

MUNICIPAL AIRPORTS AVIATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 7, 2015
Anchorage Fire Training Center
1150 Airport Heights Road, Building "A" Room 3
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Powell, Chair
Sharon Chamard, Vice Chair
Dick Armstrong
Don DeVoe
Greg Pearce
Terry Pena

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Jim Cieplak *

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES

Mark Brys, Interim ATCT Manager

AIRPORT STAFF PRESENT

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Jim Powell called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

2. SELF INTRODUCTIONS

Jim asked all attendees to introduce themselves.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the March 5, 2015 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

4. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Noise

Airport Manager Paul Bowers reported that due to the spring flying season the number of noise complaints have increased with most calls due to helicopter operations. Helicopter training pilots are encouraged to use Bryant Army Airfield for practice operations to reduce the rotor noise over residential neighborhoods near Merrill Field.

B. Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviations (VPD)

One Vehicle Pedestrian Deviation was recorded in April. The incident occurred when a helicopter parked in the median between Runway 7/25 and Taxiway November; the pilot and passenger disembarked and walked across TWY N. Paul noted that there will be no more helicopter landings in the medians. Brian Ochs, former MRI ATCT Manager, also noted that Merrill is now out of the top 100 airports across the nation with the most incursions. The VPD numbers are much better than last year at this time.

* excused absence

C. Leasing Update

Paul provided PowerPoint slides showing development plans for several leaseholds.

- Chuck Miller, Lot 7C Leaseholder, has acquired footing permits for construction of an aircraft-only paint facility that will include a fixed wing repair area. Lot preparation work such as fence relocation is being done now; ground breaking work is to begin soon. Paul pointed out the location of the 16,400+ sq. ft. facility which will be west of the control tower with access from the Ardaiz cul-de-sac. An option to use the fixed wing repair side of the facility for future auto painting will be retained in his lease if future conditions dictate a dual use.
- The nine, 2000 sf. stacked configuration hangars on the Janssen Hangars LLC lot west of TWY 16/34 are nearing completion. The for-sale, non-commercial hangars have been erected and final painting and paving work will be completed soon.
- The lease for the lot where the Quonset hut hangars are located will expire in June, 2015. Current lessee Mark Renner, Kontor Development, plans to remove the four Quonset hut buildings and construct two parallel buildings, each with four stacked configuration hangars. The leaseholder has committed to acquiring permits for the new development and plans to begin demo and construction this summer. A new lease with strictly defined performance criteria is anticipated.
- JayHawk Air owner Tim Karlovich has presented plans to build a hangar at 1842 Merrill Field Drive. The hangar, large enough to house two AS350 A-Star helicopters, will have a south facing hangar door and will be built immediately south of the existing Jay Hawk building and north of Taxiway Quebec.
- Airframes Alaska owner is interested in relocation/expansion to Merrill Field Airport through the purchase of Reeve Air Motive. On January 1, 2014, Airframes Alaska purchased Alaskan Bushwheels and manufacturing was moved from Joseph, Oregon to Chugiak, Alaska. The general aviation product line includes bush wheels, landing gear, PA-18 Super Cub & other aircraft parts. Airframes Alaska currently has 40 employees and supports the bush flying community in Alaska and throughout the world.
- North Edge leaseholder Mike McNamara has presented an expansion concept that includes proposed Hudson Circle cul-de-sac modification for hangar expansion and/or aircraft apron use.

D. Project Updates

The **Security & Lighting Upgrade Phase 3 Project** slated to start in 2015 will include installation of a MRI-parochial fiber optic cable from Stoddard Way to the west side of Wilbur Circle; modifying the existing vertical stake fencing along 5th Avenue extensions and adding 3-stranded barbed wire atop the chain link fencing; installation of security cameras on the air traffic control tower to provide Runway 7-25 surveillance; and reducing the size of Taxiway Kilo on the north side of Runway 7-25. In reference to the fiber optic cable, Paul noted that General Communications Inc. (GCI) and Alaska Communications were informed of the cable installation in the event that either entity would entertain the possibility of also laying cable for service to customers; neither company expressed interest in do so, citing low customer demand. For future development purposes, additional conduit will be installed by MRI.

