

**AIRPORT PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (APAC) MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023 2:30 P.M.
VERO BEACH AIRPORT
3400 Cherokee Drive, Second Floor, Suite 201, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT: Chairman, Ed Davidson; Vice Chairman, Brooke Malone; Members: Rodger Pridgeon, Peter Holman, Timothy Girard, Duane Hoppe, Helene Caseltine, Brian McCormick, and Cheri Fitzgerald **Also Present:** City Attorney, John Turner; Airport Director, Todd Scher, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Davidson called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. He welcomed Mr. Brian McCormick to the meeting and asked him to introduce himself.

Mr. McCormick said he is the Director of Airport Properties with Breeze Airways and he is glad to be serving on this Committee. He stated that he has 32 years working with aviation on both the airport side and with airlines. He is very excited to help bring Breeze Airways to Vero Beach and he is looking forward to a long and successful run.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) November 18, 2022

Mrs. Malone made a motion of approve the minutes of the November 18, 2022 Airport Planning Advisory Committee meeting. Mrs. Caseltine seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. OVERVIEW OF AIRPORT INVENTORY

Ms. Susan Zellers, Project Manager with Hanson Professional Services, gave a quick recap of their last meeting and explained their roll in this process for the benefit of those who were not in attendance. She asked the members of the consulting team to introduce themselves.

Mr. Doug DiCarlo (spelling may not be correct), Mr. Jeff Alexander, Mr. Michael Moon, stated they are all with Hanson Professional Services, and Mr. Joe Helinski (spelling may not be correct), said he is with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) providing support to Hanson Professional Services for the Master Plan.

Ms. Zellers gave a brief overview of what they will be covering at today's meeting.

Mr. Davidson asked if they want to take questions as they go along or keep them until the end.

Ms. Zellers replied that they can jump in with questions as they go a long if they want more of an explanation, because they will be going through the information rather quickly.

Ms. Zellers started their Power Point presentation (on file in the City Clerk's office) and provided the history on how the Airport started in 1945 and developed through the current design as the Vero Beach Regional Airport.

Mr. Alexander continued the Power Point presentation and discussed the runways, taxiways, and the wind data they accumulated. He also provided information on the taxiways, the on airport navigational aids, and an overview of the airfield. He explained what was involved with the Airport Terminal expansion and renovation project that took place in 2009.

Ms. Zellers continued with the Power Point presentation and reviewed the development of the property around the Airport. She stated that there are over 10 aeronautical tenants and she highlighted the largest ones, which included two (2) active flight schools, two (2) fixed based operators, and Piper Aircraft, because they have an agreement for use of the airfield. She stated that there are a variety of nonaeronautical uses on the airfield and the variety of businesses are a nice compliment and support to the aeronautical industry and they have a positive economic impact. She said there is a lot of employment on the Airport property and that helps support the local community. She continued with briefly discussing the funding sources for federal funding, grants with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), as well as state and local funding. She explained that recent legislation was passed that allows airports with under 100,000 enplanements per year to stay in the general aviation grant match category, which provides up to an 80 percent match versus only 50 percent.

Mr. Davidson asked if FDOT uses the same enplanement numbers for their grants, or is that strictly with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Ms. Zellers explained that FDOT uses the FAA enplanement numbers for their count, but their rules for their grants are set by the State Legislature.

4. OVERVIEW OF AVIATION ACTIVITY FORECAST

Mr. DiCarlo continued going through the Power Point presentation and discussed their future aviation activity forecast and listed the items they looked at. He said the FAA only approves two (2) major components of the study, which are the forecast and the Airport Layout Plan. He provided them with the resources they used to create the forecast and he gave a breakdown on the different types of based aircrafts, which are aircrafts that are at the Airport for six (6) months or more. He said last year they had a total of 216 based aircrafts. He also reviewed their based aircraft recommended forecasts and their projections for the future. He reported that the Airport hangars are at 100 percent occupancy and there is about a 90 person waiting list for them, so there is a demand from people who want to be here. They are looking at how to accommodate this demand as they move forward.

