

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 22, 2019

9:00 AM

Dillant Hopkins Airport Terminal

Members Present:

Curt Hansen, Chair
Beth Bendel, Vice Chair
Mayor Kendall Lane
Councilor Mitch Greenwald
Joe Bendzinski
Rick Blood
Nathan Jacobs

Staff Present:

Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager
Jack Wozmak, Airport Manager
Med Kopczynski, Economic Development
Director
Mike Moriarty, Airport Operations Manager

Members Not Present:

Bill Hutwelker
Peter Delaney
Brian Johnson

1) Call to Order

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2) Approval of Minutes – November

Mr. Bendzinski moved to approve the minutes of November 27, 2018, which Councilor Greenwald seconded and the Airport Development and Marketing Committee carried unanimously.

3) Old Business

4) New Business

a. Civil Air Patrol Presentation/Discussion

Chair Hansen welcomed Peter Blaise and Peter Hughes from the NH Civil Air Patrol (CAP). Mr. Blaise thanked Ms. Bendel and Mr. Wozmak for creating CAP space in the airport terminal. At some point, CAP hopes to have enough internal pilots to have planes at Keene more frequently. Currently, Keene is on the CAP exercise circuit; emergency rescue training exercises are simulated throughout the Monadnock region. CAP wants to contribute more to the Keene airport and wants to educate the community about CAP

rescue services. There is already an exercise planned for August and they hope to plan another in June.

Mr. Hughes was glad to visit the Committee as they focus on economic development; CAP hopes to be considered in the airports development plans as they have growing membership across the City. The NH CAP has approximately 600 members, which is always rising with recruitment. The Monadnock CAP unit has two parts: (1) emergency services and (2) cadet programs and leadership labs as well as aerospace education safety. CAP provides emergency services as an Airforce auxiliary of the Department of Defense (DOD). They are recruiting in Keene and throughout the Monadnock region to train new pilots and air crew (most members are in the Concord/Manchester/Laconia area). There are six NH CAP units as far north as Whitefield and as west as Keene; therefore, the Keene airport is a good strategic location for them. He is looking forward to staging ground and air team exercises here and hopes to have the Committee's support to build this as an operating area. Other exercises in the area have been successful, including one at Pisgah State Park. There are typically 30 people on an exercise who would work from the terminal when not performing the exercise; they will coordinate with airport staff. Additionally, they are happy to provide any services possible to help promote airport events. For the first exercise, they hope to have the appropriate media attention so the public can understand their work.

The Economic Development Director asked how the CAP incident command communicates with the Keene and Swanzey incident commands. Mr. Hughes replied that as a part of the DOD, CAP does incident command system and FEMA training. They are developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the state to be activated by individual municipalities. Right now, they can be activated by the Rescue Coordination Center for disaster relief and other incidents. The best way for an individual municipality to activate cap is to contact the Emergency Operations Center in Concord (available 24/7), which has a process to activate missions

Mr. Jacobs asked if CAP has any planes based in Keene. Mr. Hughes replied no, there are five CAP planes in the state that rotate. If there are more air crew locally in Keene, a plane could be assigned here on a monthly rotation; eventually the goal is to house a plane here all year for cadet and air crew training. The upcoming training exercises will bring five aircraft to the airport.

Mr. Wozmak asked how CAP is funded and how they find pilots. Mr. Blaise replied they are funded by Airforce Emergency Services, which has training funds from the DOD for CAP emergency services. Cadet and aerospace training are funded locally through corporate donations, dues, and fundraising.

Mr. Hughes said the Monadnock CAP unit is looking forward to exercises in Keene; they hope to use the terminal area, potentially Ms. Bendel's briefing room for incident commanders, and space in the parking lot for vans. They will work with the FBO to communicate with training crews.

Mr. Wozmak asked if there is an MOU between the City and CAP. Mr. Hughes thinks there is an outdated letter, which he will try to find to update.

