

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Friday, December 18, 2015

8:30 am

Airport Terminal Building

Members Present:

Clark Dexter, Chair
Mitch Greenwald, Councilor (arrived at 9:01 AM)
Bill Hutwelker
Robert Bergevin
Rod Thompson
Joseph Bendzinski
Kevin Provost

Staff Present:

Mike Moriarty, Airport Maintenance and Operations Foreman
Rebecca Landry, Assistant City Manager/IT Director

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Kris Roberts, Councilor
Peter Delaney
Richard Kasper

1. Call to Order

Chair Dexter called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. He announced that Mr. Thompson and Mr. Delaney had their membership extended for another term, and Councilor Roberts and Mr. Provost are both leaving.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted.

3. Approval of Minutes – November 20, 2015

Mr. Bergevin made a motion to approve the minutes of November 20, 2015, which was seconded by Mr. Thompson. Chair Dexter asked that Doug Green's name be stricken from the membership list, since he is no longer an AAC member. The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed by unanimous vote.

4. Assistant City Manager, Rebecca Landry: T.I.F., Environmental Assessment, and Restaurant

Ms. Landry reported that the Environmental Assessment (for the obstruction clearing project) is proceeding to phase II, now that the grant application was approved by the Governor and Council. She continued that (former Airport Director) Ed Mattern had a huge job, which she cannot do by herself in addition to her other jobs/roles within the City. Acting City Manager Med Kopczynski has divided up the projects so that airport infrastructure projects go through the

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Public Works Department, and she is trying to manage the grant projects, Master Plan update, and AAC projects, along with Planning Director Rhett Lamb. Mike Moriarty is the “go to guy” with all the knowledge. They are seeking to hire an interim Airport Director until the new City Manager has been named and then they will fill the Airport Director position permanently.

Chair Dexter asked for an update on the expansion of the TIF district. Mr. Hutwelker reported that Swanzey has a little more work to do. He continued that the person who handles the numbers is recovering from an illness but now the holidays are approaching. He recently received some guidance from Beth Fox, the City’s Finance Director, and will work with Sara Carbonneau, Swanzey’s Director of Planning and Community Development, to put the final details together. He is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Ms. Fox gave him the sense that they were pushing for detail at a level that is not necessary at this point. The goal is to present a general plan on the warrant for the Town to vote on, without any specifics of a hard nature, then go back next year when they see what the City really wants to do and get some hard numbers.

Chair Dexter asked if anything has happened with the Liberty Utility line coming in. Mr. Hutwelker replied that he thinks it is a “no-brainer” but he is alone in that. He continued that he has some lobbying work to do to get at least one other Selectman to agree. The Town is actively supportive about what Liberty Utility wants to do and hopefully that will give comfort to the other Selectmen. They are looking at 2017 or 2018. This is independent of the Kinder Morgan project. It is strictly about bringing fuel to the projected fuel farm. He is perplexed by the Selectboard meeting - this is a win for Swanzey so he does not understand why it would not go forward. The timing would work – the Master Plan completion in six to eight months will show how to develop the airport, and in 2016 there will not be construction, so 2017 would work well to perhaps coordinate Liberty Utility’s line with the construction of the sewer line.

Mr. Hutwelker reported that in terms of the restaurant, nothing has changed. He continued that the man that he and Mr. Moriarty have been working with met with Mr. Kopczynski last week. This man’s new, unusual idea is to use the space as an indoor flea market from January to April, simultaneously with a caterer, and then switch to just catering in the spring. He has not broached this idea with Mr. Kopczynski or Ms. Landry. Caterers are busy during the holiday season, so the conversations would not even happen until January.

Mr. Bergevin stated that it is not on the agenda, but he wants to ask about the person who is still occupying a hangar that he was supposed to be evicted from. He continued that he heard, and wants to know if it is true, that this person might still be able to operate on the airport by renting a hangar, even though he owes the City \$25,000 or \$30,000. Ms. Landry replied that the City has engaged the legal process and are doing everything they legally can, as they have the same concerns that Mr. Bergevin expressed. She continued that it is going to court in January. City staff are looking at the lease agreements language as agreements come due for renewal. They have a great team working on this, doing everything they can within the bounds of current law.

5. Operations Manager, Mike Moriarty: Airport Infrastructure

Mr. Moriarty reported that the Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPIs) are fixed. He continued that it took many days, much troubleshooting, and money. Just as he was calling a contractor to come fix them, he thought of one more thing, tried it, and it worked.

Mr. Moriarty continued that the airport has an efficient HVAC now, a much better system than before. It is warmer now. They did repairs on ramp lights. He is looking for options with installing lighting between the T hangars. They think they can do it in-house and it would be a big advantage to airport users.