Mrs. Malone asked if they are at capacity.

Mr. DiCarlo explained that there is still more apron space, but for plane owners who live here or those who want to come here they typically want a hangar.

Mrs. Malone stated that their forecast shows a 62 percent increase over 20 years.

Mr. DiCarlo continued with discussing the projections of the facility requirements. He said they looked at the trends of the airline manufacturing companies to project the types of facilities for the future. He said manufactures are not building as many single and multi-engine planes as in the past and the new growth for the future is in jet aircrafts and rotary aircrafts.

Mr. McCormick asked if they included the new emerging electric vertical take-off, short distance aircrafts.

Mr. DiCarlo replied no, they did not. He said there are some industry leaders who are emerging with ideas for Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircrafts, but it will be quite some time before they can get their certification.

Mr. McCormick asked if they would classify AAM's as rotary craft.

Mr. DiCarlo said yes most likely. There is a lot to be seen with these aircrafts, but they might include them in the future.

Mr. DiCarlo went on to cover the Vero Beach Regional Airport's annual operations and the projected changes. He showed the comparisons of the annual operation projections over the next 20 years. He said they also looked at past studies and they did a market share analysis. He said the first quarter of this year the Airport was already 57 1/2 percent over the first quarter of 2022, so he might be underestimating the growth. He was informed that things are not slowing down, so they could easily be at their projected 2030 goal in a couple of years. They did not have any history to use for passenger enplanements except for the flights by Elite Airways in 2022, but they cannot compare Breeze Airways with those figures.

Mrs. Malone asked Mr. McCormick how does this line up with what Breeze Airways has predicted for the year.

Mr. McCormick replied that they are very pleased with the initial results and they will be here year round. This summer they will be running seven (7) flights a week and those numbers line up with the forecast. Next winter they will be running 10 to 12 flights a week and then back down to seven (7) in the summer. 416 operations is a very realistic figure, but it is subject to change as they continue to learn the market.

Mr. Davidson said it is his understanding that the 190 aircrafts are being phased out of Breeze Airways fleet.

Mr. McCormick replied no, they use them for charters in the winter, so they will continue to have three (3) of them. One (1) change that they are undertaking is that they are increasing the capacity of their A220-300 aircrafts from 126 seats to 137 seats by the end of the year, and the E195's will go from 118 to 124 seats.

Mr. Davidson asked if their scheduled flights into Vero Beach will all be A220-300 aircrafts.

Mr. McCormick replied that most of them will be, but they will also use the E195 jets.

Mr. DiCarlo continued discussing the annual passenger enplanement projections with low and high scenarios. He said they had to guess their projections on Breeze Airways based on their load factor, because they had not started their flights to Vero Beach yet. They used an 80 percent load factor as a baseline for their projections, but for the first month Breeze Airways was at 82 percent.

Mrs. Malone asked if enplanements are just the number of people getting on the planes.

Mr. DiCarlo replied yes, that is the figure the FAA uses, but there is also deplaning so it is only about half the number of passengers that move through here.

Mr. Davidson asked what is the number of enplanements that the FAA uses that will put them in a different category for funding.

Ms. Zellers replied that it is 100,000 enplanements in a year.

Mr. DiCarlo explained that once that happens, the share that FDOT provides for matching grants with the FAA drops down to 50 percent.

Mr. DiCarlo said another category they looked at was the Airport's peak operations per month, the average peak day of the peak month, and the peak hour of the average day. He went over the comparison of their recommended forecast and what the FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) looked like. He said that they are right on target for meeting the percentages required by the FAA. They also had to look at the critical aircraft for the runway system, because each runway can have its own critical aircraft. With each aircraft comes certain design codes and the design codes are based on the speed of the aircraft upon approach, and several other factors. He said for the primary runway the A220 aircrafts will be their most critical aircraft over the next year, which is a C3 aircraft. In the future it switches over to the larger Gulfstream Business Jet.

