

Airport Advisory Committee Meeting
St. Mary's County Regional Airport
January 25, 2010

Approved Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jim Davis, Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 PM. Committee members Rich Richardson, Skip Shepherd, Michael Brunnschweiler and Jacque LaValle were also present. Robert Mullennix, the committee's new member, was excused as well as Randy Willis. Since a quorum was present, official business could be conducted. Others in attendance are reflected on the Sign-In Sheet.

II. MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the December 7, 2009 meeting. After review, Mr. Davis asked for comment or a motion to approve, and Mr. LaValle moved and Mr. Richardson seconded a motion that the minutes be approved as drafted. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0. The approved minutes for prior meetings are posted to the County website.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Davis reviewed the current membership of the committee for calendar year 2010 and the recent appointments from the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Robert Mullennix has been appointed as a new member, and Mike Brunnschweiler and Skip Shepard were reappointed, to a three-year term through December 31, 2012.

Mr. Davis then opened the floor to the committee members to consider nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman for calendar year 2010. Rich Richardson moved and Jacque LaValle seconded a motion to re-elect Mr. Davis as committee chairman. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0 with Mr. Davis abstaining. Mr. Davis then moved and Skip Shephard seconded a motion to elect Mr. Jacque LaValle as Vice Chairman. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0 with Mr. LaValle abstaining.

Mr. Davis and the committee then accepted Rich Richardson's offer to be the Committee Safety Officer for Calendar Year 2010.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Whipple facilitated a discussion about an Ethics Commission request for comment on requiring Airport Advisory Committee members to file Financial Disclosure statements. Mr. Whipple provided committee members a copy of the Airport Advisory Committee by-laws indicating its official duties, the current Ethics Ordinance from 2006, and the ten-page Financial Disclosure form. The committee noted that the 2006 ordinance did not require the committee to file. They also noted that their role is strictly to advise the County Commissioners on airport-related matters with no involvement whatsoever in acquisition decisions, which are handled by the responsible County departments. The committee recognizes the purpose of the financial disclosure process and the protection it provides from complaints of conflict of interest. However, it is the opinion of the committee that filing statements is not necessary. The committee asked Mr. Whipple to communicate its opinion to the Ethics Commission.

Mr. Davis requested Mr. Bildman to provide an update on the hangar construction for MedSTAR medical flight services. Mr. Bildman stated that the project was on schedule and that once the project was complete, he would like to move the Pilot Lounge to the terminal space currently occupied by MedSTAR. In concert with this move, Mr. Bildman would like to

move his offices into the terminal, consistent with enhancing the use of the terminal. The committee agrees with these proposals to enhance the Pilot Lounge and the general aviation operations of the airport.

Mr. Davis reported on the initiatives to enhance the use of the terminal. He reported that informal discussions with leaders in the county indicate that, with the local and state budget concerns, it would be a challenge to convince a majority of the County Commissioners to invest the approximately \$50,000 to provide infrastructure for a food service operation. It is generally agreed that the payback period for such an investment would be around four to five years, and it may be more amenable to the County to provide a rent reduction. Mr. Davis also reports that a liquor license would be key to a successful operation, noting that the County's Wicomico Shores Golf Course retains a liquor license. The committee will have to address the intended market; transient aviators from the region, visiting predominantly on weekends, or local clientele for lunch during the week. The Cambridge airport runs a successful restaurant, but it was an established family business that relocated onto Cambridge airport property. The committee also recognizes that the economy does not favor new start-ups at this time. However, the committee sees several general aviation airports in Maryland as modeling aspects of a successful operation and will continue to explore the steps necessary to bring the initiative to a decision point for the County Commissioners.

As a related matter, Mr. Whipple passed around an example of an airport marketing brochure received from Mr. Erichsen for the committee's consideration. The County would like the committee to come up with a design for a marketing brochure for the airport.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

As a follow up to the food service proposal, Mr. David Webster, the local Civil Air Patrol squadron commander, commented that advertising any food service operation will be critical since the terminal is not visible from the 235 corridor, unlike other airports in Maryland. A significant sign at the MD 235 and Airport Road intersection will be necessary. The committee agreed.

V. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORTATION REPORT

Mr. Whipple represented the Department of Public Works and Transportation and handed out a copy of the draft 2009 Annual Report for the committee to review. The committee asked that the terminal enhancement initiative be highlighted in the 2009 annual report. Rich Richardson inquired as to the determination of the 105 jobs generated by the airport. Mr. Whipple stated that those jobs were most likely both direct and indirect and would look into the State's data to see how that figure was determined. The committee also requested a graph indicating basic operational statistics over the last five years.

