

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

Airport Advisory Committee  
MEETING MINUTES

**Friday, June 16, 2017**

**8:30 AM**

**Dillant Hopkins Airport Terminal**

**Members Present:**

Clark Dexter, Chair  
Councilor Robert Sutherland (Arrived Late)  
Bill Hutwelker  
Robert Bergevin  
Fred Happ  
Rodney Thompson

**Staff Present:**

Jack Wozmak, Airport Manager  
Ben Albert, Airport Maintenance

**Monadnock Aviation**

Beth Bendel, FBO

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Mitch Greenwald  
Peter Delaney  
Joseph Bendzinski

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Dexter called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

**2) Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes of May 19, 2017, which was seconded by Mr. Happ.

Mr. Hutwelker noted on page one, item one should be corrected to read, “these leases are now on an automatic format...”

The motion carried unanimously.

**3) Airport Manager’s Report**

**a. Updates on:**

- i. Marketing PR**
- ii. Airport Master Plan**
- iii. Lawsuit Following Tree Harvesting**

Mr. Wozmak provided the following report:

1. Mr. Wozmak has begun advertising on the Sentinel web site and to date has received 35,367 views with 32 people advancing to the airport website; this ad will run for three months. There will also be an ad in the Business Journal that is sent to the Keene, Peterborough, and Brattleboro Chambers of Commerce. The goal of these advertisements is to raise awareness about the airport.
2. Airport staff continues to work at hydro seeding the areas that were stumped but with mowing in full swing, there is little time left to accomplish anything else. We continue to use Kelly Lawn Care for some areas “outside the fence” and along Rt. 32 and we used Good Digs, LLC to do some brush clearing along the airport runways and ditches. We received a quote for approximately \$12,000 to clear brush from the airport and so far have spent about \$2,500. Mr. Wozmak is looking into buying an over-the-rail mower, like the City used to own, and hopes to convince the City it is an expenditure that can be used City wide – a better value than hiring an outside contractor. Councilor Sutherland will share State Auction information with Mr. Wozmak where equipment can be acquired at reduced prices. Some brush has not been cleared in three years and is acting as habitat to wildlife that could interfere with airport safety and operations.
3. The City Council Finance Committee and City Council approved a one-year lease for the former ALPS building to house the Christian Life Fellowship youth center. Mr. Wozmak is working with the City Attorney on the lease language.
4. Mr. Wozmak continues to meet with Edgewood neighbors regarding the removal of pine trees and has obtained quotes from Phil’s Tree Service in the hopes that some neighbors will voluntarily allow tree removal without a permanent easement. Mr. Wozmak hopes to receive City Council approval and FAA support to fund this effort. To date, Mr. Wozmak has worked with four neighbors on screening agreements. To use the \$16,000 revenue from tree removal, it must first be appropriated by City Council.
5. Mr. Wozmak has reached out to the Civil Air Patrol seeking volunteers to paint the trim of the terminal building. Nearly every surface inside and out could use a good paint job. Committee members suggested other sources of volunteers including: the boy/girl scouts, court-appointed community service, and inmates with work release.
6. Interviewing of firms to be the engineer of record (also called the ‘on-call’ engineer) to work on airport projects over the next five years is complete. The results will be made public once there is a confirmation. With questions remaining about which Council Committees this will go through and when, Mr. Wozmak will follow-up to expedite the process.
7. Mr. Wozmak hosted the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (members within a 60-mile radius) recently and gave them a two-hour tour of the facilities and a trip

down the runway. They very much enjoyed learning about the airport. Approximately 15-20 people attended.

8. Mr. Wozmak continues to work with PlaneSense – a fractional plane ownership corporation out of Portsmouth – on a joint marketing program. He hopes to have a sense of what criteria are required to transition from flying commercial to fractional ownership. Many companies, like NE Wood Pellets, used to fly commercial but shifted to fractional ownership to save time and money, and increase efficiency. The motivation behind this effort is to make the airport more visible to companies; Mr. Wozmak hopes to compose a survey to generate data that supports encouraging companies to make this transition. A fractional jet can be acquired for approximately \$500,000.
9. With the arrival of nice weather, there are only three vacant t-hangars. Mr. Wozmak was contacted about potential non-aviation storage in a hangar for collectible automobiles. He will inquire about the fair market value for auto versus plane storage.
10. All documents regarding the Environmental Assessment, Phases I and II, as well as the Airport Master Plan Update have been finalized and were accepted by City Council on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
11. With the increase in traffic at and through the airport, Mr. Wozmak has begun looking at installing an AED at the airport. It will be the same type as seen in most City buildings, such as City Hall. Mr. Wozmak will inquire as to if this is an FAA mandate and look into advice from the Keene Fire Department. The State bid price for the equipment is \$800 which is half the retail cost.
12. There are two serious candidates for new private hangars, built at their expense. Both have begun the local approval processes. Mr. Wozmak is communicating with the City Attorney on how to handle this, as one candidate is already an airport tenant; either their land lease will be expanded or there may be zoning options. The tenant came to Keene after bureaucratic dissatisfaction with the Westfield Airport in MA.
13. Within the next two weeks, Mr. Wozmak expects the contractor to begin installing the new floor and sheetrock in the former baggage handling area in order that this space can be rented to Monadnock Aviation. Those improvements will cost approximately \$2,500 and only take a few days.