Mr. Todd Scher, Airport Director, asked if a critical aircraft is still based on the number of operations per year.

Mr. DiCarlo replied that the FAA defines a critical aircraft as one (1) that is conducting at least 500 annual operations.

5. REVIEW PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Ms. Zellers stated that they all received the inventory report and the forecast of working papers. Their next step is to submit the forecast with the inventory chapter to the FAA so they can see the background, because that is the trigger to get the FAA's concurrence to be able to move forward with the schedule. For the facility requirements and alternatives the schedule is based on when they receive the forecast concurrence. They have started looking at some of the facility requirements as to the existing conditions compared to the design standards, which have been updated since they were built.

Mr. Davidson asked if they have an idea on how long it takes for the FAA to concur.

Mr. DiCarlo stated that it depends on the FAA's workload, but they understand that the Airport just acquired Breeze Airway and how important the Master Plan is to what is going to be occurring, so he hopes within a month.

Mr. Davidson asked if the planning process has to come to a halt until the FAA concurs, or can they continue to do other things.

Ms. Zellers explained that they have started looking at the facilities, but at some point they will have to stop until they get the FAA's concurrence. Once they have that date they will be able to plan out their schedule. They will do their best to try to have their next meeting in October when they will meet with the Airport Commission.

6. OVERVIEW PROJECT WEBSTIE

Ms. Zellers said that if anyone has any comments or questions on the working papers to enter them on their website so they can be answered or addressed and they can update the information that is available to the public.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tim Zorc said he is an aviation enthusiast and is doing some work with Corporate Air. He asked if the Airport has a higher number of registered aircrafts does that help them with getting grants.

Mr. DiCarlo replied that the FAA says it does not affect the funding, but they are moving to a system that will do that for the general aviation airports. The FAA checks the registrations to see where the aircraft is located, but it has to be on a lease with the Vero Beach Regional Airport to get credit.

Mr. DiCarlo said it is based on the leasehold when they check the registration.

Mr. Scher said you would think that is how it works. However, when they enter the information into their database and another state has already claimed the aircraft then they have go head to head with the other state to see who is going to claim it. They have actually lost based aircrafts in which the owners live here and built a hangar, but they also did the same thing in another state.

Mr. Davidson asked if that is a small percentage of their based aircrafts.

Mr. Scher replied yes it is. He explained that based aircrafts in Vero Beach is a moving target, because every day new planes leave from Piper and don't come back while new ones come out of their doors. They do not claim Piper's aircrafts because they are only here for a short time.

Mr. DiCarlo stated that the National Aircraft Data Base Inventory Program started in 2009 because the FAA was thinking about doing funding based on that information. However, they realized that there were more based airplanes than there were registered airplanes. In 2011 or 2012 they had to purge a lot of registrations because they did not exist anymore.

Ms. Zellers said as part of that, the FAA started requiring aircraft registrations to be renewed. Now they can tell which planes are actually flying with an active registration. She explained that in the general aviation classification of airports, Vero Beach Regional Airport has jumped to a national classification because of the number of business jets that are based here.

Mrs. Malone started her Power Point presentation on local small businesses and the potential for growth in the Airport area (on file in the City Clerk's office). She stated that she has been working on getting all of the nonaeronautical businesses together to make sure they have had conversations about what their future looks like in the area. As this area grows and they get more foot traffic and flights it is important to the small business owners and tenants of the Airport that they do not fall victim to design standards that only look at the commercial aspect of the airplane industry. Instead of people going straight to the front doors of the Airport, they should have the opportunity to enjoy the area around the Airport. She presented her Power Point presentation and discussed developing properties in the Airport area to attract people rather than using the commercial property for storage units and such. She said there is a growing number of businesses coming to the light industrial and commercial areas and parking issues need to be addressed to increase safety. She said there are also open spaces that the City could use for events related to the area. She continued by discussing the use of pavers instead of cement and asphalt, and incorporating beautiful solar lit areas, bus stops, light fixtures, sidewalks, traffic planning, bicycles lanes, and the designing of projects that are outside of the box. She believes people should be amazed when they fly out of here or drive through the Airport district.

