

VERO BEACH AIRPORT COMMISSION MINUTES
Friday, September 16, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida

PRESENT: Louis (Buck) Vocelle, Chairman; Carlos Halcomb, Vice Chairman; Members: Arthur Hodge, 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

Excused Absence: Carole Jean Jordan

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Mr. Vocelle welcomed their new Alternate Member, Mr. Stephen Kepley.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) June 17, 2022

Mr. Halcomb made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2022 Airport Commission meeting. Mr. Hodge seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

None

5. OLD BUSINESS

None

6. AIRPORT DIRECTOR’S MATTERS

A) Airport Director’s Report

Mr. Todd Scher, Airport Director, said the photo he sent out with the Airport Director’s report shows the capital projects, but now it also identifies the leasing activities on the airfield. He asked the Committee members to let him know if that is helpful. He continued by going over the updated Airport Director’s Report (attached to the original minutes.) He explained that the one (1) electrical item to be completed for the rehab of runway 12-30L is to replace the airfield lighting control system. The new system has been ordered and it is being manufactured. They anticipate receiving it and having it installed sometime in November. He said the current system is still functional, but it is no longer supported. An upcoming project is the Airport painted markings. All of the markings are going to be

refreshed except for the main Runway, which are only five (5) to six (6) months old. It will be about a 10-day project and it will start in early November and hopefully be done by Thanksgiving. A project that will be most noticeable to the public is the wayfinding signage project. Some of the signs are hard to find and are in need of replacement. This project will probably start after the first of the year. The new signs will be sturdier, externally lit, attractive and easier to read. They had their first coordination meeting for the master plan, which will be an 18 to 24 month process. They have a very good consultant on board who has a lot of experience. The inventory and forecasting report is scheduled for next February, so there will not be a lot happening that will be apparent. After that report, it depends on how long it takes the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to approve it and then they can apply the timeline to the rest of the master plan. The plan will also include a Financial Implementation Plan report. There will be three (3) public meetings in 2023, but the dates have not been determined. The final meeting will be held concurrent with a City Council meeting. He asked the Airport Commission members if they had an interest in holding the second public meeting concurrently with an Airport Commission meeting, but they do not have to decide that today. He continued by providing an update on the Citrus Village Mobile Home Park. The FAA notified them in writing that long term residential use of Airport property is an incompatible use. The FAA directed the City to come up with a Corrective Action Plan and they have until October 28, 2022 to submit it.

Mr. Canal asked if the FAA gave them a date for implementing the plan.

Mr. Scher replied no, they did not.

Mr. Vocelle asked if a Corrective Action Plan means the removal of the trailers.

Mr. Scher stated that it means changing the land use to a compatible use.

Mr. Vocelle asked again if that means trailer removal.

Mr. Scher replied yes it does.

Mr. Halcomb asked how is the State of Florida going to react to that.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, stated that the City will outline their suggestions and recommendations to the FAA. There are State laws for operating and dismantling Trailer Parks and he understands that FAA has done this in other communities.

Mr. Vocelle recommended that when they are considering their plan to go beyond the minimum requirement that the State allows in order to give these folks the maximum amount of time to relocate.

Mr. Hodge asked if this only pertains to the Trailer Park, or will it apply to current and future uses of Airport property.

Mr. Turner stated that they are only talking about the Trailer Park property.

Mr. Vocelle asked what percentage of the trailers are individually owned versus leased out.

Mr. Scher replied that he does not have that answer, but he believes that the majority of them are individually owned.

Mr. Canal said he would recommend that the City submit a timeline to the FAA rather than asking them for a timeline.

Mr. Scher stated that is their intent.

Mr. Scher gave a brief update on Elite Airways.

Mr. Vocelle asked what is the status of Elite Airways payment to the City of Vero Beach.

Mr. Turner replied that remains unchanged.

Mr. Vocelle asked if they are in default and how much in the arrears are they.

Mr. Scher replied yes, they are in default and they owe in the neighborhood of \$6,300.

Mr. Hodge asked if they have satisfied their fuel debt.

Mr. Scher said to his knowledge they have not.

Mr. Scher gave a brief update on the status of the customs facility. He said they might start construction of the building as early as the beginning of next year.

Mr. Scher said he continues to be amazed at what the leasing team is getting done. There is a lot of aeronautical and non-aeronautical leases at this time. They are working with at least 15 leases in some form of activation. In the past, the Airport has not been very good at inspecting the leased properties to make sure they were being maintained properly. Currently they are doing three (3) lease compliance inspections on non-aeronautical properties. All of the discrepancies they have found are either in progress or in the process of remediation. The inspections by the leasing team are increasing every day and that will make a difference in the condition of the properties when they revert back to the City's ownership.

Mr. Vocelle asked if they verify the insurance requirements as per the lease.