Mr. Bergevin questioned why potential tenants, for example, no longer come before this Committee to propose their ideas before these matters go to City Council; he said the Committee no longer seems as involved, although Mr. Wozmak is doing a good job. Mr. Wozmak will revisit the language of the AAC's charge to see how they fit within these matters.

Councilor Sutherland said he sees a problem with the City operating the airport, which is apparent when airport management cannot make progress because of the City bureaucracy. Having to go through so many processes at the City level can take months in addition to the various political opinions of the Council. Mr. Wozmak replied he has sought FAA guidance for analyzing what sort of organizational structure the airport should have. Councilor Sutherland agreed there needs to be a study of the airport/City organization and noted interviews for a new City Manager are in progress. Chair Dexter added the various City Committee chairs and members have received a survey from the City Manager to better understand the needs of Committee's and members.

Chair Dexter asked about airport landing fees. Ms. Bendel replied those fees are \$25 for planes under 40,000lbs and \$50 for planes over 40,000lbs. Some airports charge more or less, Keene is mid-range. These fees recognize that when large planes land, there is a toll on the runway. Councilor Sutherland noted some airports have stopped landing fees because of the cost and management of collection; they make up the difference in slightly increased fuel sales. Ms. Bendel said that 75% of those fees go to the City, Monadnock Aviation pays credit card fees, and the remaining fees are Monadnock Aviation revenue. She said there is minimal administrative cost for the City; she collects the fees and sends them to the City monthly with a report. Chair Dexter asked if eliminating that fee would encourage more commercial aviation at the airport. Ms. Bendel said she believes that fee is insignificant in the scope of running a jet and she does not think eliminating that fee will bring in more traffic. If the fee were eliminated there would only be revenue in selling fuel, which not every plane that arrives at the airport purchases. She would rather keep the fee and maintain low fuel prices.

Councilor Sutherland noted that Cape Air runs out of Rutland and asked how Keene compares to that airport. Ms. Bendel replied that Cape Air runs out of Rutland and Lebanon with government subsidies. Mr. Wozmak has spoken with the Vice President of Development at Cape Air and they are not opposed to using Keene; part of the reason for reaching out to the Chambers of Commerce is to make clear that with regular service, Keene can fill planes. If Cape Air can see data that a 15-passenger plane can be regularly filled, they are not opposed to coming here. The Committee discussed the benefits of commercial flights out of Keene, including reduced expense for passengers and increased efficiency. Ms. Bendel added that government subsidies only last a few years, making them unsustainable; additionally, Keene has not generated a sufficient wave of consistent travel in past subsidy periods to allow airlines to continue here.

Mr. Bergevin said commercial travel out of Keene can be discouraging because of weather delays. Mr. Thompson asked if the ILS minimums have changed. Ms. Bendel replied no, they are still high and particularly in the fall, flights can be delayed until 9:00 AM because of fog. Mr. Thompson asked if the ILS will improve when the slope changes with tree removal. Mr. Wozmak replied he believes they will return to the guide slope pattern that existed before. At Chair Dexter's request, Mr. Wozmak will contact Carol Niewola with NH DOT about the possibility of lowering minimums. As Mr. Wozmak and Ms. Bendel understand it, the hills around the airport are a hindrance.

Mr. Albert said in terms of operations, the priority now is mowing and work continues seeding the stumped areas. The lawsuit following tree harvesting is still pending. The restaurant is doing well with many events advertised on their website.

Chair Dexter said the airport needs to be advertised for what it means to the community, both Keene and Swanzey. He said it is important for the City to remember the airport in economic development and he will keep reminding Council of that. Mr. Hutwelker agreed there has been similar discussion in Swanzey and expressed his frustration that towns market themselves individually, as opposed to a whole region. He hopes to work with Keene going forward as Keene is the driving town in the region. Councilor Sutherland agreed noting that the airport is featured on the cover of Keene's Economic Development Plan, though not adequately addressed in that plan. Mr. Wozmak said he has reached out to Councilor Greenwald about this but has not received a reply. Councilor Sutherland said the City has debt and must start making sacrifices. Mr. Thompson recalled a past FAA/NH DOT study that included data on the value of the airport to the City and region; Mr. Wozmak will ask Ms. Niewola for that information as well.

**4) FBO Announcements/Activities**

Ms. Bendel reported that both business and the flight school are busy. The flight simulator was recently upgraded to make it feel more realistic and accurate. The CPU was also upgraded to make all approaches on the simulator more similar to real approaches.

Ms. Bendel continued that she was appointed as an FAA Safety Team Representative. Her duties in this volunteer position include addressing safety issues at the airport and insufficient pilot training, among others.

The bar-be-ques continue in July. In June there is a conflict with the Walk for Animals so she will direct pilots to the Walk instead and encourage participation and donations.

The Aerobatics event went well and many community members came to enjoy it; there were a few complaints from neighbors.

**5) Next Meeting – July 21, 2017**

**6) Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Chair Dexter adjourned the meeting at 9:42 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker