

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 28, 2023**

**9:00 AM**

**Terminal Building,  
Dillant Hopkins Airport**

**Members Present:**

Elizabeth Bendel, Vice Chair  
George S. Hansel, Mayor  
Councilor Mitch Greenwald  
Nathan Jacobs  
Richard Blood  
Bill Hutwelker  
Peter Temple  
Luca Paris  
Kristopher Radder

**Staff Present:**

David Hickling, Airport Manager/Chair  
Rebecca Landry, City of Keene  
Communications Marketing Director

**Members Not Present:**

Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager  
Brian Johnson  
Alona Florenz

**1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

Chair David Hickling called the meeting to order at 9AM.

**2) Approval of August 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the August minutes was put forth by Mayor Hansel and seconded by Richard Blood. The August 2023 minutes were approved unanimously.

**3) Old Business**

**A) Airport Brand and Marketing**

Chair Hickling stated that Rebecca Landry (City of Keene Communications Marketing Director) and Guide Studios, who did the new branding for the City, created a new brand marketing and communications plan for the airport. He was pleased to work with such a great company with very talented people. The committee viewed a PowerPoint of the new Marketing and Communications plan. The Visual Identity Guide creates an identity for the airport that is consistent with the city branding. Chair Hickling acknowledged that they did a great job on

this. Guide Studios created a new color pallet and font for the airport to be consistent with the City of Keene's new branding. They also came up with new logo options. Discussion ensued regarding the different logo options shown in the PowerPoint. Chair Hickling showed the Committee examples of how the new logo can be used on clothing, business cards, vehicle decals, and signage for the road-facing airport building. The new logo had already been added to the meeting agenda and they will be implementing it further in the future.

Chair Hickling stated that the new marketing communications plan is how the Airport will interact with people of the community and market the airport. Some objectives discussed are: bringing in businesses related to aviation to grow the airport; better communication to potential airport users; and relaying the value of the airport. Businesses may not be aware of the commercial or charter aspect of the airport, so the marketing and communications plan may provide a solution. Everyone promoting the Airport will have to be on the same page, create the same message, and relay it to the public in order to implement this project.

Chair Hickling read the positioning statement for the airport, "The Keene Dillant-Hopkins Airport connects the Monadnock Region and its people to the world." He stated that, although it isn't possible to fly internationally from the airport, people are able to fly out to connect with an international flight, which offers great potential for airport patrons. The airport offers first-rate facilities and outstanding services in a prime location in New England. He agreed that they did a great job summarizing what the airport has to offer.

Chair Hickling stated that he wanted to ensure people know that the airport isn't only for people who have their planes stored there. The Committee agreed that their location is a distinct advantage because it is easy to travel to Boston, New York, and New England as a whole. He stated the amenities provided by the airport are as good as any other airport in the region. Chair Hickling continued, he believed the current image of the airport is that it is only for a select amount of people that have planes there, so he would like to market the approachability, as that is not the case.

Chair Hickling stated that they will look to redo the landing page on their website. They will need to make sure all information is available and they will also need to add the new branding. The Communication plan addresses social media as well. He stated that they will focus on one platform, which will be Facebook on which we should stay consistent and post five to seven posts per week. Discussion ensued on what kind of content they will be posting such as "Happy Holiday" posts as well as videos and photos of the planes that use the airport. The Committee discussed adding events to Facebook for the community to take part in. They may create a monthly newsletter with a calendar of events to email to a more targeted audience. The Committee agreed that they need to build community engagement and take part in more networking and outreach. Some of the to-do items also include content on radio stations, newspapers, and Public Access Television. Chair Hickling stated that the information provided for this meeting is a brief overview and that the plan provided to the Committee will explain in more detail.

Mr. Nathan Jacobs referenced when T hangar rents were raised, neither the Committee nor local pilots were informed of the potential price increase before the decision was finalized by the City. Mr. Hickling stated that this specific issue isn't in the realm of the committee's influence, as they handle the marketing and development of the airport. Mr. Temple asked how they may receive better communication from the City. Mayor Hansel suggested that it should be the mission of the committee to bring more interest and involvement from the general community, as there is a very small number of pilots in the area who are inherently involved with the airport. Mr. Hickling stated that he has had conversations with Peter Temple about starting a Keene Airport Pilot Association, which would be a way to increase communication on topics of interest within the local aviation community.

In reference to creating interest in the airport, Mr. Temple stated that there is great potential for recreational use on the land surrounding the airport. The Committee discussed the trails around the airport, potential bird watching sites and nature centers, 5K races, as well as air shows. Mr. Hickling stated that there is a group that does a Green Sale with plants every year at the airport. Potential groups may only be charged for insurance if they are doing all of the set-up and take down of their events. If the event is bringing a large group of people and requires additional resources, they may be charged for use of city property. Luca Paris stated the Committee once tried to hold a Touch a Truck event at the airport, but they faced issues with holding the event, so it never happened. Discussion ensued on past events held at the airport.

The airport will potentially hold a special event when new signage and branding is implemented.

#### **B) Airport Development Broker**

Chair Hickling stated that he had a Teams meeting with the Town of Swanzey Supervisor and City Manager as well as Business Aviation Group, who gave the proposal. They addressed a lot of the concerns the City and Town of Swanzey had previously discussed so it was a very productive meeting. The City Manager is on board and Mr. Hickling will be meeting with the Swanzey Selectmen the following evening. If the selectmen are on board and ready to support the proposal, he believed they would be able to move forward. He spoke about the two phases of the project. Business Aviation Group would do a market analysis where they look at all of the developed parcels and determine what use they may have. They will also look at other airports and what they have to see if it is feasible for them to take on the brokerage part to bring in a company. Mr. Hickling was pleased with the meeting. He was able to meet the project manager, who explained what was involved in the market analysis, which was more in-depth than the proposal. He believed that this is the best way to bring in an aviation company to develop at the airport.

#### **4) Airport Solar Development**

Chair Hickling stated that they have a letter of intent to put more solar farms on City property. This project, taken on by Revision Energy, is by far the largest one, as it is a 5 megawatt solar farm. The Committee looked at a map as Mr. Hickling explained that it will be located on the South end of the field. Mr. Hickling believed this piece of land would be perfect for it, as there are restrictions that limit other possibilities for use. He was not worried about solar glare as there are new technologies that help to prevent it. There is still no agreement in place for this project but Revision Energy has already started doing a lot of research on it. Mr. Hickling connected them with the airport engineer, McFarland Johnson, to be sure they are meeting all FAA requirements.

**5) Other/Miscellaneous**

Chair Hickling was pleased to share that the contact information and QR codes were added to the “Land for Development” posters discussed at the last meeting.

Chair Hickling referenced a piece of paper he handed out to the Committee and stated it was from the City Charter Code. There have been problems with meeting quorum for the ADMC meetings so Chair Hickling spoke with the City Manager to remedy the situation. They may change the structure of the Committee, either by changing the number of members or doing something different to make it easier to meet. There have been struggles to find members that the Charter says are qualified to serve. It was suggested to broaden the scope of what the Committee works on. Discussion ensued on the Airport Advisory Committee of the past and that it struggled with the same member issues even though it had a broad scope of responsibilities.

Further discussion ensued on the function of the Committee and if they have any say in, for instance, the proposed solar farm. Mr. Temple suggested creating a small advisory committee to be able to offer their expert opinions on airport matters to the City Council. Mayor Hansel said the Committee, as is, is able to draft a letter to be considered by the City Council explaining their opinions or concerns on any matter. Anyone may go directly to the City Council to address any concerns once a project becomes public. Further discussion ensued regarding the amount of information that the Committee receives from the City, as some members would like to be more involved in the decision making regarding airport matters.

**6) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Hickling adjourned the meeting at 10:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Melissa Danneker, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
David Hickling, Airport Director