

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

9:00 AM

**Terminal Building,
Dillant Hopkins Airport**

Members Present:

Elizabeth Bendel, Vice Chair
Nathan Jacobs
Peter Temple
Bob Lyle
Bill Hutwelker (at 9:04 AM)

Staff Present:

David Hickling, Airport Manager/Chair
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager

Members Not Present:

Kristopher Radder, Alternate
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager
Councilor Mitch Greenwald
Luca Paris

1) Call to Order

Mr. Hickling called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Roll call was conducted.

2) Adopt October Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lyle made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 22, 2024. Mr. Jacobs seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Member Appointments

Mr. Hickling stated that Mr. Jacobs has been on the Committee for two terms and his second term has expired, but he can stay on until a replacement is found. He continued that Ms. Bendel's and Mr. Radder's first terms are up and they indicated that they want to stay on for a second term. Their re-appointment is on the City Council agenda this Thursday. Everyone else's first term will be up next year.

Bill Hutwelker arrived at 9:04 AM.

4) **ADMC Functions and Guidelines**

Mr. Hickling stated that with today's agenda, he printed copies of the Ordinance from the City Code about the Airport Development and Marketing Committee. He continued that Section 624 of that is Function and Guidelines. He asked if members think it meets the Committee's intentions, or if they think the guidelines should be modified.

Mr. Jacobs asked how these were first established. Mr. Hickling replied that he thinks the functions and guidelines were established when the group changed from the Airport Advisory Committee to the Airport Development and Marketing Committee. Last year the membership number changed from twelve to seven.

Ms. Bendel asked Mr. Hickling if the ADMC's functions and guidelines support him. Mr. Hickling replied yes. Mr. Lyle asked if Mr. Hickling had anything he wanted changed. Mr. Hickling replied no, he just wanted to see what the Committee members thought. Mr. Temple stated that the functions are consistent with what he always imagined for the Committee. He continued that the Ordinance talks about the Airport Master Plan, which he has not looked at carefully.

Discussion ensued about the Airport Master Plan, including when it was created, and whether/how it needs updating. Mr. Hickling stated that much of the infrastructure portion of the Master Plan is either completed or no longer relevant. He gave examples, and spoke about how the FAA will not consider funding a new master plan update until the current plan is ten years old. He continued that it would be a good idea for the Committee to look at the applicable sections of the Master Plan and see if they are meeting it.

Mr. Hickling asked how the Committee thinks they are doing with meeting the functions outlined in the Ordinance. Ms. Bendel stated that she thinks they talk a lot but do not implement a lot. Mr. Hickling asked how the Committee can change that. Discussion ensued. Mr. Temple stated that the work Mr. Hickling has done, bringing in consultants to identify and categorize the developable properties, is a big part of pushing the Master Plan forward. He continued that the Committee could encourage putting out there the different characteristics of the properties. Mr. Hickling replied that another big step was the airport visual identity project that they did with the consultant. Ms. Bendel replied that she thinks the effort Mr. Temple spoke of has been the biggest step forward in marketing that she has seen here, but she is not sure the Committee could take credit for it; it was more Mr. Hickling and Ms. Landry. Mr. Hickling stated that he will send an email pointing out the applicable parts of the Master Plan and the Committee can review that and discuss it in January.

Ms. Landry spoke about the need to complete the signage project, and the logistics of that. Discussion ensued. Mr. Jacobs asked how the Committee could help with such a project. Discussion continued.

Ms. Bendel stated that they have already been talking about the Airport Open House. She asked what other marketing efforts the Committee can help with. Mr. Hickling replied outreach. He continued that the Ordinance talks about the Committee members serving as ambassadors for the airport. Discussion ensued about what that means and what they could do. Mr. Hickling spoke of how he speaks to local civic groups, such as Rotary Club and on the talk radio programs, and he would be glad to have a Committee member join him when he does that.

Mr. Jacobs asked how they could create better synergy between what the city is doing with events and using the airport as a means of entry into the city. He spoke of how general aviation seems to be exploding right now, and he would like to see more advertising for downtown events, to encourage folks from surrounding states to fly in for the events. Discussion ensued. Committee members discussed the possibility of some sort of shuttle between the airport and downtown Keene, to get people to the stores, restaurants, hotels, and events, and discussed how they could potentially do advertising and marketing for such events and for a shuttle/transportation options. Ms. Landry stated that downtown businesses are going to want as much foot traffic as they can get in the coming few years, because the Downtown Infrastructure Replacement Project will be happening. She spoke of how the footprint of downtown events will be shifting during that year, and how much downtown businesses would appreciate something like a shuttle to their events.

Ms. Bendel asked if the City has an events calendar. She continued that the airport could have a marquee or board to announce such events. Ms. Landry replied there is a list of events authorized by the City Council, but events that do not require a City-issued license are not listed on the City's website. Mr. Hickling stated that the airport has a monitor, and they could put events announcements up there. Discussion continued.

