

CITY OF MACKINAC ISLAND

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING WITH HOFFMAN MARINE & SHEPLER'S FERRY

Wednesday, August 28, 2024 at 3:30 PM

City Hall – Council Chambers, 7358 Market St., Mackinac Island, Michigan

I. Call to Order

Mayor Doud called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm

II. Roll Call

PRESENT

Richard Chambers
Tom Corrigan
Steven Moskwa

Anneke Myers
Alan Sehoan
Jason St. Onge

V. Correspondence

- Email from Susan Odgers regarding ADA compliance of Shepler's boats
 - Mayor Doud noted that the City does not have jurisdiction over boats and their compliance. Shepler's is a private company and has to adhere to US Coast Guard regulations.

Motion made by Moskwa, Seconded by Sehoan, to direct the letter to Hoffman Marine for further follow up.

Voting Yea: Chambers, Corrigan, Moskwa, Myers, Sehoan, St. Onge

VII. New Business

- Discussion regarding plans for Labor Day weekend ferry services
 - US Coast Guard (USCG) inspections for Mackinac Island Ferry Company (MIFC) boats Joliet and Cadillac scheduled for Thursday
 - The Joliet was put in the water today and new cracks were found
 - USCG needs to determine what further work is needed
 - Next step will be to maneuver all boats to all docks / ramps to figure out compatibility - Ryba Dock or Shepler's docks
 - At this point Shepler's does not have clarity from USCG on if the boats are ready for passenger service, and they do not know where the boats will be compatible with for docking.
 - Still actively working with the USCG to get the boats certified
 - Joliet sits higher than all Shepler boats so need to see if the ramp hydraulics at the Shepler dock can go high enough
 - Councilman St. Onge commented that Shepler's already knows that the Joliet will fit at the MIFC docks, so why not just run it from there?
 - Jason Wiley of Shepler's Ferry responded that using the MIFC docks comes down to possible operational issues - need to make sure traffic can be safely directed between the docks. Communication becomes an issue if using another dock.
 - Mr. Wiley met with Dennis Dombroski, Misty from the Bicycle Street Inn, Pete Deckert, and Todd Callewaert to discuss staging people waiting in line on the Ryba dock
 - Plan is to stop the line at the head of the Shepler's dock, then have staff to direct people down to the alleyway to MIFC Ryba Dock (between Ryba's Fudge and VanDusen's), to alleviate people waiting on the sidewalk.
 - All parties involved in this discussion were in agreement to this plan
 - Councilman Chambers noted the further cracks in Joliet, and inquired if there had been any further issues encountered with the Cadillac?
 - Mr. Wiley responded that they were waiting on the USCG inspection on Thursday to see if any further issues were found
 - Councilwoman Myers inquired when Shepler's planned to implement their staging strategy
 - Mr. Wiley responded that he had just spoke with the group mentioned before today, but would like to begin implementing this idea as soon as possible. Shepler's will need to start a new daily routine with their employees to implement this process and get guests used to it

