A FERRY FINE COMMUTE

ITEM PHOTO BY SPENSER HASAK
James Connolly of Nahant braves the wind to enjoy the great views that the Lynn Ferry has to offer during its first trip of the year on Tuesday.

BY MATT DEMIRS/LYNN ITEM
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LYNN — Mother Nature cleared the skies just in time for the ferry’s first trip to Boston in two years. Commuters seeking alternatives to the MBTA and Lynway traffic expressed gratitude Tuesday for the return of the shuttle after service was cancelled last summer.

About 60 passengers boarded Cetacea, the Boston Harbor Cruises boat, for its 2017 debut, many of them former ferry users.

“I’m so thrilled it is back in Lynn,” said Sheila Ercolini. “My favorite part about it is being on the water.”

She boarded the ferry, climbed to the second level, and took her seat, the same place she’s sat since the first ride three years ago.

Ercolini, who works just steps away from the dock in Boston, said she rides the ferry for its convenience and couldn’t have been happier to get back on board.

This season’s inaugural departure coincided with Sail Boston 2017, the largest fleet of tall ships in Boston Harbor since 2000, which brought out Lynn resident Linda Berg to catch the spectacle.

“Sometimes, you forget what goes on when you live so close to Boston,” said Berg. “Then you don’t usually end up doing these things.”

Nahant resident Michael Rauworth, who regularly rode the ferry to work during its two years of operation in 2014 and 2015, took to the seas with his binoculars to get a glimpse at the Tall Ships.

Carly Famulari, also of Nahant, said she boarded to avoid the traffic to Boston where she works.

“I’d rather do this than drive,” she said. “I plan on taking it at least once a week. At least I can avoid the traffic, especially coming home on Fridays when it takes almost double the amount of time to get home.”
Robin Ennis hopped on the ferry after spotting the traffic on the Lynnway from an accident on the General Edwards Bridge.

“When I hit the Lynnway this morning I said, ‘Thank God for the ferry,’” she said.

Some passengers who buy the monthly commuter rail pass from the MBTA were disappointed the ticket was not accepted as payment for the ferry.

Jacquelyn Goddard, a spokeswoman for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), said the ferry is not an MBTA service. It is operated by the city of Lynn through a MassDOT grant and the Boston Harbor Cruises, she said.

State Sen. Thomas M. McGee who has championed the ferry, said it’s unfortunate the T pass is not accepted. “But the most important thing right now is to give people the access to the boat,” he said. “It’s great to have it back on the water in Lynn.”

Judy McManus took the ferry instead of her usual subway ride. The accountant in Boston calculated the price of riding the ferry compared to paying for parking at Wonderland Station and riding the Blue Line into Boston.

McManus discovered the ferry cost 92 cents more than the T, which, she said can’t be passed up when you have the chance to ride the waves to work.

Stefan Wuensch of Lynn used the ride to test an app called MotionX-GPS on his iPhone. He learned the maximum speed of the ferry was 32 miles per hour with an average speed of 19 and it travelled 14 miles, according to the app. It took about 40 minutes for the ferry to arrive in Boston.

Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy said she was pleased Gov. Charlie Baker provided funding for the ferry to make one trip a day to Boston and back.

“While these stops will benefit only a small number of people during its three months of operation, I am hopeful it will ease traffic congestion caused by the Sumner Tunnel maintenance project,” the mayor said in a statement.

Prices have stayed the same at $7 per one-way ticket for an adult and $3.50 for seniors and children. The ferry departs from the Boston Street Extension at 7:45 a.m., arriving in Long Wharf at 8:20 a.m., and one evening return from Boston at 6 p.m., arriving in Lynn at 6:35 p.m.

The ferry is scheduled to run Monday-Friday until September 22.

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