

**VERO BEACH AIRPORT COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Friday, January 20, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.**  
**City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Louis (Buck) Vocelle, Chairman; Carlos Halcomb, Vice Chairman; Members: Arthur Hodge, Carole Jean Jordan, Joseph “Danny” Markford, Alternate Member, Stephen Kepley and Alternate Member, Philip Canal **Also Present:** Airport Director Todd Scher; City Attorney, John Turner and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called today’s meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) September 16, 2022**

**Mr. Halcomb made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2022 Airport Commission meeting. Mr. Hodge seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, explained that he will take the gavel and do the Election of Chairman and then pass the gavel back to the Chairman to continue the meeting.

**A) Chairman**

Mr. Turner opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

**Mr. Hodge nominated Mr. Buck Vocelle for Chairman. Mrs. Jordan seconded the nomination.**

Mr. Turner asked if there were any other nominations. With none being heard the nomination was closed.

**Mr. Buck Vocelle was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Airport Commission.**

**B) Vice-Chairman**

Mr. Vocelle opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Airport Commission.

**Mrs. Jordan nominated Mr. Arthur Hodge for Vice-Chairman. Mr. Halcomb seconded the nomination.**

Mr. Vocelle asked for any other nominations. With no other nominations being heard he closed the nomination.

**Mr. Arthur Hodge was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman of the Airport Commission.**

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Vocelle opened the floor for public comment. With no one wishing to speak, he closed public comment.

#### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

None

#### **6. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Vocelle stated that he does not see it listed under the Airport Director's matters so he would like to know what is happening with the proposed Aviation Museum on Aviation Boulevard.

Mr. Todd Scher, Airport Director, explained that parcel 17 became available in the same area as their original location. The Museum Board has indicated that parcel 17 is their new desired location and they gave the Airport a letter of intent to lease the property. The Board also rescinded their letter of intent for the original parcels, which were 18 and 19.

Mr. Vocelle asked what is the proposed timeline.

Mr. Scher replied that they are still in the lease negotiation stage.

#### **7. AIRPORT DIRECTOR'S MATTERS**

##### **A) Update on Airline Service**

Mr. Scher announced that Breeze Airways will be starting their service at the Airport in about two (2) weeks. The Airport had to upgrade their security program from the supporting program to the complete program. The complete security program is the same as all of the big carrier airports have in place across the county, so they are implementing the Airports security features and protocols to match. They have received approval for the written portion of the complete program, which took many hours on the phone with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This week the TSA inspectors are doing physical inspections of the facilities. They are on track to be ready to go by the time Breeze Airways starts service here.

Mr. Vocelle asked if he could educate them on the differences in the two (2) security levels.

Mr. Scher replied that he cannot say too much, because a lot of it is security sensitive information. He explained that under the current program the security elements are only

in place around the air carrier operations area of the Airport. Under the complete program the security procedures cover the entire perimeter of the Airport property, every access point, and every tenant that has access to the airfield. He said some people were not regulated in the past, such as the flight schools but now they will go through the process of getting badges. Some other changes will affect the pilots who fly into the Airport to go to C.J. Cannon's Restaurant. They will no longer be allowed to walk from the ramp right to the restaurant. They will have to go through Sun Aviation and they will be escorted to and from their plane.

Mr. Vocelle asked if Sun Aviation is going to provide that service for free.

Mr. Scher replied that they have been doing it for free, but they could have been charging for that all along. He explained that they are doing some changes to Sun Aviation's lease by taking one (1) parcel off and adding another parcel on.

Mr. Canal asked if people going through Sun Aviation are required to sign in and out as they pass through.

Mr. Scher replied no. Sun Aviation verifies who they are and what plane they are going to. Most people flying in are coming from another airport and they have their badge with their credentials available, so they can go back out to their plane without an escort.

Mr. Halcomb asked Mr. Scher how he feels about what is happening with Breeze Airways in regards to the terminal building and ramp space and are they planning on expanding.

Mr. Scher reported that Breeze Airways has already provided the City with a drawing account, so they have funds in place. They also submitted a complete insurance package, which is being review by Risk Management. He explained that the operations of Breeze Airways will be different than what Elite Airways flight schedule was. Breeze Airways will fly in with passengers, unload them and their luggage and then reload departing passengers and fly right back out again. The TSA requested that they separate the incoming passengers and their baggage from the outbound passengers and luggage. They worked out a temporary arrangement where the incoming passengers will exit through the gate where they will be directed to an outdoor baggage claim area under a tent and then they will exit the Airport through C.J. Cannon's lobby. Per a request from C.J. Cannon's Restaurant, the City amended their lease to remove the two (2) banquet rooms. The City's intention is to turn that space into an indoor baggage claim, with restrooms and car rental kiosks. He does not see them being able to use this area for about 12 to 18 months while it is being renovated, but it will be a more pleasant experience for the arriving passengers when it is done. They are also looking at some type of snack or sandwich cart in the TSA's secured area for the departing passengers.

Mr. Scher reported that Elite Airways stated that they were going to start service again in the first quarter of 2023, but they have not seen anything to indicate they are moving in that direction. They are still delinquent and as far as they know they still do not have insurance, which is required per the City Ordinance.