Mr. Moriarty asked where the five CAP aircraft are located and who provides aircraft maintenance. Mr. Blaise replied that most aircraft come from Fitchburg; Mr. Hughes can inquire if that would ever go out for bid. If services are equitable, there is the possibility for maintenance operations in Keene; it would require an approval change but is worth a discussion. Mr. Hughes said fuel and routine maintenance will be important on exercise day.

b. Airport Metrics (landing fees, operations, fuel, etc.) to track development activity

Mr. Wozmak recalled the Committee discussed developing metrics and tracking them to generate meaningful data about plane activity at the airport. Fuel sales provide some indication. Ms. Bendel could possibly provide data on the large jet landing fees. The main challenge is tracking smaller aircraft; there are approximately 90 aircraft based at the airport in addition to visitors. Mr. Jacobs asked if there are state services to help tracking, such as pressure traffic counters on the runway. Mr. Moriarty replied that so far all methods tried have failed including video vehicle counting technology (cannot distinguish airport operations vehicles) and radio monitoring devices (complicated by touch and go's). No methods tried have been accurate. Councilor Greenwald suggested a guest book; Mr. Wozmak recalled many visitors do not want records of their activity. Mayor Lane suggested hiring young people to watch and count traffic.

Mr. Bendzinski asked if based aircraft in Keene are increasing. Mr. Wozmak said there is an FAA formula to estimate operations based on the aircraft based here. It is a rough estimate that accounts for the roughly 28,000 annual operations listed in the Master Plan. There are typically two or three vacant hangars with two on the waiting list. There are some seasonal fluctuations as well turnover with people selling aircraft.

Councilor Greenwald said that it will be hard to get funding for economic development without defendable estimates of airport operations. There will always be people who do not think City funds should be allocated to the airport. Mr. Moriarty recalled there are methods to estimate use, particularly with people counting cameras, some of which need to be replaced in the terminal (inexpensively). He asked if the FBO still has a fuel flowage report. Ms. Bendel replied yes, which is a great way to keep a record; she hesitates to share information from guest books, however, because most of her customers value discretion and aviation freedom. She thinks it is difficult to track small private aircraft just stopping for lunch or a break. Regarding Mayor Lane's suggestion to hire someone to count activity, she said some days there will be a lot of activity to count and other days very minimal. From a marketing and development perspective, she thinks turbine aircraft should be the priority for tracking, which is easy to do through landing fees. The census from landing fees is very accurate and she submits a monthly report to the City with those figures. Mr. Wozmak agreed that those figures will help elicit airport investments; when the City invests in airport marketing and development business

follows. Councilor Greenwald agreed that investments in the airport are investments in the future. If the Council will support airport development, they will need data to demonstrate the value of airport investment to the public; public support is critical for economic development.

Mr. Jacobs asked if there are plans to change the fuel farm location; he questioned how many operations they may not be tracking because the fuel farm is on the other side of airport property. Mr. Wozmak recalled significant discussion about moving the fuel farm in the Master Plan. There are 80 tenants on that side of the property who use the fuel farm regularly; moving it toward the terminal will inconvenience those tenants. He agreed this is an issue the Committee should discuss further. Mr. Moriarty and Ms. Bendel agreed moving the fuel farm close to the terminal is challenging because the ramp is too small for transient and C&S aircraft. If there were more fuel sales, purchasing a fuel truck would be logical. Ms. Bendel recalled the FBO has always operated the fuel farm, and sometimes owned it.

The Economic Development Director recalled that most historic airport investments have used FAA funds. The City has and should continue investing in quality airport buildings and infrastructure that attracts businesses here. Councilor Greenwald agreed they need to sell the value of the airport to the public. He and Ms. Bendel agreed the terminal building is much better than it used to be. Mr. Wozmak agreed there is a long way to go and the Council will have to decide how to prioritize these investments; some airport buildings have not been maintained in more than 50 years.

c. Airport Consulting Proposal Update on Scheduled Commercial Air Service in Keene

Bill Tomcich visited the ADMC in November 2018 to share his experience negotiating with airlines to support commercial air services in areas like Keene between main hubs. He submitted a consulting proposal to the City Manager for data acquisition on opportunities for commercial service in Keene. The last feasibility study was in 2012 and the airline business has changed since then. Depending on the data, Keene could be well-positioned to reestablish commercial service in light of airline consolidations. The City Manager will advance the proposal through the Council structure; she will negotiate the scope of services and research funding possibilities. As a secondary focus, the consultant would also investigate ways to reach more corporate and charter jet customers as a fallback if commercial service is not possible.

