

MUNICIPAL AIRPORTS AVIATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 4, 2021

VIA Teleconference - Microsoft TEAMS to listen in, to provide verbal comments or to ask ques-

tions, email merrillinfo@ci.anchorage.ak.us your name, phone number, and requested agenda

item(s) no later than 09:00am the day of the meeting . The subject line should read "MAAAC Phone

Testimony."

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Sharon Chamard, Chair

Jamie Patterson-Simes, Vice Chair

David Knutson

Terry Cartee

Chet Harris

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

None

AIRPORT STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Ralph Gibbs, MRI Airport Manager

Alex Jumao-as, MRI Asst. Airport Manager

BreAnn Brandlen, MRI Service Administrator

Amy Garcia, MRI Finance Manager

Julie Hixenbaugh, Commission Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Dr. Sharon Chamard called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

2. SELF INTRODUCTIONS

Sharon asked all attendees to introduce themselves.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Unanimous approval of the January 7, 2021,

4. CHAIRPERSONS REPORT- None

5. AIRPORT MANAGER'S REPORT

- **Noise**

There were 2 noise complaints. One was a low flying helicopter over Rogers Park. The other was a plane using runway 16-34 because 7-25 was closed for snow removal.

- **Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviation (VPD)/Incursions**

There were three VPD's reported. First incident was a leaseholder towing a child on a sled on taxiway Alpha. The second was a pilot that flew into Whiskey, parked then walked across 5-23 to exit out Golf South Barrier gate. Third, homeless man from Rural cap. Ralph's response to the FAA is to start issuing fines for VPD's. Alex said the Manager's office already has authority to issue citations per Municipal code.

Chet Harris inquired if the Whiskey VPD offenders were from Merrill. Ralph said they were not.

Ralph would like to retract an email sent out to the MAAAC members, it was sent to "prime the pump" for dreams and visions for Merrill Field.

- **CARES Budget**

The FAA approved, and sent the grant form already filled out to be signed for 1 million more dollars. It is CARES like money to be used for operations but more specifically to disinfect the airport from pandemic exposures from COVID-19.

Jamie Patterson-Simes questioned how Merrill Field would pay this grant back if found out they were ineligible? According to the CRRSA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Act) on page 3, it asks if there are any airport sponsors not eligible to receive funding, the CRRSA prohibits any airport that was allocated more than four times their operation expenditures from CARES. MRI received nine times their annual expenses. Jamie asked if this is a viable request?

Ralph talked to Brad Garland from FAA airports division, he assured Ralph that this grant has been vetted. MRI received a letter of acceptance from FAA and is been forwarded to City Hall for their approval.

Jamie asked, how will the dollars be used to sanitize the airport? Ralph said there are no plans yet but looking for ideas. It can be used for operational funds.

Ralph is meeting with City Hall later this week on the proposed aircraft registration tax. He is supporting all the proposals from the AACA (Alaska Aircraft Carriers Association) letter sent to the Mayor.

Chet Harris asked that Ralph, to please, double checked that the new CARES money will not have to be repaid.

Jamie stated that Juneau airport gave back half of their CARES funds because they could not use it appropriately.

- **MRI Project Overview-MRI Road Construction-HDL Engineering (Erik Jordt)**

Alex Jumao-as introduced Erik Jordt from HDL Engineering. They are in charge of the Merrill Field road construction project this summer. The original plan was to spread the construction over two seasons but to minimize the impact to airport users it was changed to be completed in one season. After the presentation Alex asked if the MAAAC would vote to proceed, with the one season plan.

Erik Jordt provided a brief overview of the upcoming 2021 construction project at Merrill Field Airport and introduce the different teams involved.

Erik discussed the Rehabilitate Primary Access Road (AIP-79) project and explained that Merrill Field Drive (MFD) would be receiving different types of improvements throughout the project from 15th Avenue to Airport Heights Drive.

Erik also introduced the three main entities involved with the project:

- Merrill Field Airport, Owner
- HDL Engineering Consultants, Construction Administration
- Granite Construction, Prime Contractor

Erik discussed the four different schedules of work and their associated scope.

