

September 23, 2002
Keyport, New Jersey

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council, Borough of Keyport, held on the above date in the Keyport Central School All Purpose Room, Broad Street, Keyport, N.J. pursuant to the adoption of Resolution #298-02, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Notices were faxed to the Courier, Asbury Park Press, Independent and Two River Times and posted on the Bulletin Boards.

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 7:34 P.M. and read the Sunshine Law Notice.

ROLL CALL

On Roll Call the following were present: Councilmembers Bergen, Atkins, Merla, Hyer, Stalter. Others present: Wesley Kain, Borough Attorney, Harbor Commission Member John Fahey. Absent: Councilwoman Ashmore, Harbor Commission Members: Matthew Ferrano, Frank Fischler, Matthew Winchell and Catherine McLane.

DISCUSSION

1. **Ferry Service.** Mayor Graham said this meeting was called at the request of the Harbor Commission to give an update on the Keyport Fast Ferry Lease what is to come in the future. The end of the first year of the lease was June 2002. Mike Cummins, Fast Ferry, was asked to give an update on the status of service and the new boat. John Koenig, New York Fast Ferry and John Calasanti, Lighthouse Landing (parent company) were also in attendance. Mr. Cummins had a video and said the ferry is ready and on the way up from Mobile, Alabama. John Koenig said on October 15, 2001, one boat was provided and another boat was chartered. There have been up to 700 riders. The first year had some "growing pains", but all went well. In May, there were two boats chartered. There was an economic impasse to get the right equipment. Fishing Boats were brought in. The new ferry boat was scheduled to be in Keyport in July, but there were construction delays. A shipyard letter was received regarding what has been happening. Errors needed to be corrected. The boat is scheduled to leave this weekend from Mobile, Alabama and arrive next week. There is a Coast Guard zone inspection which will take one day. Mr. Koenig expects the new boat to be in service two weeks from today. The new boat is 85 feet long and will be dedicated to Keyport. The boat is from an Australian yard and was their first U.S. job. Mr. Cummins showed a video of the new boat. Anthony Colasanti, Lighthouse Fast Ferry, said boats were needed to charter after the 9-11 incident (the cost was \$60,000 vs. \$30,000); the west coast was searched, but they wanted a two year contract. A boat was located and a contract was done in March. July 4th the boat was in Mobile (sea trial). The boat yard had problems. They gave back two chartered vessels; a decision had to be made to give up the new boat or provide service (money has been lost). Fast Ferry has made a commitment to run. When the service started October 2001, there were under 700 riders. With the right boat, there will be over 1,000 riders; the boat will be totally committed to Keyport and a 2nd boat may as well.

The video showed the new boat; it draws 5 feet with speed of 29 knots (similar to the prior boat). Local businesses could be promoted on the boat. The air draft was lowered so the boat would be able to go under the bridge to get to Yankee Stadium. Mr. Bergen asked if there would be landside problems. Mr. Cummins said Fast Ferry learned as they went along; things came up and they worked through them. Mr. Bergen asked what the peak time was; Mr. Cummins said it dropped off when the boats had to be returned on April 15th. In the beginning no one knew about South Amboy. Mr. Bergen said South Amboy and the Ferry from Belford changed their plans. Mr. Koenig said Keyport was the best location; they never anticipated a large service in Keyport. Mr. Cummins said Keyport was a great location and he hopes to win patrons back. Mayor Graham asked how to get the word out on the new boat. Mr. Cummins said by word of mouth. There will be activities and events to celebrate the arrival of the new boat. There will be a ceremony. The ticket prices will remain the same. John Fahey, Harbor Commission, asked about Special events. Mr. Koenig said the events have not been announced yet (Yankee Stadium for play off games, West Point and foliage trips); they will "play it by ear". Mr. Fahey asked if Green Acres contacted Fast Ferry; no. Mr. Colisano

