float have as much right to be there as the ferry users. Remember, it won't be the end of the earth if it takes five or ten minutes longer to load your stuff on the boat.

Lasqueti Boaters - Lasquetians that use the harbour as boaters have expressed concerns to me about moorage at the concrete floats, especially since the new signage and usage policies came into effect earlier this year. Transient boaters (Lasquetians fit that category) may use the concrete floats for loading and unloading. There are two areas, the end of the dock and right in front of the ferry spot that may be occupied, with the vessel operator in attendance, for up to one hour for the purpose of loading or unloading your boat. Boaters may also pre-book one of the spots reserved for work/fish sales. They need to contact the harbour office in advance and it costs \$10 per day, in addition to regular moorage, to have the spot for the day.

At the last Harbour Authority of French Creek meeting the Board voted to make additional moorage available to transient boaters. Until the end of September 2015 the last 21 m. (70') of float C, which is directly across from the concrete float, will be reserved for transient boat day use.

This float is on your left as you look out of the harbour, it is accessed through the gate that is between the drive on ramp and the harbour office. (Please note that this gate is locked at 5:30 p.m., you can arrange for a key card with the harbour office). There will be no overnight moorage allowed and rafting will be allowed to a maximum of 6 m. (20'). All boaters using this moorage will need to pay regular harbour day rates. The most cost effective way for occasional harbour users to pay their moorage is by advance paying for thirty days of punch card usage. This will result in a significant discount off individual per day payments. Please check with the harbour office if you are a Lasqueti boater using the harbour.

I'm happy to answer any questions I can and as well to hear anyone's concerns or thoughts about the harbour.

Regards,

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