

**VERO BEACH AIRPORT COMMISSION AND
AIRPORT PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (APAC) JOINT MINUTES
Friday, October 20, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

PRESENT, AIRPORT COMMISSION: Vice Chairman, Arthur Hodge; Members: Carlos Halcomb, Carole Jean Jordan, Joseph “Danny” Markford, and Alternate Member, Philip Canal

Excused Absences: Louis (Buck) Vocelle and Dr. Stephen Kepley

PRESENT, APAC: Peter Holman, Duane Hoppe, Helene Caseltine, and Brian McCormick

Also Present: Airport Director Todd Scher; City Attorney, John Turner; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

1. CALL TO ORDER – AIRPORT COMMISSION

Today’s meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The Senior Administrative Assistant called the roll.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Hodge opened and closed public comment with no one wishing to be heard.

4. AIRPORT COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS

None

5. AIRPORT COMMISSION OLD BUSINESS

None

6. AIRPORT DIRECTOR’S MATTERS

A) Creation of Airport Rules and Regulations

Mr. Todd Scher, Airport Director, stated that the development of Airport rules and regulations has been in progress since 2015 but was never completed. As they look at the Airport today, it is a different place and there is a strong demand for leasing and economic development, so the leasing team is very busy. They also have a successful and very popular airline service and that brings more people onto the Airport property. Last spring they decided to start reviving the rules and regulations by sending a member of their staff to an Airport Compliance Workshop. One of the biggest topics discussed at the workshop was the Primary Management Compliance Documents (PMCDs) and one (1) of those PMCDs was rules and regulations. He explained that they already have some of the other important aspects in place like an airport leasing policy, minimum standards, development standards, and rates and fees, but they don’t have rules and

regulations yet. Their previous drafts were based on examples from other airports but some had elements in them that they didn't have the authority to implement or enforce. They have to be careful to have regulations that are enforceable by other jurisdictions. They will come up with something that is more applicable to the City's Airport and they need to make sure there is consistency among all of the other documents. He plans to have a draft ready for the City Attorney and City leadership to review around the first of the year. If it is decided that this is something they want to proceed with he will also bring a draft to the Airport Commission to review at their next meeting.

Mr. Canal asked if they will be creating it in-house or with a consultant.

Mr. Scher replied that it will be done in-house. He said unlike minimum standards, rules and regulations are not a requirement so they have the latitude to decide what is included.

Mr. Halcomb asked if he will include the rules and regulations in with the leasing policies minimum standards for periodic approval by City Council.

Mr. Scher responded yes, that would be the intent.

B) Airport Director's Report & Project Key

Mr. Scher referred to the Airport Director's report (on file in the city clerk's office). He gave a brief update on Breeze Airway's load factor and their current schedule. He said Breeze will conduct 75 operations in November and 26 flights each week in December. He reported on the terminal building improvement project that will make things easier for the passengers. He explained that the two (2) banquet rooms that were previously used by CJ Cannons restaurant are being modified to become an exit lane and waiting room with new bathrooms. They hope to have this construction project out to bid in December and award the contract in January.

Mr. Halcomb asked if the renovations will provide access to that new waiting area other than through CJ Cannons.

Mr. Scher explained that CJ Cannons will have their own entrance, which will be separate from the inbound passengers. The rental car kiosk will be moved from the check-in lobby to the newly renovated area as well. On the outside, there will be covered walkways and a permanent dedicated baggage claim area.

Mr. Canal asked if the 26 weekly flights in December that Breeze is proposing will be the maximum the Airport can handle.

Mr. Scher replied that they will find out but he believes they can handle it. The main restriction is the number of people that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) can screen and where to put them after they have gone through the security check. Under their new concept, after the passengers are screened they will be allowed to go outside until their flight time. He said that when 130 people are going out on a flight the check-in area gets very crowded.

Mr. Scher reported that they have not heard anything from Elite Airways and they have not paid their bill to the City. Elite's assets and a hangar in Maine were auctioned off and their only operating airplane has been repossessed.

Mr. Scher gave a brief update on the Taxiway B Rehabilitation capital project.