Mr. Moriarty continued that they are in the process of adding power to the pedestrian gates so they can install cameras that would make sure people are not handing their access cards off to each other. Those gates have a history of issues. The magnetic lock he tried a year and a half ago has been very reliable and he wants to add that to other pedestrian gates, and add LED lights.

Mr. Moriarty continued that when he issues a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), he distributes the information to a list of people. If any AAC members want to be on the list, they can contact him and he will add them to it.

He continued that everyone in the City is working on staffing shortages and doing the best they can with what they have. The City acknowledges that they need more help in the airport. They will be covered during snow events. The airport has a new part-time seasonal employee who does not have a CDL license and needs training. Mr. Moriarty continued that he, himself, is now handling a lot more than he did before, like daily communications, invoicing, permitting, certifications, issuing identification cards, and more.

He continued that he has been working on the emergency plan to make sure it is up to date. It includes the Police and Fire departments, other City staff members, and other agencies. The plan is not current; it has all of Mr. Mattern's contact information, which he just adjusted. He met with Police Chief Brian Costa yesterday, who knows very little about the airport because it has mostly been Swanzey Police. Keene Police should be involved more. Mr. Moriarty continued that he edited the emergency plan and sent a draft to Mr. Kopczynski for his review.

Chair Dexter asked if the grant for the snowblower was approved. Mr. Moriarty replied yes, that is moving forward, and will be delivered in approximately 120 days, guaranteed, but probably even sooner. In the meantime, the machine the airport has works. He will keep them posted.

Chair Dexter stated that Mr. Moriarty has a wealth of ideas on how to do things better at the airport. He continued that he looks forward to him presenting more at future meetings.

6. Consideration of a Different Time and/or Day for the AAC Meeting

Mr. Thompson stated that changing the date or time of the AAC meetings might bring Peter Delaney back in – he is a valuable asset. It might work better for other people, too. Mr. Bergevin replied that this time and date works for him. Mr. Bendzinski stated that if they change the meeting time or day to accommodate some people, other people who are able to make the current time and day might not be able to come. Discussion continued. Chair Dexter stated that the current time and day seems to work for the majority of members. He asked who was in favor of keeping the current time and day. All hands went up.

7. Marketing Subcommittee Report and Discussion

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Chair Dexter stated that a major revelation for the AAC recently was that one of their major tasks, in their charge, is to cover marketing. They have a marketing committee that Ms. Bendel chairs.

Ms. Bendel stated that she is not sure if it is considered an AAC subcommittee, and there are non-AAC members on it. Ms. Landry replied that if it were a subcommittee it could not have non-AAC members. She continued that Ms. Bendel is doing a great job. The marketing committee needs to report to the AAC, not as a supervisory or management/oversight way, just in a way that reports what is happening so the AAC can be confident they are meeting the charge. It is not an AAC subcommittee.

Ms. Bendel reported that the committee has a great team, and she is working to bring non-pilots in and marketing professionals, so it is a well-rounded committee. She continued that they met this month. Mr. Moriarty is working on a Facebook page for the airport. She, Ms. Landry, and Laurel Boivin of Eversource Energy will create and send a survey to ask hangar tenants what they are getting from the airport and what they are not, to get a baseline.

Ms. Bendel continued that Rod Thompson printed copies of a comprehensive, thorough airport marketing manual and anyone who wants a copy can have one. It is a great guide to help them not reinvent the wheel. They also talked about a City of Keene webpage for the airport; that is in the works. They need to do more work on content and who will maintain it. It is a top priority. The marketing committee meets again on January 12 at 8:30 AM and all are welcome.

Ms. Bendel thanked Mr. Provost for the time he put in with the marketing committee. Mr. Provost asked if he needs to notify the Mayor that he is leaving. Ms. Landry replied yes, he needs to send a quick letter.

Ms. Bendel stated that Mr. Moriarty has kicked into high gear and is doing a lot for the airport. She continued that it is really helpful and really moves towards the spirit of cooperation and benefits the airport as a whole. He is doing a great job and she thanks him.

Ms. Bendel continued that in January, Monadnock Aviation is taking their pilot students on a tour of the air traffic control towers in Manchester and Nashua. It is currently full but people will cancel, so anyone interested from the AAC can get on the standby list. Tomorrow many young people graduate from the ground school program, and instrument ground school starts in January. This is a popular training destination – there are good approaches and good runways, it is well-maintained, and there is a welcoming FBO.

Mr. Bergevin noted that more people will be flying now, due to the fact that a bill including third class medical reform has gone through the House. He spoke about how it increases pilots' abilities to return to aviation, by only needing their primary care doctors to answer a few questions, instead of needing repeated FAA medical exams.

