

.MUNICIPAL AIRPORTS AVIATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 2, 2017
Anchorage Fire Training Center
1140 Airport Heights Road, Building "A" Room 3
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Powell, Chair
Sharon Chamard, Vice Chair
Corey Hester
Jamie Patterson-Simes
Greg Pearce
Terry Pena

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES

Tim Coons, Lake Hood Seaplane Base

AIRPORT STAFF PRESENT

Paul Bowers A.A.E., Airport Manager
Darlene Sivyer, Commission Secretary (343-6303)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Jim Powell called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. SELF INTRODUCTIONS

Following new Commissioner Corey Hester's introduction, Jim asked all attendees to introduce themselves and tell of their association with Merrill Field.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the January 5, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

4. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

Airport Manager Paul Bowers provided a report on the following topics.

A. Noise

Paul noted that noise complaints are primarily due to rotorcraft operations. Current protocol is to use RWY 16-34 when RWY 7-25 and Bryant Army Airfield are not suitable. Even though it is being followed, Rogers Park residents are concerned pilots are not following proper protocol, as variable winds at MRI are different than at Rogers Park.

B. Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviations (VPD)

Paul reported there been two VPDs this year to date; both incidents were caused by vehicles driving into a controlled movement area.

C. User Group Meeting

The next scheduled User Group Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 5, 2017. The meetings are held with the Airport Manager the first Wednesday of each calendar quarter, 3:00 – 5:00PM at the Airport Manager's Office. (As noted hereafter, this meeting will be coupled with a special MAAAC meeting).

D. Ongoing Bird Control

Local ravens continue to be a nuisance, an maintenance personnel haze and take birds when possible.

E. Airfield Snow Operations

Taxiways Juliet (north side only) and Hotel remain closed for the season.

F. Fence Damage

Early Sunday morning, February 26, 2017, a SUV type vehicle crashed into the perimeter fence along 5th Avenue between Hudson Circle and Airport Heights Road, causing significant damage to the fence. When APD arrived on scene, the driver was gone and APD received a report that the vehicle had been stolen. The breach has been temporarily secured with sections of chain link fencing. MRI is waiting for repair estimates from the vendor who installed the fence last summer through the FAA grant funded Security Improvements Phase 3 project.

G. Leasing Update

- **Chaz Aero**, the new aircraft painting facility at 5th Avenue and Ardaiz Circle, plans to open in early April. Final stages of the interior permitting and inspection process are underway.
- Construction of the 60' x 60' hangar on the **Jay Hawk** lot has begun. Steel is up and exterior siding is now being applied to the structure. The building is expected to be completed in May.
- The 14,500sf hangar on the **A&W Services** lot is finished. The building contains one commercial hangar on the north side and six adjoining stacked hangars on the south. The hangars are being rented, not sold.
- Construction of the new hangar facility on the **North Edge** lot is complete. The addition adds two 6000sf units to the existing 4500sf building. New siding was applied to the existing structure to match the addition giving the appearance of one building.
- **Alaska Aircraft Innovation LLC (AAI)** entered into a new long-term lease with the Municipality of Anchorage/Merrill Field for the former City Electric property located at 819 Orca Street. The company will manufacture carbon-fiber aircraft parts and expand to building carbon-fiber aircraft in a few years. AAI will manufacture and test aircraft on Merrill Field and will likely partner with other airport business that can provide services such as Airframe & Power Plant mechanics and flight instruction. Hangar and tiedown rentals are also available.
- **Alaska Air Transit (AAT)** was the successful bidder for a lease of the former Quonset hut (Kontor) site. Their plan is to build two hangars to accommodate two Pilatus Porter and two Cessna Grand Caravan aircraft. Company office space will be included in the hangar, development plans will accommodate business expansion. AAT currently employs 16 people and provides regular service to, among other areas, the North Slope oil fields.
- Plans are underway for construction of a 70' X 90' (6300 sf) hangar on the **Aero Twin** lot. The new hangar will be next to the existing building.
- **D&D Airpark** plans to proceed with a new hangar development concept for four separate, multi-unit hangars for business and aircraft storage use.
- **Alaska Airframes** has submitted preliminary plans for 2017 development of a Super Cub Center on their 5th Avenue facing lot. The proposed building is to be used to manufacture and showcase aircraft superstructure components.

H. Project Updates

The **Taxiway Q Dynamic Compaction Phase 5 Project** area that included compaction of the landfill underlayment of portions of TWY Q and Golf apron is 3/4 complete. Completion of the project is on winter suspension and will be finished early 2017.

The project area for **Taxiway Q Dynamic Compaction Phase 6 Project** will begin east of the Phase 5 project area and is a continuation of the Taxiway Q Rehabilitation program depending on AIP funding. Paul defined the landfill perimeter and explained the dynamic compaction process.

The winter construction suspended **Runway 5/23 Lighting Project** (RWY lights and lighted windsock) will proceed this spring.

The **Merrill Field Airport Master Plan Phase 2 Project** is complete and is awaiting formal MOA acceptance. Paul stated the only significant change in this updated plan is the identification of Land Use Alternatives that address the potential development of a (medical) office leasehold in concert with relocation of MOA snow storage and 'Sitka Street Park' areas. The greenbelt west of Sitka Street will remain. Carl Siebe noted the Master Plan website is currently down as the site information and maintenance is being transferred to MRI, the Master Plan information will be online again soon.

Sharon Chamard mentioned she has been approached by some Fairview residents who are concerned that Merrill Field plans to acquire property on McHugh Lane and demolish those houses. Paul replied that this is not a part of any plan.

Phase 4 Security Improvements will add fiber optic cable to the west side of the airport, inside the fence that runs along Orca Street. The fiber optic cabling will support data transfer for the security camera and gate systems. New cameras and gate and lighting improvements are also a part of the project. The project documents are currently at the Municipal Purchasing Department for final review. Project construction is dependent on FAA grand funding. Discussion ensued regarding FAA AIP grant fund sources and distribution.

5. ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. MRI Air Traffic Control Tower

No report.

B. UAA Aviation Technology Division

No report.

C. Civil Air Patrol

No report.

D. Elmendorf Airfield Operations

No report.

E. Lake Hood Seaplane Base

Tim Coons reported there will be some construction on Lake Hood this summer as the Lake Hood TWY along Lake Shore Drive is being refurbished. The public ramp to the lake will be upgraded, leaving only one ramp available during the project. These projects will cause displacement of some aircraft, but the impact should be limited to a small number of aircraft. The Lake Hood Master Plan is going through the final phases.

Tim noted there is a high demand for wheeled aircraft tiedowns at Lake Hood, but he will help find spaces for any of our customers who need to move because of Merrill Field construction projects.

F. Bryant Army Airfield

No report.

6. OLD BUSINESS AND UNFINISHED ACTION

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Taxiway Segregation Project

Paul explained how this proposed project would segregate Taxiways Alpha and November from the adjoining leasetot aprons to reduce Pedestrian Vehicle Deviations (VPDs). Currently, the only separation is the painted taxiway edge line, making it very easy to walk or drive over the line which would cause a VPD.

Paul described a concept to shift the TWY A and N centerlines 15' into the infield to enable retention of the current 75' TWY width while creating a 10' wide vehicle drive lane along the apron edge and a 5' wide oval, grassed islands with lights on the taxiway side of the drive lane. This proposed concept was denied by FAA because FAA AIP grant funds cannot be used to support projects that exceed FAA standards. Merrill Field is a Class B2 airport, the standard for which is 35' wide taxiways. The existing 75' wide taxiways are a holdover from prior design use when MRI was the only airport in south central Alaska, prior to Anchorage International Airport opening in 1954.

FAA's inability to approve adding 15' to the infield next to the taxiways means that continuation of the project will reduce taxiway widths from 75' to 60'. Current FAA ATC policy does not encourage bi-directional operations on a single taxiway, so the 60' width will be adequate. Paul ended his presentation by explaining how AIP grant funding is in jeopardy if our MRI VPD situation is not satisfactorily addressed.

Alaska Air Carriers Association Executive Director Jane Dale summarized that the Alpha and November taxiway widths would be reduced to 60' and asked if there has been a public process for this change. She noted there are many pilots who will be impacted by this project and encouraged a separate meeting be held to discuss this project.

ACE Hangars Owners Association President Michael Schoder reported that this topic was discussed at the Association's annual membership meeting and collectively the members are opposed to this plan. He stated that there is no reason to create a vehicle lane for airport users to drive from apron to apron next to the taxiway.

Spernak Airways Owner Mike Spernak asked to see the plan for the entire airport and concurred with Mike Schoder's comment that vehicles need to stay off the aprons.

Mike Schoder recommended the MAAAC hold a Special Meeting to discuss this project and suggested it be held in concert with the MRI Users Group meeting scheduled on April 5 at 3:00PM. A venue larger than the Airport Manager's office conference room will be needed.

Jim asked Paul for statistics showing where the VPDs occurred, and Jamie Patterson-Simes asked also for a map showing where the incidents happened and what caused the VPDs. Paul replied the statistics and map can be provided.

The Commissioners agreed to hold a special MAAAC meeting on April 5 at 3:00PM in lieu of the MRI Users Group Meeting. Commission Secretary Darlene Sivyer will check on room availability at the Fire Training Center. A Special Meeting announcement will be posted.

B. Begich Middle School Aviation Program

Merrill Field pilot Bill Quirk presented a document containing information about the Begich Middle School (BMS) Aviation Program. Currently, the school introduces the principles of aviation to students by teaching them how to build model airplanes. Bill briefly explained the nationwide Build A Plane (not models) program and hopes that Begich Middle School would add this program to their curriculum to attract youth who are considering career paths in aviation.

Bill asked the Commission to send a letter to ASD Superintendent Dr. Deena Paramo stating support of Begich Middle School implementing the Build A Plane program. Greg Pierce noted that he saw the program in action and believes it would be useful in providing aviation science and engineering to our youth.

The Commissioners were in agreement that sending a letter to Superintendent Paramo would be appropriate. Darlene will finalize and Jim will sign the letter drafted by Bill Quirk.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AVIATION

Terry Cartee mentioned it is nice to have RWY 05-23 groomed for ski operations. Bill Quirk noted that Jeff Duft has groomed this runway twice with his snow machine.

Mike Schoder added that he is appreciative of the aviation services provided by the Municipality of Anchorage and Merrill Field Airport

9. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Paul noted that Chet Harris has expressed interest in applying for the open MAAAC vacancy for an owner of residential real property located within one mile of the boundaries of any municipal airport.

10. OTHER

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