Mr. Halcomb asked if any of their tenants had asked to participate in that project to resurface their parking lots.

Mr. Scher explained that this is a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) project for taxiways only, so there is no opportunity for them to participate.

Mr. Scher went on to talk about the Airport Terminal Building's new HVAC units, the emergency generator, the wayfinding signage projects, and security and communication improvements.

Mr. Scher reported that the property and leasing team is extremely busy since there is still a high demand for Airport property. They are working closely with the Indian River County Economic Development office to prepare for an Economic Summit at the Airport in November. They will talk with people about the available Airport property and incentives they can receive. He said a lot of tenants are raising concerns about being able to get the required insurance at a reasonable rate. They had a meeting with Risk Management, the City Attorney, and City staff to see if they could find a solution that works for everyone. They are reaching out to other airports to see if they are having the same problems and how they are handling it.

Mr. Halcomb asked if he had received any information from the Florida Insurance Commission because he heard that they were going to be studying and providing information to everyone, not just homeowners.

Mr. Scher said they have heard that too, but they don't want to wait for a response from the State. They need to find a way to work with the tenants, which might require them to amend their lease agreements.

Mr. Scher stated that the Airport has a new tenant, Diversified Aviation, and they are working on a lease for property in the infield to build a hangar complex. The same company is also looking at a non-aeronautical piece of property on Aviation Boulevard for retail development. He will be meeting with them in the next couple of weeks to finalize their plans.

Mr. Halcomb asked if the new hangars in the infield would be a cluster of hangars or a single massive hangar structure.

Mr. Scher replied that they will resemble the City's T-hangars and have a variety of sizes. He explained that there are wind and instrument towers in that area, so they cannot build anything within 500 feet of those. Yesterday they spoke with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) about acquiring funding to move those towers. He reported that the electric vertical take-off and landing (EVTOL) aircraft lease is still ongoing because it is not a straightforward lease.

Mr. Hodge asked what percentage of the Airport properties are under lease and how many leases are up or being worked on for renewal.

Mr. Scher replied that he did not have that information with him today, but the Airport has over 1,600 acres of property and 700 – 800 acres are actually used by the Airport. A lot of it cannot be used because it is conservation land and what is left would require a substantial investment

and infrastructure work to get it ready for development. He said that Aero Beach Club was a tenant who was going to lease all the property on the east side of the north ramp, but that did not work out for them. They worked out a deal to let them exit their lease and shortly afterwards they received a letter of intent and an advanced deposit from an interested tenant.

Mr. Scher explained that they are working on a Safety Management System (SMS) manual which will eventually be required for all airports. They submitted it to Hanson Professional Services for their review so they will have it implemented well before the FAA mandated deadline. He said that Corporate Air broke ground for the new Customs facility in May but nothing has been done since then.

Mr. Scher announced that they will be having a 5k run event on the back part of the airfield on November 11, 2023. He said they are also working on the 2024 Vero Beach Airshow. Planning is well underway and they will be submitting a 139 Grounds Operations Plan to the FAA showing how they will handle their operations.

Mr. Halcomb asked if Breeze Airways intends to fly in and out during the airshow.

Mr. Scher explained they are not concerned with their flights because they are obligated to accommodate them and they will do that. They are more concerned about the amount of traffic on the roads because they have no control over that. If Breeze Airways has a late afternoon flight and people are trying to get to the Airport it will be difficult.

Mr. Halcomb asked if something happens with the narrowing of the Twin Pairs through downtown will that cause Aviation Boulevard to be expanded to four (4) lanes.

Mr. Scher said he does not know if the outcome of the Twin Pairs will enhance that situation, but they have known for quite some time that it needs to be done. Aviation Boulevard has been a discussion for a long time and they have made sure that any Airport issues were considered in all of those plans. He announced that there are no more plans to build any type of overpass and everything will be done at grade level.

Mr. Canal asked what is the status of the mobile home park and the FAA.