8. Announcements:

a) Beth Bendel

Ms. Bendel stated that she gave her announcements in the other agenda item.

b) Topics for Next Agenda

Chair Dexter apologized for the agenda not being sent out in advance. He continued that it was due to miscommunications, and they will do better next time.

Chair Dexter stated that next month he will be called to give a report to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (MSFI) Committee. He asked what he should report. Part of the AAC's charge is to periodic reports to the City Council.

Ms. Landry replied that the MSFI Committee meeting at which he will be reporting is the fourth Wednesday at 6:00 PM. She continued that other committees have been informing the MSFI Committee about what they do, how often they meet, what they talk about, what items are highlighted on agendas, and so on and so forth. He does not need to report on a specific project. It can just be an informational update.

Mr. Hutwelker suggested he talk about how the mood on the committee has shifted from the beginning of last year until now. He continued that at the beginning of last year there was frustration that the committee has little input. There is now clearly more connection with the City, with Mr. Kopczynski and Ms. Landry coming in. He thinks the AAC now has more of an opportunity than they have for years. It is obvious that there is a significant push on the part of City Hall to develop activities at the airport. The City Council is appointing an airport development committee and George Hansel will be involved. He continued that Chair Dexter can also talk about the Master Plan update – that change is significant to bring forth. AAC members will be in the audience to cheer him on. Mr. Thompson agreed with Mr. Hutwelker's suggestions and assessment of the changes.

Councilor Greenwald arrived at 9:01 AM.

Mr. Moriarty stated that he is experiencing that the City's ears are open regarding the airport now more than ever. He continued that he feels good about the support he is getting and people's willingness to help. It is motivating. Ms. Bendel agreed.

Mr. Bergevin asked if Councilor Greenwald will replace Councilor Roberts. Councilor Greenwald replied that they will find out January 1. Ms. Landry stated that there are five new City Council members not sworn in yet, so committee assignments cannot happen until January 1.

Mr. Bergevin stated that for two years now he has been harping on what is happening with Green River Aviation and kept getting put off. He continued that Monadnock Aviation should have been in that hangar by now. He realizes the legal process needs to be followed but someone should have pushed harder. Ms. Landry replied that they are pushing as hard as they can. She continued that they can keep her on the agenda and she will give updates.

Discussion continued. Councilor Greenwald stated that the notice to quit papers have been served. He continued that he asked the City Attorney and the Acting City Manager if they could accelerate the process, but it must be done the correct, legal way.

Ms. Landry stated that regarding all the wonderful things happening, her goal is to try and prioritize all those things. People have many wonderful ideas and energy, but she has other roles and duties within the City and has to prioritize. They might not be making progress on everything, but they want to have the big things taken care of so things are ready for the new Airport Director.

Discussion continued about the process of getting Green River Aviation out of the hangar. Mr. Bendzinski suggested there be standards, such as an action to take if a tenant is a certain dollar amount behind on rent. Ms. Landry replied yes, they are trying to fine tune the language in the hangar leases, so the City has every opportunity available to them if that happens again. She continued that it is not easy to immediately terminate a lease for nonpayment. They are bound by state and federal laws. Mr. Hutwelker asked what the legal process entails in January. Ms. Landry replied that they should have an idea of the closure process after the court date but she does not know how long it will take or if it will be more than one hearing.

Chair Dexter asked Mr. Moriarty how many T hangars are empty. Mr. Moriarty replied that Ms. Landry asked, too, and he will figure it out by physically going in every one. Chair replied that he would like to know for the next meeting.

Mr. Bendzinski stated that his suggestion was to have a briefing (maybe from the marketing committee, FBO, or Mr. Moriarty) if the AAC takes a certain action with the intention of improving something at the airport, so they can see if the action really made improvements. For example, whether an action increased pilot activity, visitors to the airport, or fuel sales. Mr. Moriarty replied yes, that will be covered – Chair Dexter asked him to give a presentation on just that. He continued that also, Ms. Bendel and Ms. Landry will be giving reports. Mr. Bergevin stated that for years, they used to get a report from City Hall on what the FBO and airport businesses (e.g. restaurant, car rental) were doing, and he has not seen that in four or five years.

Chair Dexter stated that regarding the restaurant space, the flea market idea sort of fits in with the AAC's thoughts on what to do with the space in the interim. He continued that they were thinking that the space could maybe be used as meeting space for local groups or non-profits. He does not know how the committee feels about that. He asked Mr. Hutwelker if that is realistic. Mr. Hutwelker replied yes, if groups were responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

Mr. Thompson asked if the man with the flea market would sign a year's lease. Mr. Hutwelker replied no, his intention would be January to April, then to move into the restaurant. Mr. Thompson expressed concern that a four-month flea market would inhibit others' opportunity to have a restaurant there. Mr. Provost replied that anyone interested in opening a restaurant there would not be ready immediately anyway, so four months of income would be valuable and would not hinder anyone. Mr. Thompson asked if there would be income. Mr. Hutwelker replied that the person with the flea market would pay rent along with the caterer paying rent. Mr. Thompson replied that he likes the idea of having multiple people there. He continued that he also suggested that they have local groups like the Rotary and Kiwanis and other business leaders have their meetings here, paying a caterer.

