



CITY OF CONCORD

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Airport Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 17, 2019
Airport Terminal Building
65 Airport Road

In attendance:

Committee: Chairman Joe Alosa, Rick Bartle, Councilor Candace Bouchard, Councilor Gail Matson, Deputy City Manager Carlos Baía

Staff/Agents: David Rolla, Airport Manager; Chip Chesley, Director of General Services; Martha Drukker, Associate City Engineer; John Gorham, Jacobs Engineering

Meeting called to order at 4:45 p.m.

Approval of the October 3, 2019 meeting minutes

Councilor Bouchard moved approval; Seconded by Councilor Matson. Motion passes 4-0.

Airport Aerobatic Practice Area

Airport Manager Rolla explained that the current practice by aerobatic pilots is to use an area near the Hopkinton Dam. Mr. Rolla felt that this activity would be better suited for the Concord Airport as it would provide a runway in close proximity. It would also generate additional business for the airport. He has already had inquiries from aerobatic pilots to purchase a T-hangar as well as buying fuel.

Mr. Rolla noted that the aerobatic area is a three dimensional box of airspace that would be concentrated over the Concord Airport. Only Mr. Rolla can "open" and "close" that box. He would need to file NOTAMs with the FAA at least 72 hours before. Mr. Rolla stated that, per the FAA, he would ultimately be responsible for everything that happens during the time the "box" is open for this activity.

Mr. Rolla explained that the "box" would only be open a maximum of 2 hours per session. Councilor Bouchard asked how many sessions he anticipates. Mr. Rolla answered that Keene and Rochester do 6-7 per year.

Chairman Alosa asked about the down side of this activity. Mr. Rolla noted that when he allowed a practice session a few weeks ago, Councilor Bouchard received a complaint from a resident in the "Birdland" neighborhood about a plane flying very low over their house. The resident noted that they

had lived at this house over 20 years and were used to the National Guard helicopters over their house but that they had never had a low-flying fixed wing aircraft.

Mr. Rolla explained that when he opens the “box” for the aerobatic exercise, regular fixed-wing flight traffic to the airport is diverted away from the box thus taking planes over a different path than usual. He believes that is what transpired.

Mr. Bartle stated that, based on Mr. Rolla’s statements, the incidents of plane traffic being diverted over other homes would be restricted to 2 hours per day at around 6-7 days per year. He added that this would also assume that there was plane traffic exactly during the time of the aerobatic exercise which may not be the case.

Councilor Bouchard expressed concern over this practice’s impact on residents who wouldn’t be used to the new diverted flight pattern, even if temporary. She expressed support for the program but cautioned that there needs to be some education of the public and someone has to be assigned to handle any resident inquiries. If this program is approved, she wants it to be evident that the City can cancel the practice should there be increasing issues with neighbors.

Mr. Rolla stated that the current FAA approval he has obtained for this practice is only for two years and would need to be renewed. He agreed to consult with the Airport Advisory Committee prior to any renewal effort.

Motion was made by Mr. Bartle and seconded by Councilor Matson to recommend that City Council approve of allowing the Concord Municipal Airport to host aerobatic practices with the following stipulations:

- a) The current authorization from FAA for aerobatic activity will expire in 2 years. Mr. Rolla shall seek permission from the Airport Advisory Committee prior to re-application.
- b) Mr. Rolla will provide City Administration and the Airport Advisory Committee with notice of any aerobatic exercises, at least, one week prior to it taking place.
- c) All inquiries regarding the aerobatic exercise will be directed to Mr. Rolla.

Motion passes 4-0.

Aviation Day

Mr. Baía reminded the committee that City Council had approved of the Airport holding an “Aviation Day” on an annual basis. As such, any efforts to secure sponsorships and make other arrangements for the event could be started as soon as possible. Ms. Drukker stated that the event will be called “Wings and Wheels” going forward. There is no date set yet for 2020.

Airport Capital Program Update

Ms. Drukker summarized the work that has been done at the airport over the last year. She noted that there is some additional crack sealing proposed for the aprons by the City’s Public Properties division. She is hoping to get that included in an existing grant; otherwise the City would need to budget for it in a future CIP.

Mr. Baía asked the committee to consider whether there are new projects they'd like to add to the Capital program or move projects in from the outyears. He noted that at the last meeting, Mr. Rolla had stated that the main runway extension was a priority yet that project is very far out in the capital program. Mr. Baía stated that if the committee wants to recommend changes, such as making the runway extension a priority, staff would analyze it to gauge viability and work with the committee on steps needed to actualize changes.

Mr. Baía suggested that the January Airport Advisory Committee meeting be dedicated—in part—to discuss the entire Airport capital program. He will forward a copy of the capital program to the committee for its review prior to that meeting.

Mr. Rolla complimented the City's improvements to the airfield specifically the lighting and striping. It has made a tremendous positive impact.

Terminal Area Study Update

Mr. Gorham stated that the project has started. An inventory has been taken of the existing buildings in the scope and an architect has been commissioned to assess the buildings later this week.

Mr. Gorham anticipates the first meeting of the Study "working group" to be held in mid-January and for those results to be reported back to the Airport Advisory Committee at their January or February meeting.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.