The **Taxiway Quebec Phase 4 Project** is a continuation of the dynamic compaction process whereby the underlying landfill material is compacted. Five construction bids were submitted for this project with a notice to proceed, pending Assembly approval of contract award, to Alaska Excavating, LLC. The anticipated start date will be in June.

The **Merrill Field Airport Master Plan Phase 2 Project** is underway with HDR Engineering Consultants under contract; three sub-contractors are also on board as part of the Airport Master Plan team. HDR is currently evaluating the alternatives for subsequent refinement to a preferred plan for future development. An Airport Advisory Group will be convening soon to review the preferred alternatives. HDR is also currently developing the Airports Geological Information System (AGIS) to support an electronic Airport Layout Plan (ALP).

The **Orca Street Buildings Re-Roofing Project** includes new roof structures on three airport properties located on Orca Street: USGS at 1209 Orca Street, SkyTrek Alaska Flight Training at 1570 E. 12th Avenue, and the multi-unit commercial building at 1025 Orca Street. The project is well underway and is expected to be completed in five or six weeks, weather and material arrival permitting.

The **City Electric Property Acquisition Project** is in progress. MRI has received approval from FAA to move forward with appraisals, title search and State Historic Property Office (SHPO) evaluation. Seven lots with four buildings are included in this acquisition and the Phase 2 Environmental Assessment is nearing completion. The estimated acquisition cost will be appraisal determined (order-of-magnitude acquisition price in the \$1.9M range will be primarily FAA administered Airport Improvement Program funds).

E. User Group Meeting

The next meeting is planned for Wednesday, July 1, 2015, 3:00PM – 5:00PM. The group will meet in the Airport Manager's Office conference room, 800 Merrill Field Drive.

F. Ongoing Bird Control

Paul noted the grasshopper hatch last summer was extraordinary which considerably increased the number of seagull takes. To combat this problem, airport maintenance personnel have received pesticide applicator certification and will apply insecticide this spring. Bill Quirk mentioned that he has noticed several merlins in the grassy area at the west end of the Whiskey tiedown apron and noted that ravens are a continuing problem.

G. Other

Terry Pena asked Paul about crack sealing the asphalt. Paul reported extensive crack sealing is planned for this summer. Three summer temporary employees have been hired to help accomplish this project.

SkyTrek Alaska owner Jamie Patterson-Simes commented that diagonal connectors on Runway 7-25 make it difficult to make a timely departure off runway surface. Jamie explained that having to taxi on the runway until reaching a straight connector at mid-field many times causes the ATCT to issue a "go-around" to aircraft lined up for landing. Paul thanked Jamie for her comments but noted the diagonal/high-speed connectors will most likely remain as they are.

Paul noted that the semi-annual emergency response drill held on April 27, 28 and 29 was successful.

5. ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. MRI Air Traffic Control Tower

Interim ATCT Manager Mark Brys stated that he began his assignment at Merrill Tower on May 4 and added that he is an interim/acting manager until Brian Ochs' successor, Juneau International Airport FAA ATCT Manager Clarissa Conley, arrives at the end of the summer. Mark noted that he lived in Alaska for 35 years before moving to Las Vegas 2½ years ago to become the Operations Manager at McCarran International Airport. While in Alaska, Mark worked at Anchorage Center and Anchorage International ATCT, and he is pleased to be back in Alaska for the summer.

As far as tower operations are concerned, Brian Ochs reported that the summer projects are well coordinated and no problems are expected. Paul asked about changes to the opposing traffic regulations that were implemented about a year ago. Brian responded that new rules have changed opposing traffic regulations almost back to where it was prior to the change last year. A few changes remain to ensure a greater margin of safety. Brian provided a detailed explanation of the newly implemented opposing traffic rules.

Brian also mentioned the King of Norway will be visiting Anchorage in May. One of the activities during his stay in Alaska is a National Guard flight tour of Anchorage and the surrounding area. To accomplish this, the National Guard will be bringing four Black Hawk helicopters to Merrill Field at approximately 10:00AM to pick up the King and his entourage of 24-28. Paul noted that the time schedule is fluid, but the date of the flight tour will be May 26.

B. UAA Aviation Technology Division

An official report was not given; however, Greg Stoddard, CFI, reported that there will be large number of flight training students this summer which will help the overall number of Merrill Field operations. Paul asked that consideration be given to "fly friendly" procedures from a noise perspective.

C. Elmendorf Airfield Operations

No report.

D. Lake Hood Seaplane Base

No report.

E. Bryant Army Airfield

No report.

6. SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. MRI Marketing

Sharon Chamard reported that the Tie-Down Usage Committee met on May 4, and she provided a written report outlining recommendations to increase tiedown usage at MRI. She summarized the committee explored financial incentives, such as a 'one-month-free tiedown' for new-to Merrill Field pilots; a welcome packet that could include discount coupons from Merrill businesses; promotion of MRI existing features such as proximity to downtown and vehicle storage; and improvements that can be made to attract pilots. Information about these possible incentives could be disseminated in the quarterly Merrill Field Bulletin.

Dick Armstrong made a motion to approve these recommendations presented by the MRI Tiedown Usage Committee. Sharon seconded the motion which passed.

Jim asked Paul what further action he envisioned for the MAAAC on this subject.

Paul thanked the Committee for their recommendations; management will increase efforts to bring customers to Merrill Field. Greg Pearce asked Paul if there are any plans for building covered parking for aircraft. Paul explained there are landfill constraints that impact but do not preclude that concept. Options will be explored for future consideration.

7. OLD BUSINESS AND UNFINISHED ACTION

None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. MERRILL FIELD BUSINESS SHOWCASE: ALYESKA HELICOPTERS LLC

Amanda Adams and Leah Scott presented details about Alyeska Helicopters. The company was established in May 2004, and their new, state-of-the-art hangar on MRI at 1710 E 5th Avenue was completed in December 2013. Alyeska Helicopters offers several extensive and very comprehensive flight training programs, employs a staff of five and operates three R22 and one R44 Robinson helicopters. Sister companies Alpine Air Alaska and Alpine Aviation share hangar space and provide charter services, flight-seeing, heli-trekking and air transport services throughout Alaska. Additionally, Alpine Aviation is a Robinson service center and sales representative.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AVIATION

None.

11. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Don DeVoe mentioned that he heard that the Municipality of Anchorage may be interested in acquiring Birchwood Airport from the State of Alaska. Paul responded that this has been an infrequent but recurring issue over the past decades and there are no plans to do so. In response to SOA queries, he has sent a letter to the DOTPF Commissioner asking for a comprehensive review of Birchwood financial data, capital plans, operating costs and Airport Master Plans to enable any further discussions to be better informed. He also noted such a query should not be construed as any type of commitment on the part of the Municipality of Anchorage.

Terry Pena noted that during a recent Medallion Foundation conference Mike Yorke, FAA Safety Team, mentioned the possibility of allowing actual helicopter landings at Bryant is being explored. Terry suggested that the Commission might be interested in getting an update on this plan.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

May 7, 2015

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION / ADDRESS</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
Paul Bowlers	MRI Manager's Ac.	343-6301
Darlene Siper	MRI Manager's Ac.	343-6308
Bill Quirk	PILOT MRI	360-8245
Dick Armstrong	Ac's FUEL	
Don DeVoe	Comm. Member	229-3132
TERRY PENA	Commissioner	351-7451
Dave Leval	KTVA-TV	2782-7108
Greg Pearce	Commissioner	230-8100
BRIAN OHS	FDA ATREC	552-4093
MARK BRYS	FBI MRI ATM	271-2698
Jim Powell	Comm	229-1013
Sharon Charnard	Comm.	222-0649
Jamie Patterson Sims	SkyTree Flight Training	274-4359
Greg Stoddard	CAAT	286-2231