Mr. Scher reported that they have been working with the FFA compliance group on a Corrective Action Plan. They submitted their initial plan to the FAA and they responded with comments. Now they have until October 27, 2023, to submit a reply. He explained that the FAA asked them to do a fair market value assessment on the lot rent, which they have done.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

None

9. CITY ATTORNEY MATTERS

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, reported that he recently attended a two (2) day Airport Law Workshop in Washington, D.C. It was sponsored by the American Association of Airport Executives and there were more than 200 attendees. It focused on the FAA grant assurances, environmental issues, and other items that he will be briefing the Airport staff on. Executives from the FAA and the TSA were speakers at the event. They reported that they have over 45,000 employees and most of them are in traffic control but they are still short about 3,500 Traffic Control Operators. They are working on getting people hired and trained, but it has been difficult. He said this was a very beneficial workshop and he thanked the Airport for sending him.

The Airport Commission selected January 19, 2024, as their next meeting date.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Airport Commission meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

At 10:19 a.m. the Airport Commission took an 11-minute break.

***At this time the regular Airport Commission meeting adjourned and the Joint Airport Commission/APAC meeting took place.**

1. CALL TO ORDER – AIRPORT COMMISSION/AIRPORT PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (APAC)

Mr. Hodge called the joint meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

2. AIRPORT MASTER PLAN

A) Presentation on Airport Master Plan – Hanson Professional Services, Inc.

Mr. Scher introduced Ms. Susan Zellers, Project Manager with Hanson Professional Services, Inc., and explained that she has a very diverse background including being a pilot and a former Airport Manager.

Ms. Zellers introduced Mr. Jeff Alexander, Aviation Planner; Mr. Mike Moon, Client Liaison; and Mr. Doug Dicarolo, with Environmental Science Associates (ESA) as the members of their team working on the Airport Master Plan.

At this time the Airport Planning Advisory Committee (APAC) and the Airport Commission members introduced themselves.

Ms. Zellers gave an overview and highlighted what they will be discussing at today's meeting.

Mr. Canal said that this document is very important to the Airport and the community.

Mr. Doug Dicarolo, ESA, said two (2) key elements of the Master Plan process need to be approved and one (1) is the Aviation Forecast, which he will be discussing. The Airport Layout Plan is also necessary because if improvements are not shown they might not be eligible for funding. He started the PowerPoint presentation (on file in the City Clerk's office) and discussed the aviation

activity forecasts. He also talked about the annual operations and the number of based aircraft from 2022 and the growth figures for 2043.

Mr. Halcomb asked what category does the EVTOL aircraft fall into.

Mr. Dicarlo said they are being considered powered lift aircraft, but he would say they would fall into the rotorcraft category.

Mr. Canal said the figure for the based aircraft for 2043 seems low compared to the figures Mr. Scher mentioned in the earlier meeting.

Mr. Dicarlo said the passenger enplanements were a challenge for them to forecast because it was finalized in February, which was before Breeze Airways started operating. They read through Breeze Airways seven (7) month forecasted schedule but there was no real background information to base it on. He said that Breeze Airways did a great job sticking to their schedule and they achieved a higher load factor than they forecasted, so they have done an excellent job here.

Ms. Zellers continued the PowerPoint presentation and provided information on the facility requirements and what they focused on. She said this information was based on the available facilities and their needs and they identified where there are opportunities for improvements. She said that all three (3) runways are needed so they should all be eligible for funding.

Mr. Halcomb asked if the power lines along Aviation Boulevard and 43rd Avenue would be put underground or moved somewhere else.

Ms. Zellers replied that presently they have appropriate clearance so they can remain there. She said the FAA has requirements for surface areas that need protection and the airlines have additional surfaces that are a little lower to ensure that aircraft can continue to climb and clear any obstructions. She continued with discussing the taxiways and the areas for improvement.

Mr. Dicarlo provided information on the environmental overview section of the PowerPoint presentation. He explained that it is a highlight of all the different areas of the Airport property including soil conditions, the wetlands, endangered species, and the categories the FAA would look at should an Environmental Assessment Study be required. It identifies the areas they can develop and what areas they need to avoid.