Councilor Greenwald asked how much the consultants are seeking for their services. Mr. Wozmak said it is around \$50,000. Ms. Bendel suggested any payment should be made after the consultant helps the airport see data and results. The City Manager said there are two parts to the proposal; there should be a flat fee for data collection and additional fees if they contribute to successful outreach to airlines or corporate customers. She added that these are not the only consultants the City could contract for this work. The \$50,000 proposal seemed high to the City Manager but finding the right consultant is essential for this Committee and airport to be productive. Mr. Wozmak added that the proposal does

not yet outline how the consultants will collect the necessary data. There are many opportunities for the airport to support economic development in the region. The City Manager will continue working toward a proposal that the City is comfortable executing. Mr. Wozmak said this is more progress than there has been in a long time. Mayor Lane said there could be increased opportunities if there were someone focused on the airport at the county level.

Ms. Bendel asked if airlines have shared demographics they are looking for in this region to fulfill what they need. Mr. Wozmak agreed that is the information needed but he is unsure if that information is refined yet. They need to know how many people are traveling to other airports in the region to determine commercial feasibility. He expects a consultant to refine the data to find out what airlines need to come here. Ms. Bendel imagines airlines can easily say what demographics they need to establish in a City (population, miles from largest airport, etc.). If Keene does not meet those criteria, they are likely to move on to other opportunities. Councilor Greenwald and the City Manager agreed a consultant is necessary to answer these questions. Mr. Wozmak and the City Manager will work to refine the consulting proposal.

Mr. Moriarty recalled one deterrent for airlines is lack of fire service at the airport; services like these make marketing easier. Mr. Wozmak agreed and said he is working in that direction; the town of Swanzy is buying the Gold property and in return Mr. Wozmak has cleared the trees. The concept is to use that property to build a municipal fire station; this will allow Swanzy to preserve other developable land, leaving them in a politically and historically more successful location. Also, if the airport becomes Part 139 certified again, there would be funding available for the Town of Swanzy that could support the fire station that abuts the airport property. This is a positive step and a conversation that will continue over the next few years.

d. Airport Management Transition

Mr. Wozmak has taken a position as Director of Human Resources at Monadnock Family Services. His last day as Airport Manager is February 15 and this Committee will need to continue this work. The City Manager is exploring a few options for transition; she is working on an agreement with the Engineers of Record from Dubois and King on a short-term contract to temporarily manage the airport and continue capital work they are already doing. There is no formalized plan yet but they have someone with airport management experience on their staff that can help through this transition and refine the focus on development activities. This will help facilitate a search to hire and vet a new manager. The City Manager will review the Dubois and King proposal when received and begin negotiations to keep things moving in the short-term. Eventually, the goal is to have a full-time, City employed Airport Manager; someone with marketing and development experience they may not find locally. She anticipates a regional or national search, which might require Committee assistance. She has already received four calls from interested professionals in the region who saw the Sentinel article about Mr. Wozmak's transition. She welcomes the Committee's input in developing the job description; she will share the draft via email.

Mayor Lane and the Committee expressed their thanks to Mr. Wozmak for his service and the dramatic increase in airport activity during his tenure. Mr. Wozmak said it was an interesting experience and it will be good for the airport to have a new level of expertise. During this transition, Mr. Moriarty's role will stay the same.

Ms. Bendel listed important airport activity that can help educate constituents about the value of the airport such as successful business people flying from Keene. The Economic Development Director agreed there is potential for Keene to be a stop between hubs for major airlines, similar to Teterboro. Corporate aircraft come through Teterboro currently, but they are running out of space like many airports.

5) Adjournment

Councilor Greenwald moved to adjourn the meeting, which Mr. Bendzinski seconded and the ADMC carried unanimously. Hearing no further business, Chair Hansen adjourned the meeting at 10:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker