

MUNICIPAL AIRPORTS AVIATION ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 12, 2007  
Anchorage Fire Department Training Center  
1140 Airport Heights  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Dick Armstrong  
Rick Davis  
Jason Evans  
Tony Follett  
Allen Kemplen  
Erin Marston  
Paul Palinski

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES

MRI Air Traffic Control Tower, Jack Schommer  
UAA Aviation Technology Division, Rocky Capozzi  
Elmendorf Airfield Operations, Kevin Cramer

AIRPORT STAFF PRESENT

David Lundeby, Airport Manager  
Patrick McCormick, Finance Manager  
Darlene Sivyler, Commission Secretary (343-6303)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Erin Marston, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the May 3, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

3. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

David Lundeby reported that he received five aircraft noise complaints during the past two months. Three complainants explained excessive noise was generated from late-night or early-morning flight activities, and two complaints resulted from low departures to the south. Dave spoke with pilots who were performing late night touch-and-goes; they understood the complaint and will schedule training during the day. He also spoke to the air traffic controllers about direct flights from Merrill Field to Lake Hood and asked them to avoid approving those types of departures to the south.

Only one pedestrian deviation has occurred to date. In May, a pedestrian crossed Runway 25 at Taxiway Golf from the south to the north. Anchorage Police responded and issued a citation. This was the first deviation incident since October, 2006.

3. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT (continued)

Dave gave an update on all Airport projects. The security camera project is basically complete. Passwords have been issued to those leaseholders who have a camera focused on their lot. Camera images, which are refreshed every five minutes, can be viewed at [www.merrillwebcam.org](http://www.merrillwebcam.org); the image quality has improved since inception. Last week, the airport was able to provide the Anchorage Police Department with video footage of an auto break-in incident; the vandal was riding a bicycle. The Taxiway Bravo extension project is complete; however, this mid-section of the taxiway is closed. It will serve future development on the west side of Runway 16-34, which is planned for the spring of 2008. The apron reconstruction project south of Merrill Field Drive at Taxiway Golf has begun. This phase of the project allows for dynamic compaction during daytime hours.

The Municipality of Anchorage has acquired commercial property at 1025 Orca Street which will be under Merrill Field management. The acquisition of this building which is located mid-field of Runway 16-34 is a recommendation of the Master Plan.

Dave noted that the Glenn Highway Reconstruction Project is moving forward and that right-of-way issues are expected to be resolved by the middle of August. The State of Alaska has acquired the Vern Air leasehold, and plans to demolish the structure. The State has also acquired the Alaska Laser Wash property on the north side of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and is working with Stoddard Aero Service for relocation of that business. The Municipality has requested assembly action on August 14 authorizing Stoddard's to enter into a new lease of property at the northeast corner of the Airport, which is currently an open tiedown apron. Stoddard's business owners hope to construct a new aircraft parts store/hangar facility. The north side of the airport will be replatted to address access concerns. The project design is 90% complete and is in the review process with comments due by the end of July. Final plans are expected in August.

Allen Kemplen asked if property acquisition is part of the Airport's capital budget or if other funds are used for that purpose. Dave responded that property acquisitions are a capital expense funded by FAA Airport Improvement Project grants. Erin asked if the Laser Wash business is the same location as the former car dealership. Dave explained that the former car dealership was located to the east of Laser Wash, which is now the approach area to Runway 16.

4. ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. MRI Air Traffic Control Tower

Jack Schommer reported that summer activity from the ATCT standpoint is going well. One new employee has joined the controller group; however, they are authorized two additional controllers. Jack explained that FAA revised the pay scale, and the entry level salary makes it difficult for young employees to sustain a lifestyle in remote locations like Alaska.

Jack also informed the Commission that local Airspace discussions are being held. He will provide information when it becomes available.

When asked about the threat of Merrill tower being downgraded, Jack responded that Merrill air traffic operations numbers are holding, but we are in the buffer area.

B. UAA Aviation Technology Division

Rocky Capozzi informed the Commissioners that the State of Alaska budget is complete and there are no funds slated this year for paving the Aviation Center parking lot or for a gas remediation project.

C. Elmendorf Airfield Operations

Capt. Robert Litwin reported that a new Letter of Agreement (LOA) with Merrill ATCT is in effect. On August 23, five C17s will be added to operations. The main Elmendorf runway will be closed for a portion of next summer for rehabilitation. During that time the north/south runway will be the primary use runway. Jack Schommer added that the Cartee airspace will remain in use and that the LOA gives Merrill control of the bluff line which is a benefit to Merrill pilots.

Angie Slingluff, Alaska 99's, asked if the runway project will impact the 2008 Elmendorf Air Show. Capt. Litwin advised that the construction has to be performed outside the requested show dates which have not yet been published.

D Lake Hood Seaplane Base

None.

5. SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

6. OLD BUSINESS AND UNFINISHED ACTION

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Camper Host

Dave explained that a tiedown customer brought forward the idea of Merrill Field establishing a Camper Host Program similar to the program used at the Anchorage School District and Municipal Parks. The existing programs require that the Camper Host stay at their assigned location for a minimum of one month. Their duties are to only report any actions of others that may result in vandalism or inappropriate behavior. The Hosts are not to confront individuals, but need to call APD when assistance is needed.

Dave asked the Commission to review the Camper Host Program agreement packet and to let him know if they think a program like this would be beneficial to Merrill Field. Some options to consider are where the Camper Host(s) station(s) would be located and if this would be considered as a non-aviation use of airport property.

