



For Immediate Release

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Formal Talks on Cleveland-to-Canada Ferry Service Could Soon Begin

February 16, 2011 – Local officials in Central Elgin, Ontario have agreed to begin formal discussions with the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority regarding the launch of a ferry service between Port Stanley and Cleveland.

On Monday the Central Elgin Council passed a resolution that supports further discussions with Cleveland port officials. Central Elgin is the governing authority over Port Stanley. Talks between the municipality and Port Authority are now expected to accelerate.

“Central Elgin Council is enthusiastic about looking at the potential benefits that a Lake Erie ferry may create,” said Central Elgin Mayor Bill Walters. “We don’t know yet if this new ferry concept is the right fit for our area, but we owe it to our residents and businesses to fully investigate this concept. We will be seeking public input before making any decisions.”

Port Authority CEO Will Friedman reopened discussions with Canadian officials about the ferry service last fall. The service had been contemplated for years, but did not materialize, in part because the Canadian government had not completed a long-awaited transfer of the waterfront property to local control.

With that issue resolved, and after preliminary discussions with Cleveland port representatives in recent months, Mayor Walters recommended this week to council to have more serious discussions about establishing a pilot program of cross-lake ferry service.

“We are delighted the Central Elgin officials want to discuss this potentially exciting opportunity,” Friedman said. “We believe there is interest on both sides of the lake for this service now, and we see that interest only growing in the next several years with construction of several major developments in Cleveland, including a casino.”

Recent discussions have lead to a shift in thinking about the ferry service and the type of vessel that would be used. While the service was initially conceived of as a freighter/truck-driven service,

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a pilot program would likely focus on tourism and recreation, with truck traffic a smaller part of the mix. In addition a smaller vessel capable of traveling at faster speeds would likely be used.

Friedman said HMS Global Maritime of New Albany, Ind. has expressed interest in exploring the possibility of operating the higher-speed ferry service. Mayor Walters said he looks forward to learning more about the potential service.