Ms. Zellers reviewed the Alternatives Analysis and the lower approach minimum portions of the presentation. She discussed a couple of possible future improvements of rerouting 43rd Avenue to allow for more clearance beyond the end of the runway and adding approach lights. She said they also looked at moving the drainage channel outside of the fence so it is easier to maintain since it would be outside the security of the Airport. She continued with discussing runway extensions and the taxiway improvement recommendations.

Mr. Dicarlo stated he will discuss the proposed renovations and the long-term forecast of the passenger terminal building. He said the current terminal area is sufficient but in the future, they could use some of the existing short-term parking area for a 12,500-square-foot single-level building expansion. He reported that the long-term parking lot B is being expanded to add 150 – 200 spaces.

Mr. Halcomb asked if they considered a multi-level parking garage.

Mr. Dicarlo replied that they did discuss it but it would be expensive to build and they did not see a need for that yet.

Ms. Zellers spoke on the improvements for pedestrian access as needed with the increased passenger flight service. She also discussed the GA Hangar facilities that would be needed, the potential airside development areas, the midfield hangar concept, and how many hangers would be needed in the future. She said they looked to the North West area for potential future development to meet the Airport's demand. She went over the road improvements and nonaeronautical areas for improvement opportunities which included a permanent road system that would be inside the Airport security fence. She gave a summary of the recommended improvements and reviewed the next steps they will take including holding public information workshops.

Mr. Canal commended the Hanson Professional Services group for a very well done report. He said he is a member of the Alternate Aircraft Association and he believes they should consider accommodating the possibility of electric aircraft in their long-term plans.

Ms. Zellers replied that they might need some utility updates to accommodate them.

Mr. Halcomb said the APAC is well supported by a wide range of business individuals and they have put together a good plan. He likes what he sees with the extension of Runway 4/22 and lowering the minimums to allow access for a variety of aircraft. In his opinion, the only thing he sees missing is the ground automobile traffic accessibility because Aviation Boulevard is a main artery. With increased traffic to the Airport due to development at the Airport, more employees, etc. they really need to look at something to mitigate the problem.

Ms. Zellers replied that this subject was also brought up and they will be discussing it with the City. She explained that Aviation Boulevard is unique because part of it is the City right-of-way and part of it is Airport property. The FFA wants the Airport to maintain ownership of that area, especially near the runway approaches so they will need to figure out how to make that improvement compatible with Airport operations.

Mr. Halcomb stated that it is not just a City problem, it is also a County problem because County residents rely on Aviation Boulevard to get to the hospital and doctors.

Mrs. Caseltine suggested that they get input from the Jackie Robinson Training Facility because they are a big user of Aviation Boulevard as well.

Mrs. Jordan said the intersection of Aviation and US1 has become more difficult to get through with the increase in the number of Brightline trains. It is going to be critical to get people through there quickly and safely.

Mr. Hodge asked if they had spoken with anyone yet about the future of Aviation Boulevard.

Ms. Zellers replied that they have had some discussions with the Planning Director from the City and it is recognized as a need. The Master Plan will be their tool to make this improvement happen and make sure it works for the Airport, the community, and the FAA.

Mrs. Jordan said that at the corner of 43rd Avenue and Aviation Boulevard, which was the former Dodgertown property, she heard that it was being developed and home developments seemed to be getting bigger. If they put that much more traffic in that area she is not sure what they would do. She said that is County property so they would have to check with the County's Planning Department on what their plans are.

Ms. Zellers said they would take all of these comments and suggestions into account.

Mrs. Caseltine suggested that they also speak with the County's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Mr. McCormick said that the visitors and the people in the community have surpassed Breeze Airway's expectations and they are excited for next year. He said he has a question about "block times" which is referenced on page 145 of the report. He asked if the following statement is valid "At the Airport Director's discretion the block times are set two hours before and one hour after each flight to prevent the overcrowding of facilities with overlapping flights and to accommodate delays."

Mr. Scher stated that this document is a work in progress and that statement will not make it into the Master Plan. He explained that the two-hour block time would pertain to different airlines and not apply to Breeze Airways. He said the City Resolution is more of a guideline to control how they run the airline operations.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Hodge opened the floor for public comment. With no one wishing to be heard, public comment was closed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Today's Airport Commission/APAC joint meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

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