

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, June 17, 2016

8:30 AM

Keene Dillant Hopkins Airport

Members Present:

Clark Dexter, Chair
Joseph Bendzinski
Robert Bergevin
Bill Hultwelker
Mitch Greenwald, Councilor
Rodney Thompson

Staff Present:

Elizabeth Bendel
Jack Wozmak, Airport Manager

Members Not Present:

Robert Sutherland, Councilor
Peter Delaney
Richard Kasper

1) CALL TO ORDER

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

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES- April 27, 2016

Mr. Bergevin made a motion to accept the Airport Advisory Committee meeting minutes of April 27, 2016, which was seconded by Mr. Bendzinski and passed unanimously.

3) AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

Chair Dexter welcomed Mr. Wozmak, Airport Manager, to share updates.

Mr. Wozmak began with a follow-up to the last meeting. He has completed interviews of three NH foresters in the region. He will be making a decision to choose one forester to develop a forest management concept plan for sustainable land management of the airport property. He indicated the woods are overgrown and imbalanced creating visual and sound barriers. The foresters will help ensure that the land is managed responsibly.

Mr. Wozmak stated that he met with the Dean of Aviation at Daniel Webster College about restoring academic programs for the flight school. He said industry members are concerned with the shortage of pilots and that the Keene Airport needs to be part of the solution.

Mr. Wozmak said he spoke with Cape Air, the largest regional carrier in the US with more than 1,200 employees and 93 planes. He stated if there is a regular flow of people through the Keene airport, Cape Air is open to resuming scheduled service. They currently operate out of Lebanon and other regional airports but do not stop in Keene. Their constraint to growth is lack of pilots, and Mr. Wozmak will continue discussions with other regional airports about increasing pilot numbers. Mr. Wozmak also indicated he recently met with the Nashua airport management to discuss regional economic development needs.

Mr. Wozmak attended the Granite State Airport Manager's Association (GSAMA) meeting in Plymouth. He indicated that Keene will host the September 2016 GSAMA meeting to stay involved in regional conversations.

Mr. Wozmak indicated that the private hangar project discussion continues and that an alternate site is being considered. He has interviewed eight contractors and selected two to continue on bid packages with. Mr. Wozmak said he will be working with the City Manager to create the land lease language template but there are no specific numbers or figures yet.

Mr. Wozmak continued that one T-hangar tenant left and there are two new tenants. One T-hangar remains vacant.

Mr. Wozmak explained that mowing the 100 acres around the airport is an increasing burden due to budget/personnel reductions over time. He said some mowing will be sub-contracted out where possible. The airport has to comply with FAA guidelines of grass height. Mr. Wozmak has advertised for mowing help and conducted several interviews with lawn care companies which typically charge approximately \$100 per hour. He said he will continue to make annual budget requests for increased payroll dollars for mowing and plowing. Typically, two employees mow five-days per week. However, there is currently only one part-time employee and a new full-time employee beginning in July to assist the Airport Operations Manager with this task.

Mr. Wozmak indicated the next Airport Master Plan Update meeting is June 29 at 6:00 PM in the Keene Public Library Annex.

Mr. Wozmak stated he spoke with two car cruise enthusiasts about having a Wings and Wheels event at the Airport. Further planning is needed to make this a successful event and they are trying to coordinate this with the Aerobatics event on July 9.

Mr. Wozmack said he communicated with Mr. Warren Hunt of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) regarding a Sonex fly-in at Keene on September 10.

Mr. Wozmak continued saying he is working with the Edgewood Association to set a meeting in late June or early July. He said he is working with Brenda Dunn to find an evening that is convenient for the neighborhood association which is approximately 60 members. It will likely be hosted at the airport.

Mr. Wozmak stated he has met with two sign companies to develop signage concepts for the end of the driveway and the building area. The goal is to draw more attention to the airport. He is working with an architect to redesign the sign areas to make them more useful and to generate more business.

At the previous meeting, Chair Dexter inquired about the old fire tower. Mr. Wozmak said he spoke with Chief Howard who indicated the tower is safe and secure. Ultimately, the City might dismantle it but it remains in place for now.

Mr. Wozmak stated he has worked with the FBO, Ms. Bendel, to discuss the possibility of an air show in 2017. Together, Mr. Wozmak and Ms. Bendel determined an air show is too large and expensive (approximately \$75,000) to be possible in 2017. The event will require money and sponsors and is not feasible with the other events scheduled for the airport. Instead, the airport will focus on smaller events and continue to progress toward an air show.

Mr. Wozmak continued explaining some of the upcoming smaller events. There are plans for an Air Power Tour organization, B-29 visit in 2017. Additionally, Mr. Wozmak spoke to the Collings Foundation about having a "Wings of Freedom" tour stop at Keene in 2017.

Mr. Wozmak indicated he will be meeting the Manchester Airport management and staff on June 30. He will bring one or two of the Keene maintenance staff to learn about Manchester Airport Operations Management. He will discuss regional airport economic development with the Manchester Airport Manager.

He continued that he recently visited the Plymouth Municipal Airport, the Kingston, NY regional airport, and the Bar Harbor, ME airport.