- Councilman Moskwa commented that he saw lines down to the Library this past weekend and noted that it will only get busier. People are worried about wait times to get on the boat
- Mayor Doud noted that if the lines become a problem, she gave Chris Shepler permission to stage waiting guests on Windermere Point
- Chief Gruists noted that he has been updated on the Shepler's plan for the weekend,
 - He has also been offered additional assistance from the Fire Department, and the Police Department will have extra officers on for the weekend
- Ira Green inquired why Shepler's was not using the MIFC Main Dock
- Councilman Moskwa inquired if there were any updates on the main dock
 - Mr. Wiley replied that he has no updates on the Main Dock yet, it will be addressed at the regular Council meeting on September 4th meeting
 - Not using the Main Dock for the safety and welfare of the guests. Many repairs that need to happen to the dock.
- Discussion regarding the Shepler's schedule after October 6th
 - Mr. Wiley noted that, during this time frame, Shepler's typically paired their schedule down to run every hour throughout the day. Looking to take all of MIFC's departures and adding to the Shepler's schedule, which turns in to running to every half hour from October 7th through October 27th.
 - If needed on the weekends, will run every 15 minutes
 - October 26th, foot race day, will be adding 8:15, 9:15, and 10:15 boat to accommodate larger amounts of people
 - After October 27th shifting to run every hour out of both ports
 - Councilwoman Myers asked to discuss the schedule presented for October 28th through October 31st
 - Departing every hour with the last boat leaving the Island at 5:00 pm and the last boat leaving the mainland at 4:30 pm
 - The originally approved schedule from MIFC has later boats to both ports – 5:30pm and 6:00 pm - and the Council would like to see Shepler's stick to that schedule, especially since that was what the community was anticipating as most of them ride MIFC
 - Councilman St. Onge and Councilman Sehoyan both agreed
 - Councilman St. Onge noted that he felt that when the Council approved the suspension of MIFC, that it was the understanding that all MIFC trips would be adopted by Shepler's to cover the originally presented and approved trips
 - Councilman Moskwa noted that these later boats make a huge difference to those who are commuting to the island for work
 - Mr. Wiley responded that Shepler's has no problem adding the 5:30 pm departure from both mainland ports and the 6:00 pm departure from the Island for October 28th through October 31st
 - Councilwoman Myers noted further concerns about the employers who will have larger groups of employees leaving during this time and getting that coordinated along with the regular departing guests
 - Keep in mind that people will most likely not want to sit on the top deck at this time and that there will be a lot of luggage
 - Councilman St. Onge suggested the possibility of utilizing the Anna May at this time due to the larger amount of luggage and carts that will be leaving with the departing employees
 - Councilman Moskwa noted that we should be asking the Island businesses to coordinate the trips for these larger groups with Shepler's so that they can arrange for any additional trips needed
 - Mr. Wiley asked that businesses contact Shepler's administration offices to coordinate departures of larger groups of employees so that they are able to ensure a smooth departure
 - Possibly work through Tim Hygh of the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau to communicate with the employers the need to communicate larger groups of departing employees with Shepler's

- Schedule for October 7th through October 27th
 - Based on the schedule originally approved for MIFC, the last boat to the Island on Fridays and Saturdays was 7:00 pm and the last boat leaving the Island was 7:30 pm
 - Shepler's most recently presented schedule shows the last departure on Fridays and Saturdays as 6:30 pm from the mainland ports and 7:00 pm from the Island. Council would like to see the 7:00 pm mainland departures and 7:30 pm Island departure time adhered to
 - Councilwoman Myers noted that this would cover what this Council had already approved for transportation for the 2024 season
 - Mr. Wiley responded that for October 7th through October 27th, Shepler's would have no problem adding the 7:00 pm mainland departures and the 7:30 pm Island departure for Friday's and Saturday's
 - Would like to keep Mackinaw City and St. Ignace schedules the same (no later boats to and from Mackinaw City like there used to be)
- Discussion regarding miscellaneous ferry boat matters
 - Mayor Doud noted that the Council and Shepler's will discuss winter service at the regular Council meeting on September 4th.
 - Know this is a concern and it will be addressed. Working very hard with Shepler's to make sure there is a reliable winter service. It is very unfortunate that Jerry Fetty did not take care of the MIFC assets, especially the Huron, but that is what we have to work with at this time.
 - Councilman St. Onge commented that this Council needs to work on the here and now, not on the then. It is unfortunate that MIFC left us the City and the residents in a lurch, but the Hoffman company is who decided to grab the ball and run with it.
 - Councilwoman Myers reminded Shepler's that the third-party ticket language they have published was never approved by Council and Shepler's needs to continue accepting those tickets
 - Councilman Moskwa noted that this is not the best situation, not one we thought we would find ourselves in, but that we appreciate the effort that Shepler's is putting in, however the City and residents need more answers
 - Councilman Corrigan pointed out continued operational issues - people have been complaining about shipping over unattended small freight items. They are being told by Shepler's employees that they will be charged \$40.00, with some actually being charged the fee if they still choose to send over the items.
 - Per what was previously agreed upon, there should either be no charge or the charge should be \$4.95 per item up to 100 pounds
 - Mr. Wiley agreed with this and noted that Shepler's will continue to work with their employees on this. This is a pressing matter and we will get a handle on it.
 - Mr. Wiley proposed that Shepler's could come up with some language regarding the shipping process and prices and will send it to council for approval before publishing – just like we did previously for the parking and pass trade in
 - Once approved, this can be published by Shepler's and the City

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by Myers, second to the motion by Sehoan, to adjourn the meeting 4:04 pm.

Ayes: Chambers, Corrigan, Moskwa, Myers, Sehoan, St. Onge