

Hello James, Val, the Town Council, and the Planning Board.

Thank you for the informative session the other night. I am one of many residents who have felt that past town councils were only interested in lower main street and the business community. Unfortunately, it took the Citizens Initiative to get us to a point where we can openly discuss impactful issues regarding cruise ships. Hopefully this sort of openness will continue with other hurdles. It's refreshing to see that our current town council and town manager are welcoming input from all parties.

My opinions in this letter are mine alone. I apologize for its length, but urge you to read it in its entirety. Hopefully you find the information and opinions helpful.

It's important to remember why the residents of Bar Harbor passed the Citizens Initiative. It's also important to understand that the initiative was not meant to ban cruise ships. Additionally, the narrative that many of us didn't know what we were voting for is false and insulting. Below are direct statements taken from the executive summary of the 2021 Cruise Ship Survey. These statements are referred to a lot and represent the primary cruise ship issues that Bar Harbor faces and is attempting to resolve (Too many passengers disembarking causing congestion, too many cruise ships, too many days with cruise ships, and too many busses to move the passengers around).

Across all three questions that asked about the overall impact of cruise ship tourism in Bar Harbor, somewhat more than half of respondents indicated that the impact was negative, overall:

- 55% of respondents indicated that they perceive cruise ship tourism as more negative than positive for Bar Harbor, while 35% indicated that they perceive it as more positive than negative.
- 53% of respondents rated the impact of cruise-ship tourism on the quality of life for Bar Harbor residents as negative overall, while 26% rated the impact as more positive, overall.
- 55% of respondents feel that cruise ship tourism detracts, overall, from the image and attraction of Bar Harbor, while 27% feel that cruise ship tourism enhances the image and attraction, overall.
- 63% of respondents feel that the 2019 cruise ship season included too many days with cruise ships, while 66% feel that the average number of cruise ship passengers was "too many" in 2019.

Going forward, when negotiating with all parties about cruise ship topics, I encourage you to think about the above percentages a little differently than the percentages against cruise ships. If read as the percentages of how many respondents are for cruise ships first, a more accurate interpretation of what the above statements actually mean will become apparent.

- 35% indicated that they perceive it as more positive than negative
- 26% rated the impact as more positive, overall.
- 27% feel that cruise ship tourism enhances the image and attraction, overall.

Only 26-35% of Bar Harbor respondents felt cruise ships in any form are a good thing. That is a pretty small segment of our population. Based on the survey everyone else has some level of issue with cruise ships ranging from indifference, to somewhat negative, to over 53% purely negative impact.

Why 1,000 passengers? I've been asking myself that question. A lot. I feel the authors of the initiative did too. What number of passengers disembarking from a ship falls within the desired outcome of:

1. Fewer passengers overwhelming our streets
2. Smaller, fewer cruise ships
3. Fewer days with cruise ships
4. Smaller or fewer busses for passenger transportation

I'm lucky to be married to an accountant/auditor who in my opinion is a genius with numbers. We started looking at the sizes of ships, numbers of passengers (attempted to obtain full capacity not just lower berth numbers), what days each ship anchored, total passengers per day, crew sizes, total anchorages for each ship, yearly passenger totals and more.

For the purpose of this letter I asked her for data on the 2019 bookings and anchorages. In short, you will see that there were:

- 14 different ships with 1,000 or less passengers anchored 64 times for a total of 16,261 passengers disembarking.
- 4 different ships with 1,001-1,500 passengers anchored 37 times for a total of 51,334 passengers disembarking.
- 4 different ships with 1,501-2000 passengers anchored 11 times for a total of 21,100 passengers disembarking.
- 6 different ships with 2,001-2,500 passengers anchored 28 times for a total of 60,840 passengers disembarking. (the largest ship in this class was 2,394 passengers)

Not included are ships larger than 2,500 passengers or other data because, (true or untrue) there is a rumor that the council is attempting to negotiate daily limits of 2,000 for path # 2 and the other data isn't relevant to what I'm attempting to point out. The 2,001-2,500 ships are included because several of them have low 2,000s capacity numbers and potentially could anchor.

Looking at the numbers and actually being in town when different size ships are anchored lead me to believe that cruise ships of less than 1,000 are the only ones that can fit the 4 desired outcome criteria listed above. I also believe the Citizens Initiative creators might have felt the same way. Possibly thinking that with 14 different ships there would be a possible opportunity for increased anchorages of the smaller ships. A consistent smaller amount of people over more days is much preferable then periodic large masses swarming around town. There are roughly 220 days available for cruise ship anchorages and I hear from just about every councilor that I've spoken to that we could end up with a cruise ship every day. If that happens, it happens. That will be a potential for 220,000 passengers. I bet the **35%** segment of our population would be very happy with that.