The project is broken down into four schedules of work along MFD:

- Schedule A: 15th Avenue to Charlie South Apron

Reconstruction involving dynamic compaction, street lighting improvements, landscaping, signage, utility adjustments, and other related work.

- Schedule B: Charlie South Apron to Long Term Vehicle Parking

Reconstruction involving dynamic compaction, street lighting improvements, landscaping, signage, and other related work.

- Schedule C: Airport Heights Drive to UAA Aviation Mx Building

Rehabilitation involving roadway excavation/dig-out sections, geotextile reinforcement, street light improvements, landscaping, signage, and other related work.

- Schedule D: UAA Aviation Mx Building to Long Term Vehicle Parking

Resurfacing improvements including milling of existing pavement, curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements, utility adjustments, landscaping, and other related work.

He then compared the original schedule (as part of the design) to the contractor's proposed construction schedule (to include a night shift).

The project was originally designed to require each schedule of work to be completed sequentially, starting from Schedule A to Schedule D. This was to ensure that at least one entrance to Merrill Field Airport was maintained at all times during construction. Schedule A and B work was to be completed and this portion of MFD reopened to traffic before work could be performed on Schedule C or Schedule D.

The project was scheduled for two years of construction. Work was anticipated to begin in May 2021 and to be substantially complete by October 2022. Allowable

working times for each schedule of work included Monday thru Saturday, from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM (daily).

The contractor plans to complete Schedule A and B work in the timeframe allowed as designed but have requested to perform Schedule C and Schedule D work simultaneously, during nighttime operations. Under this proposed schedule the contractor anticipates completing the work in one season and reaching substantial completion by September 2021.

Under the contractor's proposed alternative, night work will occur under Schedule C and Schedule D. One lane of traffic will be maintained at all times with flaggers controlling vehicular and pedestrian movements during the night construction. Additionally, the affected area under Schedule C or Schedule D construction will be rebuilt to a drivable surface prior to the end of each night shift. Two-way traffic (Under Schedule C and Schedule D) will be maintained throughout daytime construction operations.

Erik will seek input from the airport users and obtain Commission approval to allow the contractor to perform night work.

The council members and airport users collectively felt that the contractor's proposed schedule would be acceptable. There was no objection from any members of the Commission, and they provided full-support of the contractor's proposed schedule. HDL will also present at the Fairview and Airport Heights Community Council meetings this spring prior to construction.

A series of questions were asked about the project and the requested night schedule.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESENTATION

1. Question: Will there be any improvements to the pedestrian pathway to provide a continuous loop around Merrill Field Airport? Will there be any modifications to the existing bike path south of RW 05/23, where users typically cut the corner and walk across the grass instead of remaining on the pathway?

Response: A complete response was not available at the time of the meeting. After further discussion with the HDL design team, it was determined that funding for this project was solely designated for roadway improvements and the pedestrian pathway was not included in the design.

2. Question: Will HDL be presenting upcoming construction to the Airport Heights Community Council?

Response: Yes. HDL is currently on the agenda for the March 2021 Airport Heights Community Council meeting.

3. Question: How long does this type of roadway improvement project typically last?

Response: Dynamic compaction projects are anticipated to last around 20 years. In 2001, the first dynamic compaction project took place on Merrill Field Drive, between Taxiway Golf and Alaska Aircraft Engines. This portion of roadway is still in good condition, even after 20 years of use.

4. Question: Will gravel trucks be hauling material throughout the airport, similar to the last dynamic compaction project that was performed on Golf East Apron? Could the weighted gravel trucks be used for landfill densification instead of dynamic compaction?

Response: Excavated material from Schedule A and Schedule B will be placed in designated disposal areas found adjacent to and south of their respected work areas. Excavated materials from Schedule C and Schedule D will be hauled to the same disposal areas used for Schedule A and B. However, the amount of excavated material from Schedule C and Schedule D are considerably less than Schedule A and Schedule B. Airport users should not expect to see the same level of hauling efforts compared to the Golf East Apron project.

5. Question: Is there any plans to host a project website where frequently-asked questions and project updates can be posted? Will the PowerPoint presentation be available to the public so that it may be disseminated to other airport users?

Response: HDL does not plan to host a project website. However, HDL will work with Merrill Field management to provide construction updates that can be posted on the airport's website. The presentation will be provided to Merrill Field and copies can be obtained through the airport management.

6. Question: Will the dynamic compaction work have any effect on the airport operations for Runway 05/23?

Response: Yes. When work takes place within the approach surface, RW 05/23 will be temporarily closed. However, the closures are expected to be short durations and only during daytime operation.

7. Question: Has there been any consideration on the impacts to the Fairview Community regarding dynamic compaction work that would take place at night? Will noise permits be required?

Response: Dynamic compaction will only be performed between the hours of 6:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Night work operations will only include the Schedule C and Schedule D work. Noise permits will be obtained in accordance with the contract specifications.

8. Question: Is there any reason why work cannot take place on Sundays? Wouldn't this expedite construction?

Response: Contractors typically like to give their crews at least one day off a week. This allows crewmembers to recover from a long workweek, which will usually result in less mistakes during construction and provides an overall safer work environment.

A motion to accept the one season construction schedule was made from Chet Harris, a second from David Knutson and unanimous support from the MAAAC, contingent on communication as needed.

6. ORGANIZATION REPORTS

- MRI ATCT – Caleb Newville reported the findings from the TWY Charlie reconstruction meeting. The reconstruction had an undesirable impact on traffic flow and safety to exit the runway. They studied the safety and efficiency of the design and presented their findings to the Managers office. Ralph agreed with the changes presented, especially having a run up area. Ralph will work with the airports division to make adjustments to the area, while meeting the design standards.

Caleb reported traffic operations at MRI for 2020 were only down 1% from the previous year.

Crystal Marks requested Ralph to resend the proposal of helicopter routes, at MRI, for her review.

Crystal invited everyone to attend RSAT (Runway Safety Action Team) meeting via Zoom, March 16, 2021, 12 pm to 1pm.

There will be a SRM (Safety Risk Management) panel for air traffic members only, to discuss the road construction project.

- CAP –None.
- AOPA –None
- Lake Hood- None
- AACAA-None

7. OLD BUSINESS

- Motion for Tie-down ropes

Chet and David gave their motion for tie-down ropes:

Tie-down ropes with tensile strength greater than that of the gross weight of the aircraft shall be used. Nylon or Dacron tie-down ropes are recommended. Tie-down ropes utilizing hooks and ratcheting straps are prohibited. Tie-down ropes should be inspected for damage due to chafing, mildew, and rot and replaced as necessary. At a minimum, it is recommended that tie-down ropes are replaced every two years due to UV degradation.

They will give suggested language to Manager's office and so it can be vetted through City Hall legal team.

Jane Dale would like to have the specifications shared to all the aviation associations.

Helicopter take offs

Ralph has seen helicopters flying over buildings, fuel stations and cutting corners. He said hover taxi's are an accident waiting to happen. Terry has also witnessed the helicopters flying over building and stated there is no reason to fly over them, it is unsafe.

Mike Schoder shared that the heli-skiing helicopters seem to be the ones “hotdogging”, and should be reined in.

AD-Hoc Development Committee

Sharon reported topics discussed at the February 10th meeting.

- 1.) Public terminal at Merrill Field
- 2.) Manager’s office relocation-Ralph plans to keep office where is but to renovate
- 3.) Northway Mall acquisition- seems expensive but could be investigated.

Jane Dale inquired if the airport had an avigation easement for Northway Mall, Alex reassured her that the avigation easement has not expired, and the airport is protected. She would like to have a copy.

- 4.) Simulation Center- Would like to investigate acquiring a commercial simulator such as a Caravan, as long as it does not compete with others on field.

8. NEW BUSINESS

VPD Fines

The Airport Manager has the ability to issue tickets. It isn’t practiced due to the lengthy court process to testify and usually gets dismissed. APD is also reluctant to issue citations for VPD’s.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AVIATION

- None

10.COMMISSION COMMENTS

- None

11.OTHER

- Next Airport User Group Meeting April 7, 2021, 5:00PM, at the Airport Manager’s office
- The next MAAAC meeting will be May 6, 2021, 12PM [VIA TEAMS]

12.ADJOURNMENT at 1:38 p.m.