Mr. Hodge asked if there is any set time frame that Elite would not be allowed to return.

Mr. Scher stated that he does not believe there is a timeline, so as long as they do not owe the City money and they can provide insurance documentation they can reestablish service here.

Mr. Turner stated that Elite Airways cannot use the facilities while they are delinquent.

Mr. Vocelle asked if there was any information on the number of bookings expected by Breeze Airways.

Mr. Scher replied that Breeze Airways stated that the numbers were more robust than they expected, but they did not reply with a figure.

Mrs. Jordan said she understands that Elite Airways still has outstanding fuel bills. She asked if they have any idea on the amount.

Mr. Scher replied he does not know that figure.

Mr. Turner explained to the Commission members how a drawing account works for the airlines using the Airport. He said that Elite Airways used up all their money in their drawing account and they did not replenish it, so they really don't owe anything. In order to use the facilities they have to be current with their drawing account to cover about three (3) months.

## **B) Update on Airport Leasing Team Activities**

Mr. Scher reported that the leasing team is very busy and there are multiple leasing issues in progress and the demand for property remains very high. He explained that Diversified Aviation is proposing to develop some property in the infield. However, that property is height limited because of the site visibility from the control tower to the north taxiway. Diversified Aviation is working with Hanson Professionals in designing a layout that will not interfere with the sight from the tower. It will be a multiple hangar complex with the taller buildings being closer to the tower. Diversified Aviation initially asked for a longer term for their lease, which was longer than the City was comfortable with, but now they are looking at a more traditional 40-year lease. Diversified Aviation will also develop the infrastructure in the infield as part of their development.

Mr. Scher said another interesting lease is with Skyports Infrastructure for the potential operation of electric vertical takeoff and landing (EVTOL) aircrafts. This new technology involves vertical takeoffs and landings, similar to a helicopter. They are looking at a parcel in between Piper Aircraft and Skyborne Airline Academy to develop a commercial terminal to operate their EVTOL aircraft. Not only is this new technology, but it is also new in the terms of the airspace requirements.

Mr. Halcomb asked Mr. Scher if they have shown him any types of EVTOL's that they will be using and are they piloted or unpiloted.

Mr. Scher said what he has seen has been piloted. He believes the intent within the industry is that once they are flying the technology will determine what their business model might be.

Mr. Scher continued reporting on the potential for additional single airplane hangars on the north ramp area as well as their work on lease inspections to make sure customers are living up to their lease requirements.

### **C) Airport Director's Report & Project Key**

Mr. Scher gave an update on some of the capital projects from his report (attached to the original minutes.)

Mr. Scher reported that the draft inventory and forecast report for the Master Plan has been delivered to the Airport staff. When the inventory of the Airport property and their forecast for future needs is completed it will be submitted to the FAA who will have 30 days to review it.

Mr. Scher explained that they were directed by the FAA to submit a corrective action plan for the Citrus Village Mobile Home Park and that plan was submitted yesterday. They put what they intend to do in the plan and if the FAA does not like it they can move on from there. They plan to remove the Mobile Home Park property from the Airport Master Plan, but it will still be managed by the Airport and they will still receive revenue from it. In the plan, they requested that the Airport be allowed to spend Airport funds to manage and maintain the Citrus Village Mobile Home Park property, so they will have to see what the FAA comes back with.

### **D) Updated Report on Breeze Airways to City Council**

Mr. Scher stated that attached to today's agenda was a copy of the detailed and updated report on Breeze Airways that he presented to City Council (on file in the City Clerk's office).

## **8. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

None

## **9. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mrs. Jordan announced that the Indian River County Tax Collector's office on 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue does the TSA pre-check, but it is by appointment only.

Mr. Hodge asked what is known about the Aviation Boulevard project, because the traffic is terrible.

Mr. Scher replied that it is on the County's radar. There is a lot of attention on the intersection of Aviation Boulevard and US Highway 1, which is part of the entire Aviation Boulevard project. He has no knowledge of their plans or timeline for improving the road.

Mr. Vocelle asked for a status update on Corporate Air's customs facility.

Mr. Scher reported that their plans are ongoing to make sure they are 100 percent. This process has taken a very long time, but they are very close to seeing some construction.

Mr. Turner reported that he has been in contact with Corporate Air's counsel regarding documents for the financing so hopefully ground breaking will take place in a couple of months.

Mr. Vocelle said he has heard that Saint Lucie County has been trying to attract an airline.

Mr. Scher replied that he has been hearing that for quite a while and he knows they have done a few things to become compliant. He has not heard what their intent is or if any progress has been made, but he did hear that Elite Airways submitted a letter of intent.

Mr. Canal asked if there was damage to the buildings that Skyborne Airline Academy took over from Flightsafety.

Mr. Scher reported that Skyborne was concerned that a couple of the buildings were not in safe condition. He said Skyborne asked the Airport to do an inspection on the buildings and they used that information to go back to Flightsafety to work on having repairs done. Flightsafety agreed to compensate them for the repairs.

## **10. CITY ATTORNEY MATTERS**

None

## **11. NEXT MEETING DATE**

### **A) April 21, 2023**

The next Airport Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, April 21, 2023 at 9:30 a.m., in the City Hall, Council Chambers.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

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