Mr. Temple shared other attractions the airport could consider having, such as nature trails, a climbing wall, running trails, or other recreational facilities. Mr. Hickling replied that those are great ideas. He continued that his question would be how the Committee can be involved with implementing the ideas. He continued that when all these ideas come, he tends to try and take them on himself, but does not have the bandwidth to do all of it. He asked how the Committee can take on a project.

Ms. Bendel stated that arranging a shuttle service might be beyond the Committee's scope, but they could at least make a simple sign to let people know about the downtown events. Mr. Lyle replied that the first step would be for the Committee to investigate four or five downtown events that might draw people to the airport. He continued that then they could figure out the mechanics of the process, create a list of airports to send flyers to, determine who will send them, and so on and so forth.

Ms. Landry spoke about the Jumanji 30th anniversary event scheduled for April. Discussion continued about events marketing, including how some people prefer email announcements while others prefer social media. Mr. Jacobs spoke about an aviation app that many pilots use,

which includes events calendars. He spoke about how it would be great to get more information about the Keene Airport, and information about Keene events, into that app. Mr. Hickling replied that that is a great example of something the ADMC could take on. Mr. Jacobs replied that he would be happy to talk with the app developer.

Mr. Hickling stated that he really wants the Committee to think about how they can take some of these ideas and run with them this coming year. Discussion continued about the Committee identifying and advertising events like the Jumanji anniversary and trying to do a downtown shuttle.

5) Airport Runway 5K/Airport Open House 2025

Mr. Hickling stated that the Airport Runway 5K/Airport Open House will be May 18, 2025. He continued that after the holidays, he is looking at meeting with Mr. Lyle and Ms. Bendel to start working on the bullet points they had put together. He had a discussion with Monadnock Choppers about helicopter rides, which Monadnock Choppers think they can do, for a fee and by reservation. He gave more information about how that could work, stating that it would be a big draw to bring people in. He continued that he talked with the people at the Senior Center who are organizing the 5K. They want to meet with him and Ms. Landry to start coordinating the marketing efforts, probably in January.

6) Hangar Development Updates

Mr. Hickling stated that Avanru is the company that had responded to the Request for Proposal (RFP). He continued that they had been going back and forth for a while on a letter of intent. There has not been a lot of movement. He drafted a letter of intent and got it to the City Attorney. This week, he is meeting with the City Attorney, the City Manager, and Ms. Landry, to talk about the letter of intent and getting it to Avanru.

Mr. Hickling continued that he continues to receive inquiries from people who are interested in building hangars here. He has another such meeting tomorrow. Some of the people expressing interest have merely an idea, whereas others have done the research and probably have the resources. He has everyone's contacts, and it might get to the point where they put out another RFP. There are still multiple parcels available. The RFP would be sent to everyone who has come to talk to him, called, sent an email, or otherwise shown interest.

Mr. Jacobs asked about the RFP process. Mr. Hickling explained how it ensures everyone has a fair opportunity. He spoke of how the RFP is advertised publicly and sent specifically to people who have shown an interest, giving people an opportunity to tell the City that they want to build a hangar, and to tell the City about their plan and their ability and resources to accomplish it. Then, the City goes through a selection process, choosing the best proposal based on several criteria. Mr. Jacobs asked more questions about the RFP process, which Mr. Hickling replied to. Mr. Temple spoke about the fact that much of the RFP process is required by law. Mr. Hickling

added that there are FAA regulations that they need to follow as well. Ms. Landry stated that the City makes sure to meet the requirements of the FAA and the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT). She continued that it is not unusual to have to use a competitive process when selling or leasing property for development. Mr. Hickling replied yes, the RFP process is the best way to give everyone equal opportunity, and for the City to look at all the options and choose the best one.

Mr. Jacobs asked how long an RFP is good for. Ms. Landry replied that it depends, and gave examples, such as 30 days, 90 days or six months. Discussion ensued. Mr. Temple asked how the City gets the word out about RFPs, reaching people around the northeast. Ms. Landry replied that the City's Purchasing Manager does a great job with that, doing everything he can to hit the right audience, including using recommendations from Mr. Hickling. She continued that the City advertises publicly and sends the RFP directly to people who have said they want to receive them. There is a sign-up page for that. She gave more information. Discussion continued about potential sources to advertise to.

7) Other/Misc.

Mr. Hickling stated that he does not have anything else. He asked if ADMC members had anything to bring up. Mr. Jacobs asked how they are looking at getting taxiway alpha fixed. Mr. Hickling replied that it is not really this Committee's scope, but he could update Mr. Jacobs on that after the meeting.

Mr. Temple stated that he will try and help out however he can with the Open House. He continued that Mr. Hickling can let him know.

8) Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Hickling adjourned the meeting at 9:49 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
David Hickling, Airport Director