

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

9:00 AM

Terminal Building
Dillant Hopkins Airport

Members Present:

George S. Hansel, Mayor
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager
Curt Hansen
Nathan Jacobs
Brian Johnson
Richard Blood
Elizabeth Bendel
Bill Hutwelker
Alona Florenz
Kristopher Radder

Staff Present:

David Hickling, Airport Manager/Chair

Members Not Present:

Mitch Greenwald, City Councilor
Luca Paris
Peter Temple

1) Call to Order

Chair David Hickling called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

2) Discussion/Updates

Rebecca Landry has moved into new position as Communication Director. She will likely be working with the airport on communications. This work will include everything from social media, traditional media, promotions, and advertising. Chair Hickling had preliminary communications with her, and also has a meeting in two weeks to discuss how to develop a plan and move forward.

Chair Hickling wanted to put it before the committee to see if anyone had ideas/suggestions for what that would involve.

Nathan Jacobs asked if the appearance of the airport from an incomer was taken into consideration and wondered if anyone has viewed it from that side of the terminal. He wondered if there were ways to improve the appearance, improve upkeep, make it more inviting, etc. He

also suggested incorporating advertisements for local business in the terminal and suggested putting thought towards how to incorporate local businesses as a way of increase spending in the area. Finding ways to promote events at the airport to try to increase/drum up business might also be beneficial.

Ms. Elizabeth Bendel was in agreement with Mr. Jacobs and added that advertising local businesses might increase the likelihood of the crews spending time and in turn, money, in town.

Chair Hickling added if we know we have an event, we should think about how we can market it to people who have flying clubs in an effort to try to get people to fly into Keene for the event. In particular thinking about ways in which to advertise it to private pilots.

Beth Bendel mentioned there are websites available for promoting that type of thing.

Member discussion around potential for Flying Magazine to do a foliage special.

Kristoper Radder asked if anyone had considered doing a small video, (5-10 minutes) that could be pushed to potentially interested individuals on either social media or sent out via e-mail.

City Manager Dragon noted that the City does not market for private businesses. She suggested looking at the Chamber of Commerce and their methods of marketing or public sharing. The city will share a post, but will not create the advertisements, as they are not city events. Rebecca Landry, in her role, will collect the information and share it, but not create it. Ms. Dragon suggested looking for additional ways to collect the information and then share it.

Chair Hickling mentioned that another thing he wants to work with Rebecca on is growing the social media followers for the airport. At one airport he worked at, they did an advertising campaign. It involved handing out foam airplanes and asking the kids/families to take a picture with the airplane while on vacation and posting it to the airport website. Something like that may not work as well here given the limited commercial travel.

City Manager Dragon suggested looking at other social media platforms as Facebook popularity is waning. Other platforms seem to be more beneficial and useful in promoting and advertising.

Nathan Jacobs asked if there is a link to weather that could be promoted to the members of the community. Mr. Hickling said they do, as it is information from the ASOS.

City Manager Dragon mentioned that the City is going through the process to update the website. Rebecca is working on that right now. We have data that tells us what people are clicking on. It is determining and integrating ways to bring them to the website and gets them to click on additional information.

Mr. Hickling suggested that if members think of anything after the meeting to e-mail him.

Brian Johnson joined resulting in quorum.

3) **Adopt May Meeting Minutes**

Chair Hickling asked if anyone had changes to submit for the minutes. With no changes, Mayor George Hansel motion to approve the minutes. Motion seconded by Curt Hanson. All members voted to approve May meeting minutes.

4) Airport Communications Plan
A) Airport Land Use Study Update

Chair Hickling introduced Steve Bourque from McFarland Johnson. McFarland Johnson will be working with the City on the land-use study. They have started into it and already come up with some interesting things so Steve is here to present on it.

Mr. Bourque explained that Chair Hickling originally presented the idea of a land development study and added that he finds appropriate land use and planning is a common issue for many airports. The desire for the study was because of many hanger developers wanting to develop here, but the question remaining of where? Hangers can limit the ability for the airport to grow and cause issues for decades to come making planning crucial.

The airport master plan done in 2017 did have an airport layout plan. It showed some of the areas that identified areas for development including some buildings and hangers that might work in these areas. McFarland looked into the specific parcels. They drilled down into them and looked at the constraints of each one in an effort to figure out the limitations of each of the parcels. In the north end of the airport, there is no sewer, which provides a constraint to development in that particular area.

Their goal is to try to identify the best use for each one of those parcels based on strengths and limitations. They do plan to offer secondary uses, if available.

Mr. Bourque noted that Chair Hickling had also asked them to look at cost-benefit of a ten-unit T hanger. Chair Hickling wanted information on whether it would be more beneficial for the airport to build and take on the operations and maintenance over 40 years or have a developer to come in and just charge for the land use.

Mr. Bourque was able to share some early drawings on parcels. Parcel 1 identified some acreage.

He also put together a height map showing the maximum allowable building heights above the ground. Some areas only allow buildings less than 40ft. He noted that outside of the airport might be good spot to market for a multi-tenant facility. Other areas have an allowable height of 40-60 feet in this area, but are in the centerline of the approach, which could possibly cause issues with FAA. A solar development might be a good idea for a location like that.

Chair Hickling asked Mr. Bourque about one of the recently built hangers. Part of the reason for the study, was the placement of the hanger right in the middle of the other two hangers. NFPA standards 409 say that hangers have to be at least 50 ft. apart. Mr. Bourque used a map to show the area left after applying the NFPA standards. By putting this hanger right in the middle, it limited the space for future development of a larger hanger.

Mr. Bourque noted that there are ways to build closer, but you have to put in a fire-rated wall, which has a significant additional cost.

Ms. Bendel asked if the blue is the footprint of a future allowable hanger. Mr. Bourque answered, yes, essentially.

Ms. Bendel asked if there was space on the north side of that particular hanger. Mr. Bourque said he was not sure how old the hanger was and where it was in terms of its useful life. It was noted that the hanger was privately owned. Mr. Bourque said there is 170 feet between that hanger and the property line. By subtracting 50ft from that, there would be 119 feet available. Everything gets small quickly when you include the necessary features and utilities.

Ms. Bendel asked when they expected to have a draft. Mr. Bourque responded that they hope to have a draft to Chair Hickling by the end of this month. They will then having a meeting and likely, a couple iterations with the hopes to have a final done October/ November.

Mayor Hansel asked if anyone had or was considering having an RFP once the land/use study is complete and using a broker?

Chair Hickling noted he would speak on that later.

Mr. Bourque mentioned one other component, which is to work with City GIS to build this into something that the city can incorporate it into the website so people can get access and review it.

There was a question regarding the capacity of the largest hanger possible. Mr. Bourque responded he is anticipating about 18,000, which translates to 125x140. In that particular area, there is a right of first refusal and a height restriction offering multiple challenges.

Chair Hickling and Mayor Hansel thanked Mr. Bourque for his time and presentation.

B) Airport Marketing Plan

Chair Hickling stated his desire to work together in an effort to put together a marketing plan identifying target markets, methods, routes of communication and possible evaluation methods. His goal is to have it ready to go first quarter of next year to start marketing those parcels.

Chair Hickling asked if that addressed what Mayor Hansel was asking. Mayor Hansel responded that he believes the better method would be to create an RFP and put it out. He sees it as a risk for the City.

City Manager Dragon mentioned that when it comes to hangers there really is not much negotiation unless there are multiple people and in that case we would have to put it into an RFP. There is some means of negotiations, but far less flexibility concerning private hanger use.

Mayor Hansel asked if it was possible to get a copy of the leasing agreement. Chair Hickling responded that it was available on the city website.

Mr. Bourque was asked if he found that sewer was a benefit in development in some of the sites. Mr. Bourque said if a developer wants to come in and sewer is available, they do not have to invest. If it is an empty hanger, it is a wash. Most of the sites they are looking at, if there is

aeronautical access, they are suggesting should be for aeronautical use. They have not looked at commercial versus private. The FAA knows (based on airport plan) which spaces are approved for aeronautical use. It is going to be hard to get them to approve putting a non-aeronautical hanger in where there is aeronautical access to the runways.

The marketing plan comes into play in helping to determine to whom we are going to market to both nationally and internationally.

Mayor George Hansel would like to see to dollars and cents put to these opportunities. Development for the sake of development is not ideal. Priority identification is the next step and it also important for buy-in.

Mr. Bill Hutwelker stated that from the Town of Swanzezy's prospective, it should be noted that 79E was adopted and the board has been supportive of expansion.

Chair Hickling noted that when we start marketing, information like 79E should be included as well as tax benefits, etc.

City Manager Dragon as part of this study, given the lack of space, asked whether it would be safe to assume that we are looking at the highest best use. That seems to be a crucial part to determining whether to develop or hold on to some land for additional revenue or potential future development.

5) **Old Business**

A) Airport Leases Update

Chair Hickling updated that there is still a lot of interest in leasing. Another lease was recently signed with Thomas Transportation.

Monadnock Choppers also renewed for another two years. The airport also now has an operating rights agreement to do aircraft maintenance. There has been continued and recent interest in potential hangers.

B) General Discussions

Chair Hickling mentioned that Bill Hultwelker had introduced him to Cody Morrison from Monadnock Economic Development Corporation. They will be working together on potential funding opportunities for water/sewer.

General discussion ensued on identifying some high level goals for the airport that could be over the top of all this. If the desire is to make this airport a place that fosters or introduces people to aviation, what are the goals? This airport is great for introducing new pilots to aviation and starting pilot careers.

Chair Hickling asked if that would be part of identifying the target audience. Mr. Hickling's goal is to bring in an aviation business that is going to potentially grow and at least come in with ten high paid employees. Last meeting, he talked about a company called Beta Technologies. Came

into Burlington airport with six employees and now they are up to six hundred employees with even more potential for growth.

There was discussion around trying to tie it into one of the area technical schools. Chair Hickling discussed how that can be quite a challenge as the FAA rules and regulations make it quite cumbersome. He thinks it would work great and there is a lot of demand for aircraft maintenance and mechanics, but it would be a challenge to get through.

Overall, the goal is to utilize the little bit of property that we have left that supports Monadnock area development and growth. It was asked if the airport had a mission. Chair Hickling said there is not an official one.

Discussion moved to shuttle service and promoting available housing for incoming pilots. It was mentioned that Southwest Community Services is doing a micro transit study.

Keene airport does not have scheduled service, so any transport would have to be on demand.

6) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Hickling adjourned the meeting at 9:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
David Hickling, Airport Director