Mr. Wozmak stated he has found a possible tenant for the former Alps Restaurant. He is trying to negotiate the deal with the City Manager. Councilor Greenwald asked what use the space would be rented for. Mr. Wozmak replied that it is a non-recreational, business operation and he will disclose more details once there is greater commitment.

Mr. Wozmak indicated that progress has been made in conversations with Thomas Transportation regarding constructing a building at the airport for the company. Additionally, Mr. Wozmak indicated he has reached out to Greyhound Bus Lines to determine if they have interest in using the airport as a pick-up/drop-off/ticket location.

Mr. Wozmak reported that the City Council passed the airport budget with a \$293 reduction. He said the City Council added some money to the budget but did not want to increase the overall budget. The reduction will come from the Fuel System Maintenance Line which they usually spend approximately \$3,000 on each year.

Mr. Wozmak explained that the FAA has issued new guidance on the non-aeronautical use of hangars. Non-aeronautical use cannot interfere with or impede access to or use of hangars for aviation purposes. He said he will issue a letter to all tenants regarding the new regulations and what items can be stored in the hangars. He commented that it is a balance between need for revenue and using fair market prices. Market prices on different types of storage will have to be researched and different pricing tiers for hangars may be developed depending on use. The FAA indicated that anything can be in the hangar but if there is a demand for aviation space, the non-aviation use will be given 30-day's notice to vacate. These rules take effect July 2017 so there is time to price storage, notify tenants, and implement a timeline. This guideline also applies to privately owned hangars so the airport may need different land lease rates depending on the content of the privately owned hangars. Mr. Wozmak stated that tenants will likely not be happy about this change, but the government is seeking balance between aviation and non-aviation use of hangars. He said he would send a copy of the Federal Register to the committee for details.

Councilor Greenwald asked if there was a current hangar inventory. Mr. Wozmak replied no, not specifically. It is typically done when there is turnover but there has not been sufficient personnel, although they have the right to inventory. Councilor Greenwald asked if all tenant payments are current. Mr. Wozmak replied they are all current. He indicated that tie downs have generated a change in revenue collection. He also indicated there is one abandoned aircraft that he will begin the statutory process of liquidating. Ms. Bendel asked which plane. Mr. Wozmak said it belongs to an individual from Hillsboro and he sent a letter to the last known address.

Mr. Bergevin posed a question about mowing. He asked if there is small equipment or just large equipment. Mr. Wozmack replied that there is an 18 foot mowing deck and smaller eight-foot decks. Mr. Bergevin suggested bringing in available people to work the smaller equipment. Mr. Wozmack said there are issues with liability, workers compensation, and having strangers inside the fence. He is working on finding a balance but cannot burn through the budget. They need to find the right people, with the right equipment, at the right price.

Mr. Thompson asked if modifications on the restaurant are complete. Mr. Wozmack replied that they are basically done, but it has been a labor sink. Mr. Thompson asked if having the restaurant complete will free labor time. Mr. Wozmak said as a result of the new budget, there will be one Operations Manager, one full-time employee, and one part-time employee. He said there is never enough labor to keep the airport sufficiently mowed in the summer.

Mr. Bergevin suggested the Committee view the restaurant, specifically the kitchen, to see the improvements. Mr. Wozmak indicated the restaurant was not yet open for the day. Members of the Committee complimented the construction crew and improvements to the restaurant.

Mr. Wozmak said he is developing a FAQ document to assist the Edgewood neighbors in understanding aviation easements. This was initiated after the last public information meeting. He is consulting with Ms. Carol Niewola from NH DOT and will be e-mailing it to try to ease community concerns about easements. He indicated that some Edgewood residents would like to cut the trees themselves.

Chair Dexter commented that the City Code says the AAC is responsible for facilitating communication between airport users and City Hall. He indicated that he wrote a short notice, in the renters e-mail and the FBO newsletter, to encourage people to contact him directly with questions and concerns. He said he has an inquiry about the use of red hazard lights to note obstructions and why they cannot be used to solve the tree problem. Mr. Wozmak stated that because trees invade airspaces, they are obstacles and lights do not eliminate the hazard.

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bendzinski thanked Mr. Wozmak for this thorough report.

Mr. John Dunnell asked Mr. Wozmak about the mowing history at the airport. Mr. Wozmak indicated that in the past there were more personnel to meet the demand and guidelines. Mr. Wozmak stated that sufficient labor hours and personnel are lacking. Mr. Dunnell suggested it is time to bring in a brush cutting unit. Mr. Wozmak agreed and said he had spoken to the Operations Manager about it.

Mr. Bergevin asked about the current number of people working in maintenance. Mr. Wozmak replied that on a typical Friday, the Operations Manager and one part-time employee work, unless there are necessary repairs, in which case there is no one because their hours would be exceeded. He said that through budget cuts the labor hours have gradually declined. There is typically no staff on Friday's.

Mr. Bergevin made a motion that the AAC recommends more staff for airport maintenance to the City Council, which was seconded by Mr. Thompson.