If the council seeks to negotiate a larger number of passengers, I urge that it not be any more than 1,500 per day. Even with 1,500 passengers there will be significant crowding of our streets and significant bus traffic. If 2,000 passengers are negotiated, the ships (10 from the 2019 count) in that range class all carry passengers close to the 2,000 number (1,750-2,394 passengers) and historically anchored very often.

There's a point where the number of passengers disembarking hits a saturation point. I don't know what that number is, but it's less than 2,000. I think with numbers above 1,500 per day we will not feel any less overcrowding and congestion pressure than we have in the past.

Example:

06/13/2024 Norwegian Gem maximum guest 2,394. Based on a comment made by Eben Salvatore during a town council meeting that “not all passengers disembark the ship”, let’s assume roughly 2,000 passengers disembarked. West Street was almost not navigable, lower Main Street was swamped with people wandering all over the place, the rest of the town was packed, and a significant number of valuable parking spaces were blocked.

Remember. The primary things the residents are concerned about are the over crowding of our town from large masses of people entering Bar Harbor from cruise ships and the street congestion caused by transporting them.

Any considerations for higher numbers of disembarkation should have the following conditions.

- Only arrive weekdays- Monday to Thursday (Except Monday holidays)
Weekends are busy enough. We shouldn’t be adding to the crowds with additional people from cruise ships. This would also benefit businesses during the week in the slower shoulder seasons.
- No ships on holiday weekends, holidays or days around to holidays.
It’s been repeated over and over that Bar Harbor does not allow cruise ships on holidays. However, cruise ships are allowed to disembark on days surrounding the holidays. This is often when the town is extremely busy.

Examples:

Memorial Day weekend 2024 -

1 ship with 1,432 passengers on 5/24 (Friday)
and 1 ship with 1,432 passengers on 5/26
(Sunday).

4th of July 2024 (Probably the busiest weekend in Bar Harbor) 1 ship 7/3 (Wednesday) with 100 passengers,
1 ship 7/5 (Friday) with 1,432 passengers, 1 ship 7/6 (Saturday) with 109 passengers 1 ship 7/7 (Sunday) with 1,432 passengers.

- Mandatory counts of passengers and significant fines for overages; with the possibility of revoking disembarkation for repeat offenders. Basically, the same as the initiative with the added revocation.

Additional points and suggestions that should be considered for any talks with the cruise ship industry and its partners going forward.

- Monitor parking spaces used and charge the land-based tour groups per space for the maximum daily charge. I counted 30 parking spaces one time being tied up with bus/tour parking or blocked for GEM cars.

*The above statement might be done already. Be it through the disembarkation fees or other fees. However, if it is paid for by the disembarkation fees it shouldn’t be. The loss of parking space fees should not come out of the town disembarkation fees. It should come out of the pocket of whomever is using the spaces.

- All tour busses should be required to apply and pay for a yearly certificate of operation license rated at a cost/day fee to operate in town. Again, some form of this might be in place now, but if not, it will help to offset the damage the bus traffic is causing on Bar Harbor's infrastructure.
- Cruise ship disembarkation fees should be at least equal to land-based parking fees. I attempted to obtain the number of \$2.00 spaces and the number of \$4.00 spaces there are, but nobody that I contacted knows those numbers. I was told there are roughly 900 total spots and the town will perform an audit and publish those numbers.

For the sake of my point let's assume all the parking spaces in town are \$2.00 per hour, and each car parks for 8 hours. With those assumptions there is a potential for Bar Harbor to receive

\$14,400 per day in gross parking revenue based on all spaces being \$2.00 per hour. (The actual number is probably closer to \$22,400, because in all likelihood more than ½ of the spots are \$4.00.)

Now, let's assume every car parked has 2 occupants and parks for 8 hours. They would pay

\$16.00 for that parking spot. So effectively, each vehicle that parks in Bar Harbor is paying a

\$16.00 daily entrance fee to enter Bar Harbor. Or \$8.00 per person per day based on double occupancy of the vehicle. (and potentially up to \$12.00 per person if counting \$4.00 spaces). Whereas each person disembarking a cruise ship only pays roughly \$5.50 per person for the same privilege. 2,618 (4,072 if counting the \$4.00 spaces) passengers would have to disembark **every day** all season long to equal the potential income from paid parking. Talk about fundamentally unfair, the land-based tourism is paying potentially over 2 times the amount of fees collected from cruise-based tourism in Bar Harbor. The disembarkation fee needs to be more in line with the land-based parking fees.

I appreciate you taking the time understand my

perspective. Guy D unphey