Mr. Scher answered yes, a member of the leasing team reviews the insurance to make sure it fits the City's guidelines.

Mr. Canal asked if the statement by the FAA that they will not approve any lease extensions is tied to the Trailer Park.

Mr. Scher replied that in the past, if a tenant was half way through their lease and they asked the City to extend it out further the City would usually do that. He is not sure if there has been a policy change with FAA, but they have been told that is contrary to FAA's

leasing policy. By extending a lease, it circumvents the City's opportunity to take a new look at a lease that is going to be renewed and be able to apply a new lease rate to it.

Mr. Scher stated that the traffic at the Airport has been steadily increasing since January 1st. The monthly traffic count through August, 2022 is just under 12,000 operations per month. That is just over half of what they were recording in 2019, which was just under 21,000 per month. During the COVID years, in 2020 they averaged 13,000 operations per month and 2021 they only averaged 9,000 per month. The numbers are still way down from a few years ago.

Mr. Canal asked with the fixed-base operator (FBO) lease that Skyborne Academy was looking at, what are the concession fee costs.

Mr. Scher explained that some leases require payments of concession fees. The lease that Skyborne was assigned from Flight Safety does not charge concession fees. Skyborne explored the possibility of changing to an FBO lease so they could possibly sell fuel to the public. Once they found out that would trigger concession fee payments they lost interest in that, so it is tabled for now.

Mr. Hodge asked if there are any updates on improving or widening Aviation Boulevard.

Mr. Scher said not that he is aware of, but it is still on the radar of the County's Metropolitan Planning Organization on what they want to do with Aviation Boulevard. The City has not had any input on it except for a possible flyover on the east end of Aviation Boulevard.

Mr. Halcomb asked how would the widening of Aviation Boulevard look like financially between the City and County.

Mr. Turner said he believes they are looking to the State for funds. It is a project the County and the City needs and they want to see it completed.

Mr. Scher stated that they have approached the State about funding for a rehab of the existing roadway, but not for widening. The State responded very favorably and it would be something they would consider funding. However, there is a portion of Aviation Boulevard that he believes is between 27th Avenue and 44th Avenue that is no longer considered Airport property. The Florida Department of Transportation will not give the Airport money to fund something that is not on Airport property.

Mr. Halcomb asked how receptive is the City on incorporating new and different ideas into the master plan that previous master plans have not identified.

Mr. Scher explained that they are always receptive, but they have to stay within the scope promulgated by the FAA Advisory Circular on master planning. They could add additional items, but they will not be funded except for by the Airport. They want public participation and their opinions on what they think the Airport should have, but the master plan process is driven by the Advisory Circular and the scope within as far as the funding goes.

Mr. Vocelle said he understands that there are several federal programs, such as the SHIP Program that can help the residents of the Trailer Park with their relocation expenses. He

is not sure if that is something they want to incorporate in the plan they are submitting to FAA in October.

Mr. Vocelle announced that under the direction of Mr. Scher and the direction of his staff, the Vero Beach Regional Airport has been recognized as the number one (1) General Aviation Airport in the State of Florida.

Mr. Scher said the Florida Department of Transportation gave them this award at the Florida Airport's Council conference last month. He said he has a very talented staff and he knows how to get out of their way. There are over 100 general aviation airports in the State of Florida and he believes there were 15 to 18 that were nominated.

Mr. Vocelle said that speaks volumes as to the amount of work Mr. Scher and his staff have put into receiving this award. They have received this award before, but it is the first time in recent history. He thanked Mr. Scher and his staff for all their efforts.

Mr. Scher said the Airport can only do what it does because of the support from both the past and present Airport Commission members, City Council, and City ownership. They all have given them the ability to do what they feel needs to be done.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Hodge asked that in addition to fuel fees and the money that Elite Airways owes the City, are there any other local individuals or businesses they are indebted to.

Mr. Scher replied not that he is aware of.

Mr. Halcomb asked if there are feelers from any other carriers, other than Breeze Airways that he mentioned in his report.

Mr. Scher said nothing with any substance. He said that Breeze Airways will be visiting to determine if Vero Beach Regional Airport is a viable location for their services. They want to look at the terminal facilities, the TSA screening check point, aircraft parking, etc.

Mr. Halcomb asked if immigration and customs enforcement is a tipping point for them.

Mr. Scher stated that they have not said so, but he does not believe it is. He thinks that they are primarily a domestic carrier, so he does not think it is a tipping point.

Mr. Kepley asked if Elite Airlines is being purchased by another company and is there any more information on that.

Mr. Scher stated that was a verbal comment made to him about four (4) weeks ago and there has not been any other information given to him.

9. CITY ATTORNEY MATTERS

None

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Airport Commission meeting will be held on Friday, December 2, 2022 at 9:30 a.m., in the City Hall, Council Chambers.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

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