Mr. Davidson thanked Mrs. Malone for her commitment to progressive development.

Mr. Zorc said he is representing and speaking on behalf of Corporate Air and invited the Committee members to the United States Customs ground breaking event. He said this will take place over by Corporate Air on the west side of the Airport on April 5, 2023. He stated that they also invited Governor Ron Desantis, but they are not sure if he can attend.

Mrs. Linda Moore, Vice Mayor, said she read that Delta Airlines is partnering with Skyborne at the Vero Beach Regional Airport and that is great. However, what is the issue with the housing or dorms for the student that was mentioned earlier.

Mr. Scher replied that in the past it has not been a problem, but their FAA Program Manager looked at the residential use that supports the flight schools and their first comment was that they were not going to be allowed. They believe this all stemmed from the Citrus Park Village Mobile Home Park issue. Since then they have softened their stance a bit for now. They are working on getting the FAA to agree that when Skyborne exercises their option to extend their lease they will allow the residential housing for their students to remain for that option period. He believes they can make their case, because this is not a true residential operation. It is short term housing in support of an aviation industry and it should be allowed on an airport.

Mrs. Moore asked if there are other airports that have housing for students.

Mr. Davidson replied yes, Vero Beach is not the only airport affected by this. He said that the Flight School Association of North America is already working with their lobbying group in Washington, D.C. on this issue.

Mrs. Caseltine asked why would existing facilities not be grandfathered in.

Mr. Scher replied at first they said no, but he believes all sectors of the aviation industry will make a pitch that the short-term residential housing for students should be exempt.

Mr. Pridgeon stated that the Orlando Airport has a hotel in their facility.

Mr. Scher said he can point that out and ask that question to numerous FAA employees and get different answers, but the only answer that matters is from the individual who is over their Airport. He said there are airports in Florida that have campgrounds on their property.

Mr. Davidson stated that Flight School Association of North America has identified 53 airports that have flight school accommodations on airport property, so this is not unique to Vero Beach.

Mrs. Malone asked what is the status of the Citrus Village Mobile Home Park.

Mr. Scher reported that they submitted their Corrective Action Plan to the FAA and they acknowledged receiving it, but they have not responded yet.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, suggested that Mr. Scher address the intersection of Aviation Boulevard and U.S. Hwy 1.

Mr. Scher explained that Indian River County and FDOT are looking at improving the intersection of Aviation Boulevard and U.S. Hwy 1. He said the City and the Airport support at-grade improvements, but

they do not support an overpass. He said he does not think that the FAA would allow it anyway. They asked the FAA if they would allow them to improve the roadway on Airport property without there being a problem with the runway protection zone (RPZ). He thinks the FAA wants them to do a RPZ Alternative Analysis, which is a great study. They asked FDOT if they would fund the study because it is a FDOT project. As of now, FDOT has not committed to funding it and they still want them to have it done, but the cost is about \$30,000. The City is not the one (1) asking them to do the improvements, so they don't feel they should be the party responsible for funding the study.

8. CHAIRMAN/MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Davidson said based on the comments from Hanson Professional Services they want to wait until October to have their next meeting.

Mr. Turner stated that the schedule is not set, but if they want to schedule their next meeting in October that is fine.

Mr. Davidson asked Mr. Turner to work with the City Clerk's office to set their next meeting in October.

Mr. Turner said that is fine. If something comes up on an emergency basis they can call a special meeting.

Ms. Zellers asked the Committee members to have any of their feedback or questions submitted to her by April 5, 2023.

Mr. Turner asked that their comments or suggestions need to be sent to the City Clerk's office and she will disburse them.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

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