Mr. Whipple handed out the 5-year County Airport Master Plan Capital Improvement Plan, indicating that it has been coordinated with input from the FAA. He noted that the FAA's funding plan is not a commitment of funds in the out-years, but a planning projection for their long term management of the FAA overall Airport Improvement Plan (AIP). Only the current and past years are obligated. The updated projects and their phasing have not changed from the prior year. The current program, FY10, does not have any construction, only land acquisition and design. The FAA's general rule is to fund land acquisition, design and construction in that order. Therefore the overlap of the various projects to expand the airport indicates a surge of construction funding in FY14 as the construction of the runway extension commences.

Mr. Whipple attended the quarterly Maryland Airport Managers Association meeting on January 6, 2010 in Baltimore with the FAA and the MAA. He briefly addressed the comments made about the FAA reauthorization, which is due to be extended on March 31, 2010. Due to economic pressures, the airline industry is pressing Congress to restructure the FAA's Airport Improvement Program (AIP) such that general aviation airports are more self-sufficient. General aviation interests have mobilized to counter the airline industry, and it appears that the current funding of the AIP program will continue.

Mr. Whipple handed out the grant application letter to the Maryland Aviation Administration indicating three State-eligible projects; the replacement of the rotating beacon, repairs to the storm drainage system on the airfield, and taxiway markers. The projects must be complete by June 30, 2010.

Mr. Whipple stated that there is nothing significant to report with respect to the airport environs on the development review process for the January 2010 submission.

Mr. Whipple asked Mr. Carlton to provide an update on maintenance and repair tasks for the airport. Mr. Carlton stated that the taxiway and runway had been re-striped in December and that the additional markings requested by the committee were not installed because the contractor ran out of daylight. The additional markings can be added to the inspection list to be addressed when the runway is extended.

The purchase request for the rotating beacon is still with the Procurement Office, which is currently short-handed. The committee asked for a safety priority since the beacon's visibility is notably degraded.

Mr. Carlton reported that the Highways Division had been contacted about the tree cutting and perimeter fence maintenance. Mr. Carlton has not received a schedule date since the Highways Division is waiting for the ground to dry. He stated that he would continue to press the Highway Division about the tree cutting.

The committee also requested that the existing wind sock be replaced and that the segmented circle be repainted. Mr. Carlton will request that Building Services replace the wind sock and perform the painting. The committee recommends looking at other sources outside of County government, such as volunteers. Mr. Webster stated that the cutting of the trees and the painting of the tetrahedron could be a job for the Civil Air Patrol cadets to perform on a weekend.

Mr. Davis reported that the asphalt is apparently heaving at the middle intersection of the taxi way and the ramp in-front of Air Tec. Mr. Davis and Mr. Carlton would investigate and that Mr. Carlton would contact Mr. Davis as to when to review the intersection.

Mr. LaValle expressed concern that the airport ramp area was not cleared of snow for four days after the December storm, and because of this, no one was able to get to their aircraft. Piedmont Aviation was not able to rent aircraft or give flight instruction, losing income. Mr. Whipple explained the prioritization of snow removal at the airport, indicating that the medevac ramp for the Maryland State Police was Priority 1 and that the rest of the airport is Priority 4. The committee would like to see the airport raised to a higher priority level, and Mr. Whipple will evaluate the steps to make this happen.

The committee established Saturday, April 24, 2010 as the next airport inspection by the committee. DPW&T staff will be available to assist in the inspection. The committee also requested that the 2010 airport emergency exercise be conducted as a field exercise similar to the 2007 event. Mr. Webster indicated that the Civil Air Patrol would be amenable to participating as they did at the prior event.

VI. FBO AND LEASEHOLDER REPORTS

Mr. Bildman stated that the aircraft tie downs and hangers were 100% leased. The existing state police hangar had been modified to conform to the County's Code Official and State Fire Marshal direction. The existing exterior siding has been replaced. The new hangar exterior metal is complete, and the Maryland State Police has approved the interior design and lay out.

VII. NEW / OLD BUSINESS

The next scheduled meeting is scheduled for February 22, 2010. The meeting will begin at 6:00 PM in the Walter F. Duke Terminal Building Conference Room.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Having heard no additional comments, Mr. Davis indicated that the agenda for the meeting was complete. Mr. LaValle moved and Mr. Shephard seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting which passed by a vote of 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved,

(signed)

(signed)

Gary Whipple, P.E. DPW&T
Recording Secretary

Jim Davis, P.E.
Chairman