Paul Palinski noted that this program helps a lot to reduce vandalism on school district property. Jim Cieplak added that Fairbanks Airport has a campground host service whereby volunteers provide local area information to their transient campground customers. Although the volunteers do not camp on the airport, perhaps we should think about a similar service at Merrill Field.

B. Proposed 2008 and 2009 Merrill Field Airport Operating and Capital Budgets

Each Commissioner received a copy of the draft Proposed 2008 and 2009 Merrill Field Airport Operating and Capital Budgets. Dave explained the Municipal budget adoption process and gave a page by page overview of the document contents. He added that no fee increases are proposed in the biennial budget and that he has not yet received the budget assumptions from the Office of Management and Budget. In conclusion, Dave explained that in the past the Commission voted on a resolution recommending the municipal assembly approve the Airport budgets. He asked the Commission to support the proposed budget again this year; a draft resolution has been prepared.

Dick Armstrong noted that the Capital Budget does not show transfer of the Anchorage Fire Department (AFD), Fire Training Center property to Merrill Field. It was presumed that this parcel would go to Merrill Field for the loss of Airport property due to the Glenn Highway Rehabilitation project. Denis LeBlanc, Municipal Manager, responded that the Municipality had secured funds to relocate the AFD training facility to a centrally located area east of the Anchorage Police Department; however, the plan met with community opposition. A new public process on the relocation of the Fire Training Center will begin soon; interested citizens should become involved.

Erin asked if the labor expenses included the accelerated PERS contributions and if the Municipality is anticipating the State of Alaska will absorb some of that expense. Denis responded that PERS information will be included in the budget assumptions which have not yet been issued.

Allen Kemplen asked that land acquisitions be defined on the Capital Budget Summary page. Dave agreed and will make a note in the project description column. Rick Davis noted that the Other Expenses line item was much lower in 2007 than 2006, and is shown to increase in 2008. Dave responded that in 2006 the airport funded some small projects that were planned to be capitalized; however, we were required to charge those costs to operating expenses which caused the final 2006 expenses to be larger than anticipated. The 2007 and 2008 operating expenses are more representative of actual costs.

Tony Follett asked if the Glenn Highway/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue project will have any impact on future Airport revenue. Dave clarified that some leasehold square footage will be lost to the cul-de-sac access areas, but that additional lots are being made available for leaseholds; the revenue impact would be minimal. Carl Siebe asked if the FAA is releasing the Municipality from their grant assurances and what impact that would have on the Airport. Denis responded that if the Fire Training Center does not move and the existing land is not transferred to the Airport, they would then address the FAA grant assurances.

Erin asked Dave if the MESA expense is in line with the original estimate. Dave explained that by ordinance, the MESA was phased in, and he described the way the assessment is calculated. Dick Armstrong noted that the Airport MESA expense is being packaged as a "good deal" when compared to what other utilities pay, but it should be a "no deal". Dick then read a draft resolution recommending approval of the Merrill Field Airport 2008 and 2009 Proposed Operating and Capital Improvement Budgets and the 2008 – 2014 Capital Improvement Program with the exception of the MESA allotment.

B. Proposed 2008 and 2009 Merrill Field Airport Operating and Capital Budgets (cont.)

Dick made a motion that the Commission approve this drafted resolution. Paul seconded the motion. Denis LeBlanc commented that the Commission does not need to vote on the resolution today and that he would like the opportunity to review this draft resolution. He also gave details about the history of the MESA assessment to Merrill Field and reiterated that all utility departments should do their share to invest in the City.

Allen Kemplen commented that Merrill Field has had an impact on adjacent residential property values due to aircraft noise which lessens the amount of property taxes the Municipality collects. One could look at MESA as a way to offset that indirect impact to Municipal revenue. Tony Cestnik also interjected that business owners on Merrill Field already pay taxes on the property they lease from the Municipality and that he does not think the Airport should also pay MESA. Denis responded that budget adoption is a public process and that the administration will listen to leaseholder and Commission concerns.

Erin asked for clarification on when the Commission needs to act on the proposed budgets. Denis responded that an Assembly work-session on the budget is scheduled for October, so the Commission could vote on the budget resolution during their next scheduled meeting in September. Jason Evans asked if he could find out the amount of property taxes paid by the leaseholders on Merrill Field before the September meeting. Dave agreed to provide this information to Jason.

Following discussion on the pending motion and hearing no objections, Erin agreed to lay the motion on the table. The Proposed 2008 and 2009 Merrill Field Airport Operating and Capital Budgets will be listed as an unfinished business item on the September meeting agenda.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AVIATION

Tony Cestnik commented that he has been a business owner on Merrill Field for over 30 years and that the Airport could not be in better hands. He noted that Denis has great management at the Airport and that good people work here. Acknowledging his intense reaction to taxes, Tony asked that his outrage be excused.

Mio Johnson, Alaska 99s, announced that the 99s International Conference will be held in Anchorage in August, 2008. This aviation week will include a trade show with several exhibits, and she hopes it coincides with the Elmendorf Air Show.

9. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Allen Kemplen mentioned that he noticed a reduced number of incidents of aircraft turning south over residences when the controllers agreed to give guidance to pilots. However, the activity has increased over the past few weeks. Tower comments help, and he encouraged the air traffic controllers to advise pilots to remain in the pattern.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 PM.