Councilor Greenwald asked Mr. Wozmak if employees can be borrowed from the Parks and Recreation Department or Public Works. Mr. Wozmak replied that those labor hours would still be charged to the airport and the problem is labor hours. He said he has spoken to the City Manager about finding extra money for maintenance, when possible.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Thompson asked if a hangar cannot be rented because it is not ready, does that mean revenue is being lost. Mr. Wozmak replied yes, that it is a dilemma similar to the restaurant. Mr. Thompson suggested subletting laborers to empty the hangars. Mr.

Wozmak indicated that the hangar contains oil tanks that have to be disposed of properly. There are not enough people available to do so. Other solutions were suggested but Mr. Wozmak replied that in any circumstance, there are not enough people available to do the work.

Mr. Dunnell recommended hiring college students to mow in the summer. Mr. Wozmak indicated there is not sufficient funding for seasonal staff.

Chair Dexter welcomed Mr. Johann Nortz of Keene to speak about signage. Mr. Nortz said after the March meeting, while passing through Rutland, VT, he saw signs for the airport there. He said the main sign is 16 by 16 feet with two additional signs that cost approximately \$12,000. Mr. Nortz showed photos of the Rutland airport signs to the AAC and compared them to the Keene airport signs. He questioned how the airport would make signage more distinctive and attractive to passersby. He made suggestions of possible locations for airport signage on Route 12. Mr. Wozmak indicated that signage is something he is focusing on and that he has met with Yankee Signs and Keene Signworx. Mr. Wozmack said the goal is to draw people to the various businesses at the airport. He said the layer of signage required would cost \$10,000-\$20,000. He will be developing sign concepts soon and will share them with the Committee.

Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Wozmak if he was considering relocating the driveway sign to facilitate larger vehicles in the case of a new transportation center. Mr. Wozmak replied that he has considered it but has to research if other property is available. One consideration is changing the dimensions of the driveway sign to open the driveway more. He is working to determine the best course of action.

Mr. Bergevin suggested moving the topic of signage to agenda number seven and Chair Dexter accepted the photos as informational.

- 4) **OPERATIONS MANGER REPORT**
- 5) **MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT**
- 6) **FBO ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Bendel shared upcoming events that can also be found in the FBO newsletter:

- a. June 18- Humane Society 25th Annual Walk for Animals. Ms. Bendel indicated this is the same day as the airport monthly bar-be-que and they would be sending visitors to the Humane Society event.
- b. June 20- The Student Pilot Social. Ms. Bendel said this is an event to support those obtaining or considering pilot certification. This event is held twice per year.
- c. July 9- Individual Aerobatic Practice Session. Chair Dexter indicated there is a notice in the newspaper.
- d. August 6- Introduction to Aerobatic Flight. Ms. Bendel said pilots can take 40-minute lessons with an Aerobatic instructor to learn how to safely handle bad situations.

- e. August 20- Safety Seminar. Wes Liu, a safety coach and member of the International Aerobatics Club, will lead the seminar on spin training and pilot safety. The event will take place at 1:00 PM after the August bar-be-que.

Ms. Bendel said they are halfway through the current ground school session which has been successful with 10-12 participants.

Mr. Dwight Anderson indicated the 2016 AAC meeting minutes are not available on the City website. Chair Dexter and Mr. Wozmak asked the minute taker to communicate this to the City Clerk's Office.

Mr. Bendzinski asked Mr. Wozmak if the restaurant is receiving a good response. Mr. Wozmak said they have been serving 30-70 people per meal. He indicated struggles with staffing as with all new restaurants.

Mr. Anderson asked if the August 6 Aerobatic event counts as one of the five designated aerobatic practice sessions. Ms. Bendel replied that it was not related, it is a completely different session by Monadnock Aviation. Mr. Anderson said he thinks the City should count it as one of the five times. Ms. Bendel replied that it is not related to that organization in any way. Chair Dexter asked if it is a ground or air event. Ms. Bendel said it is both and that she anticipates a maximum of six students that day taking part in an aerobatic decathlon. Mr. Thompson added that it is very valuable experience for a pilot and that this is a standard training. Ms. Bendel agreed and added that only one plane would be in used during the event. Mr. Wozmak said that Mr. Anderson's comment is about the noise in the neighborhood from this event being similar to the aerobatic practices that went before City Council. Mr. Anderson said he believes this should count as one of the five allowed events, Ms. Bendel said it is unrelated to that school.

Mr. Wozmak was thanked again by the AAC for his work and communication.

Mr. Wozmak concluded by saying that he is out of hangars. He added that the state has an Aviation Users Advisory Board, appointed by the Governor, which monitors all nine pieces of aviation related legislation. That board meets at the same day and time as the AAC and Mr. Wozmak would like the AAC to attend those meetings at some point. He said he will work with Chair Dexter to arrange that.

7) TOPICS FOR NEXT AGENDA

New airport signage.

8) NEXT MEETING- July 15, 2016

The next Airport Advisory Committee meeting will take place Friday, July 15, 2016.

9) ADJOURNMENT

Chair Dexter adjourned the meeting at 9:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker