

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

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

**Tuesday, April 19, 2022**

**9:00 AM**

**Terminal Building**  
**Dillant Hopkins Airport**

**Members Present:**

Councilor Mitch Greenwald  
Nathan Jacobs  
Richard Blood  
Alona Florenz  
Elizabeth Bendel  
Bill Hutwelker  
Peter Temple  
Kristopher Radder

**Staff Present:**

David Hickling, Airport Manager/Chair

**Members Not Present:**

George S. Hansel, Mayor  
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager  
Curt Hansen  
Brian Johnson  
Joe Bendzinski  
Luca Paris

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Hickling called the meeting to order at 8:59 AM.

**2) Adopt February Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Blood made a motion to accept the minutes of February 22, 2022 as presented. Mr. Temple seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3) New Member/ Introductions**

Chair Hickling introduced Kristopher Radder as a new member of the committee filling the alternate position. Mr. Radder stated he has a 5-year-old daughter who is obsessed with airplanes, which has driven his interest in the airport and encourage youth grow up with involvement in aviation. He added that his father worked for Delta Airlines for 30 plus year so he's been around a lot of airports growing up. Mr. Radder stated he works as a journalist in

Brattleboro, VT and has his drone license. Introductions from the rest of the committee members were made.

**4) Airport Open House Event**

Chair Hickling reported that he met with Ms. Bendel and Mr. Paris to discuss the open house event and the idea of a food truck festival kept coming up. They feel it could be a huge event for locals and fly-ins. General consensus was to move forward with a focus on a food festival and an open house, and hopefully attract food truck festival attendees to the open house. He further explained that they will reconvene within the next week or so to set a date for some time in the fall. Additionally, they will bring in the owner of Mama McDonough's on board who has a food truck and who has connections with people in the business.

**5) Airport Hangar Development**

Chair Hickling reported that they are in lease negotiations with Avenru, who is currently going over the lease with their attorney. They also recently received City Council approval to negotiate a lease with Monadnock Aviation. He stated this will be a good sized, heated, corporate hangar. He mentioned that Ms. Bendel recognized a market for a hangar that can accommodate corporate aircraft which is good potential revenue. He added that Monadnock Choppers is on hold for now. Mr. Hickling explained that the demand is there but the high cost of construction right now makes things difficult.

Next, Mr. Hickling introduced Steve Bourque with McFarland Johnson Inc. He stated they have made a change with their airport engineering consultant because every 5 years the FAA encourages airports to go out with an RFQ to see what options are available. After going through that process they found Mr. Bourque, who along with his planning and engineering expertise also brings aviation and FAA knowledge with regards to hangar development.

Mr. Bourque shared a drawing of potential lease areas for development to the group and explained that they started plotting out different size hangars in different locations on the airfield to identify order of priority. For example, they are looking at where to put various size hangars so they don't impede the development of other opportunities downstream. He pointed out area one on the drawing, next to the C&S hangar, and stated they could fit a 140 x 130ft hangar there. He mentioned that there's a FAA requirement of 50ft between buildings so it would fit and make it one of the first readily available sites.

Mr. Bourque next showed area two, a spot at the bottom of the drawing, where it would make sense to have corporate development. He pointed out a 200 x 200ft corporate hangar. Chair Hickling stated it will be a difficult area to develop but it's in the Master Plan as developable land for a hangar. He mentioned that it's near where there's a proposed multi-family housing complex. Mr. Bourque reiterated that these are ideas and Chair Hickling stated Mr. Bourque is working off of what is in the Master Plan.

Mr. Temple asked about the light green areas on the drawing and Mr. Bourque stated those are pavement.

There was short discussion about another area and Mr. Bourque mentioned a building restriction line, which they'd have to take a close look at to see what they were trying to protect. He added that it would require notification to the FAA if they want to penetrate the surfaces and put a hangar in the area. Chair Hickling noted that the area had been looked at previously for hangar development and site plans were developed. Mr. Bourque stated it is viable to put a hangar there but there are a lot of things to consider with the particular formulation.

Next, Mr. Bourque showed area three where there's a hexagon hangar and a space for a larger 100x100ft hangar. Mr. Bourque mentioned, further down the road, with a parallel taxiway to runway 32 at 225ft would open up the area for future development as well. Mr. Temple mentioned drawings that show a double row of hangars in that area. Mr. Bourque stated it seems the focus of the airport is moving away from smaller t-hangars and towards corporate hangars, so it all depends on demand. Chair Hickling stated there's more demand for t-hangars right now but they want to bring in corporate to generate more revenue and hopefully do both.

Mr. Temple asked about the waiting list for t-hangars and Chair Hickling stated it stays around 20 consistently, which shows the interest. He added that he is working with KSC design teams for either t-hangars or box hangars (upgraded t-hangars with a bit more room) so there are a lot of options, the demand is there, and they have the space. Additionally, Mr. Bourque is looking at the layout and where to best place the hangars which will be very beneficial for the airport.

Mr. Blood asked for an overview of what it would look like if they had airline service at the airport. Mr. Bourque stated initially, if they are talking about someone like Cape Air, the current layout they have would be appropriate. Down the road, they would need to look at if the building would continue to serve their purpose. Chair Hickling stated he is confident they could work out of the current terminal but if we were to get service with larger aircraft they would need to obtain FAA money to build another terminal, and my need it to be somewhere else. Mr. Bourque agreed that they'd be constrained if it was regional jet air service.

Mr. Blood mentioned the property next to the airport and stated it seems very valuable to the future of the airport if considering regional air service. Chair Hickling stated the City Manager would need to be involved in decisions with that. He noted that realistically the idea of getting regional jets at the airport is not likely to happen; however, there's a chance of getting a smaller commuter service such as Cape Air. Mr. Bourque added that 50 to 60 years ago airports like Keene had small airlines and they all went away because everything was consolidated into larger hubs; however, the forecast suggests that there's the possibility that smaller airports supporting short haul routes using electric aircraft might be a viable reality in the next 20 to 30 years. He added that Cape Air focuses on airports that are eligible for essential air service because without federal subsidies it would be difficult for them to remain viable.

Mr. Temple wondered if they should update the Master Plan to make sure they are not blocking future developments and are being conscious of the larger context of individual moves. Mr. Bourque stated, without going through a full 3 or 4 year Master Plan process and looking at all of the different variables, it's challenging to figure out where the pieces fit in. He added that the parcel next to the airport is recommended as one of the last places to develop, so as to not block future development.

Mr. Radder asked about solar panels on the new hangars to offset energy. Mr. Bourque stated solar will offset energy and supported the idea.

Mr. Blood asked about the area south of runway 1432 and if a hangar could go there. Chair Hickling stated potentially but there's a lot of wetlands there, so they need to wait for the new wetland delineation as part of the fence project to learn more.

6) **Other**  
A) **Beta Technologies**

Chair Hickling showed a video of Beta Technologies, who developed electrical technology for aircraft with no need for jet fuel, and therefore no carbon emissions. He explained that it's a plane that could take off and land without a runway and quietly hop from recharging station to recharging station, like a large drone. The vehicles would land atop charging stations made out of shipping containers, some equipped with showers, bunks and kitchenettes. He stated Ms. Florenz shared information about the company with him and he did some research. Mr. Hickling mentioned that bringing in an innovative company that's doing research and development on technology like electric aircraft and a recharging network is exactly what he envisioned for the Keene airport.

Ms. Florenz stated the company is based in Burlington, VT. Chair Hickling stated he had discovered during his research that they are not interested in relocating as they have over 300 employees and keep growing.

Chair Hickling explained that the aircraft can go 250 nautical miles per battery charge and they are currently focused on cargo rather than passengers, and are hoping to get FAA approval in 2024. He mentioned UPS has already pre ordered aircraft with the plan of using them as "micro-feeders" for time-sensitive deliveries such as medicine.

He added that there are levels of safety by the FAA that they need to pass for passengers, and if given the okay he would feel confident flying in the electric aircraft. He stated that the possibility of bringing in a company like this needs to be considered when Mr. Bourque is looking at best use for the developable areas. Mr. Bourque added that his company has a relationship with Beta Technologies.

Chair Hickling mentioned Cape Air is interested in electric aircraft so if Keene can be in a position to charge electric aircraft it could help make Keene a place of interest for them. Mr. Temple suggested reaching out to the Experimental Aircraft Association and Chair Hickling stated he will reach out to them and bring Mr. Bourque in on that as well.

Councilor Greenwald asked what it takes to have a charging station. Mr. Bourque stated they would have to look at power coming into the building and going out to the apron. Chair Hickling stated solar could work as well. Mr. Temple asked about solar restrictions. Mr. Bourque stated a glare analysis needs to be conducted but past analyses have found no adverse effects. He noted that the panels they make now are not highly reflective like they were in the past. Mr. Temple mentioned that it seems to be fairly cost effective. There were comments that current pilots haven't noticed any difference with the current solar panels near the airport.

Mr. Temple mentioned that there seems to be a lot to consider with t-hangars, corporate hangars, solar energy and electric aircraft and wondered again if the committee should be updating the Master Plan. Chair Hickling stated he would love to update it but it's only fundable through the AIP every 10 years. Mr. Bourque stated there's a potential to do focused studies if they want to look at specific items without re-doing the entire Master Plan. Chair Hickling agreed with that idea and mentioned that McFarland and Johnson came up with a Master Plan tool where you can change something and it will automatically update everything. Mr. Bourque explained that it's a dynamic Master Plan where they build a website and you can go in and change parameters. For example, you can look at the impact of going from C2 to C3 or D2 and what it would look like. There's also potential for financial planning so you could add scenarios that plot out the cost of bringing in air service.

### **B) Flying Start Event**

Chair Hickling stated the EAA Flying Start event is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup>. They will soon begin outreach utilizing avenues such as social media and talk show. He reminded everyone that this will be an event aimed at attracting people who would be interested in learning to fly.

### **C) Aviation History**

Mr. Temple stated, with regards to aviation history, he acquired two books since the last meeting and showed them to the committee, noting that he's found materials at the Cheshire County Historical Society and Aviation Museum of NH. He mentioned that he is trying to get a reprint of the book Wings Over Keene and has been in touch with the author's daughter who is interested in the reprint and possibly adding to the book. Mr. Temple also mentioned that he has a contact at Keene State College who would like to work with some students on historical aviation and requested any contacts from the high school be passed along to him. Lastly, he stated he would like to eventually have a display in the terminal with aviation history of Keene. Chair Hickling stated they could potentially have a display in the library as well.

7) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Hickling adjourned the meeting at 9:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
David Hickling, Airport Director