said they welcome trips for events, school class trips to museums (leave at 9 AM and return at 2 PM). Mr. Cummins said people who used the ferry not only went to work, but shopping and other events. Mr. Bergen asked about the parking situation; this past Friday, approval was received from the DEP. Mr. Fahey asked if there was a geo grid; yes. Mr. Bergen asked if they will use the bus; Mr. Cummins said it depends on the ridership. Mr. Bergen asked if the riders were the same as last year or if there were more riders this year; it has not been figured out yet. Mayor Graham asked once the ferry is up and running, did they plan to finish the West Front Street Parking lot according to plan; yes. The Mayor asked if permits or funds held them up; funds. Mr. Fahey asked if the trips were 5:50 and 8 AM now; run 6 AM and 7:30-7:40 AM. There are three trips; the 8:40 AM is run with the Highlands boat. Mr. Merla asked about the ridership at 8:40; it can hold 300 passengers. Mr. Koenig said there are 50-100 riders. Three runs will be made with the Keyport boat. Last year there were three morning runs and four back. Mr. Bergen asked that they keep the landside smooth.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Meeting was opened to the public at 8:04 P.M. John Olsen asked about cars in the lot. Mr. Cummins said he did not count; approximately 200. Mr. Olsen said there were 39 Borough spaces provided and the lot at West Front and Beers Streets holds 200 cars. There is an employee who handles valet parking morning and night (11 rows, 5 cars deep). Mr. Cummins was not sure what the amount of people were. Mitchell Meyerson asked how the bulkhead project would impact the ferry service. Mr. Cummins said he supposed the construction would start at one end and work its way down. The pier would be effected, but a temporary walkway could be installed; parking will not be effected. Mr. Olsen asked what happens if the boat is out of service; the Highlands boat would be brought in (the boat is kept in Highlands). Wade Pedersen asked if there are 700 riders and that could increase to 1,000 are there alternate plans to not use the Fishing Pier and wouldn't there be an advantage if there were a permanent mooring. Mr. Cummins said that it would be the best idea to have a permanent mooring, but he does not know the mean low water line at the bulkhead. Mr. Pedersen said the objective should be to remove the service from the pier. Mr. Koenig said if there is a spot and enough water, the ferry could bow up to the bulkhead. Mr. Bergen asked if the Harbor Commission did surveys regarding fishing. Mr. Fahey said other than normal swabbles, not much. Mr. Pedersen said where the boat sits is the prime area to fish; people are forced to fish inland. Mr. Cummins said shade promotes fish. Mr. Bergen asked if people could fish off of the barge; no, there are risks. Andrew Willner said there is animosity by the fishermen and there are concerns about public amenity. Access should be granted to the area at certain times of the day and safety measures provided. Public access to the waterfront is an issue (comport with Green Acres). Mr. Cummins said he will respond back; insurance is an issue. Mr. Merla asked Mr. Fahey if the Harbor Commission has had feedback from fishermen that Captain John has not been out seven days per week; no, he has not heard anything. Mr. Merla said there are people who still fish off of the pier. Mr. Fahey said the pier has been crowded. Mr. Merla said people also fish off of the bulkhead. Mr. Hyer said he had two questions regarding Captain John two months ago; where the boat is (only there on weekends). Mr. Merla said Captain John had some concerns regarding the Bulkhead Project. Mr. Fahey said access is needed and it will have to be provided. Mr. Cummins said the barge is mobile and can be moved (the contractor should be advised). Sandra Shevlin asked if this October would be two years for the lease; no, the lease is one year with a one year renewal. People are upset that the ferry is not running; no one noticed any problems when the Ferry was running (there have not been any complaints). Fishermen have the privilege of fishing off the pier; revenue has been generated. Kenneth Schwartz said everyone who has spoken tonight has made sense. Everyone is agreeable and has made compromises. Mr. Schwartz said he cares about the environment and as a businessman he saw the Ferry as an investment (if it did not work out for the residents). Holmdel residents want to move to Keyport. Residents would not get a return investment on their homes. The Ferry gave people hope that things would happen in Keyport; equity in homes will increase.

The Ferry brings people into Keyport. David Vickery said the fear was that the ferry was going to leave Keyport; it is a challenge to keep it going. Mr. Merla said people decided to invest. Mr. Cummins came into Keyport and the Ferry has to be committed to the businesses; the newspaper stands are an eyesore and takes money from the businesses. FEMA is being given \$2.5 million per month to use the New York Waterway; it was asked if they get any help. Mr. Colisano was told they qualify for FEMA and at the end of May Fast Ferry was supposed to be reimbursed (no money has been received to date). Mr. Colisano said within the next 30-60 days a meeting will be held to plan trips. Mr. Cummins said there is FEMA money out there for Keyport's Ferry terminal. Mr. Koenig said this is a guise to replace PATH Service. NY Waterways has provided service and will continue to until the PATH goes back on line. There is other money Keyport could go after and there is an application for Keyport. Mr. Merla said he met with Jamie Fox of the DOT to get a sense of support. The Ferry is an asset when looking for grants. Mr. Koenig said there is a real downtown in Keyport and businesses are counting on the Ferry. Fast Ferry is waiting to get going again; it will be heart warming. Mr. Hyer said last year, Mr. Cummins approached the school's First and Second grade classes for an essay on why free trips should be given on the Ferry and then things went "downhill". Mr. Cummins said he hoped there would be future riders. Mr. Koenig said the boat has room for more passengers and they will donate tickets to various organizations. Michael Rigelli asked if the ridership will come back. They went to South Amboy and are eagerly awaiting Fast Ferry's return. Mr. Rigelli said he services fishermen and it has been a banner year for fishing; he has not heard any grouching. He said riders will compete for seats on the 7:40 AM run (there won't be time). Mr. Koenig said three runs are needed. Highlands carries more passengers at 6 AM; ridership is spread out amongst three runs (people arrive at least ½ hour before departure). Between 5-8AM spots are being coned off, people are unsure about parking and something should be done to advise them. Mr. Cummins said Steve Reed is there every day and cones off the spaces to make sure. Mr. Pedersen said spots were suppose to be painted different colors. Mr. Merla said Captain Dayback should be contacted about traffic safety matters. Mitchell Meyerson asked if the lot is used for the fair; yes, and everyone should benefit from it. Andrew Willner asked about Planning Board requirements and asked if there was a time when Fast Ferry is to report back on progress. Mr. Cummins said they are trying to get the service going; DEP permits were received. Steve Reed said he is a Keyport resident and he is at the waterfront 4:30-8:30 AM to address any problems and to talk with everyone. Fishing was great this year. Alan Deeken asked if the Boat will say "Keyport"; Hailing will be changed to Keyport. Kathleen Shaw said BID has an open dialog and the new logo will be on the boat. Fast Ferry was wished all the best and everyone is in it together to benefit Keyport. The Meeting was closed to the public at 8:55 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn moved by Mr. Merla, seconded by Mrs. Atkins with Ayes by all present.

Time of Adjournment: 8:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Judith L. Poling Janc
Judith L. Poling, RMC/CMC
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Allyson M. Cinquegrana
per Allyson M. Cinquegrana, RMC
Deputy Borough Clerk