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Mr. Bergevin expressed concerns that someone coming in for just a few months could leave the space in poor shape. He asked how they protect against that. Mr. Moriarty replied that Mr. Kopczynski asked him to talk with Parks & Recreation Director Andy Bohannon and others, since they are paying for heat, about using this space for City-related activities such as meetings, or FBO activities. He continued that the City already rents/allows use of other City facilities and there are existing agreements the City uses. They will look at agreements that, say, American Legion uses – like what do they need for a temporary liquor license? This is an active conversation and he will keep everyone posted.

Ms. Landry stated that she understands that Mr. Hutwelker only had a casual conversation with this person, but her opinion is that it would be great to get people in even for only a few months, if it does not cause damage. She hesitates to push off anyone who is interested in being here.

Ms. Bendel agreed that she loves the idea of getting people in here, from any kind of business. She continued that her staff already carries a large burden almost as a receptionist for the airport, as anyone entering the airport for any reason generally goes to Monadnock Aviation's office. If a flea market is here someone from the City should be present to avoid her staff acting as receptionists. Ms. Landry thanked her for that point and replied that they would have to work that into the lease agreement.

Mr. Hutwelker stated that this is an attempt to get something actively going here. He continued that he has not spoken with anyone other than this group, and he appreciates feedback. Regarding concerns about the space's conditions, Mr. Moriarty, Ms. Bendel, and Mr. Kopczynski have met with the person. The lease would establish the ground rules, including about what can be placed on the walls. The City would have the ability to control the condition of the space. The person's goal is to bring a restaurant here. It is in his best interest to keep this space well. It would mean not having other groups coming in but it might be a race to the finish, to see who gets here first. Having both the caterer and the flea market here would be a benefit, he thinks. They could try and see if the caterer might go into partnership with the flea market person after four months. Anyone wanting to have a restaurant here would be three or four months away anyway. A big concern was the cost to heat. If someone was in here, they could see just how much it would cost. Seeing activity here might enhance others' interest in coming. The flea market would be juried, like what is at the Colony Mill. Mr. Thompson thanked Mr. Hutwelker for the information. He continued that after hearing that, he takes back his concerns.

Mr. Bendzinski asked if the flea market would have a food cart of some sort attached. Mr. Hutwelker replied that he does not know, but that is a great idea, and he will let the person know. Chair Dexter stated that he agrees that this has been empty far too long. He continued that Mr. Hutwelker is working hard to get it taken care of. In the meantime they have to find a way to use the space – maybe by service clubs and non-profits. He wants to revisit this at the next meeting and come up with consensus with what they want to do. Mr. Hutwelker replied that he wants to be able to talk with Ms. Landry and Mr. Kopczynski because if the flea market idea takes hold he wants to move sooner than later. He continued that he would appreciate movement from the AAC. If the flea market is for four months it gives them the time to market the space to non-profits such as the groups that lost out due to the loss of Pumpkin Fest. It takes time, and both

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could happen. Ms. Landry suggested they come up with a name other than “flea market,” like how Faneuil Hall in Boston is a flea market but not called that.

Chair Dexter asked about the Elks space. Ms. Landry replied that Mr. Kopczynski has met with someone interested in that space. Mr. Moriarty replied that they sell safety equipment, and the location would work. Ms. Landry replied that the Town would require permitting. Mr. Hutwelker replied that the person has met with Ms. Carbonneau. He continued that the Town will not hold up the process.

Chair Dexter stated that Roy Rankin is here today from Gayle Associates and goes to several airports to see what is going on. He continued that Mr. Rankin has offered to keep an eye on what other airports are doing for marketing and keep in touch with the AAC. Mr. Rankin stated that he will be gone in January and back in February. He continued that he will give Mr. Moriarty and Ms. Landry his card and they can call him anytime. He would be glad to help in any way that he can.

Mr. Hutwelker encouraged everyone to look at the airport marketing plan that Mr. Thompson has copies of. He continued that it is extensive but has incredible information. Mr. Thompson agreed and stated that it is an airport marketing plan that did work, from beginning to end. It is a good example of how one is put together and what happens when it all comes together. This is a smaller version, not the big how-to manual.

9. **Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Chair Dexter adjourned the meeting at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker