

DELAWARE COASTAL AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2025

Opening:

1. Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Delaware Coastal Airport Advisory Committee was called to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. on December 3, 2025, at 21911 Rudder Lane, Georgetown, Delaware by Committee Chairman, Rick Garner.

Advisory Committee Members Present: Todd Lawson, County Admin. Mark Ryan
Andrew Harton, Econ. Dev. Director Rick Garner Jeff Reed
Ray Hopkins Dustin Berlinger
Larry Kelley
Bob Bryant, Airport Manager, Delaware Coastal Airport, non-member

Advisory Committee Members Absent: Matt Lloyd, Mark Parker, Ezra Rickards, and Scott Thomas

2. Approval of Agenda:

A Motion was made by Andrew Harton, and seconded by Ray Hopkins, to approve the agenda as distributed. The agenda was unanimously approved by consent.

3. Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Andrew Harton, and seconded by Larry Kelley, to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2025, meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved by consent.

4. Wildlife Management Update:

Bob informed the committee that the deer are being dealt with and there are about five that have been seen. They found two separate sections of the fence that had been cut for entry and were repaired. There have been issues with birds, and he is keeping them away with the noise makers.

5. Airport Update:

- (a) Bob stated the first phase of Taxiway Bravo has been completed and the bid for phase two has been accepted and should start March/April 2026. The contractor who won the bid is Allen Myers and they are the same company that did phase one. He also said there was positive feedback from the Wings & Wheels committee that the new taxiway made an enormous difference to the event. Bob has had discussions with the FAA regarding grant allocations and the possibility of a single grant to complete the project.

Questions arose regarding the PAPI lights being out of service for over a year and what is the status for repairing them. Bob has been in contact with FAA to do a flight check but due to budget issues they are not doing flight checks at non-FAA owned/operated airports currently. They said 4-22 are working but 10-28 are not. Bob will check with FAA and ask them to lift the NOTAM on the PAPI's.

- (b) Bob gave an update on the status of the installation of the Eastern Shore natural gas line. There have been a few issues with wires cut causing problems with ASOS, the FBO phone lines and the terminal building security system. He mentioned to the committee there will be an email sent out in the future to tenants wishing to tie into the new system later.

6. Discussion of Role of Airport Advisory Committee:

Bob left this item on the agenda because he does not want the initiative to die out. He suggested at the last meeting for the committee to provide him with ideas on sub-committees and to date, he has not received anything. These could be items such as day-to-day operations, capital development, maintenance, etc.

Dustin and Larry mentioned the need for pavement repairs on the old taxiway and specifically the apron area between the Schell hangar and the new tiedown apron. Repairs are needed on Aviation Avenue near the Aviation Museum. Bob stated he would report this to the County Engineering Department and ask that they determine the need for repairs so we can include them in our FY27 budget entry.

Several tenants also asked if a supplemental wind cone could be added back at the approach end of RWY 22. Bob said he would talk to Delta about how to coordinate this with the FAA and about internal lighting.

The next discussion was a lengthy one regarding Fire Department training at the airport. The need for aviation communication training is important. If the Fire Department is not trained in the language, it would be foreign to them when coming in for an emergency. Mr. Lawson mentioned that Bob contact Tim Cooper with the County Public Safety office. Brian White said he would check with AOPA to see what training they offer. The NBAA also has training programs. Mike Freed of Ocean Aviation said he has CFI's on staff and could check to see if they would want to do training.

Dustin suggested the first working group could be one that worked on a best practices manual.

7. Ocean Aviation Updates:

Mike Freed, Founder/Owner/Operator of Ocean Aviation, was invited to speak at our meeting. He recently moved to Delaware from Maryland to be closer to this location. He has been a flight instructor for 40+ years. When he first came to DCA, he was just looking for tiedown space and the business evolved from there. He said the operation at DCA has far exceeded his expectations. He has 14 – 16 students per day taking flight lessons and 140 students currently enrolled between the two locations and sees consistent growth. When they graduate 30% go to businesses to work and 70% are professional pilots. Many of his students are doing flight lessons versus going to college. Mike invested in a flight simulator at DCA and has one at the Ocean City Maryland location and said the simulator was built into their curriculum. The OC location started out slowly, but DCA took off quickly. Students are transferring to DCA for training versus OC due to convenience. Three of his graduated students are now flying commercial in Europe. He has a new plane coming in June of 2026 and is interested in expanding his business at DCA. It costs about \$85,000 to complete the training. He has two classrooms now and would like to expand to 3 or 4 instructors and build upstairs as his office space to give more room downstairs for instructors. He is also interested in bringing in investors. He was asked how long it takes to complete the courses. He said the ones who want to accelerate take classes 4 – 5 times per week others on a self-pace come once a week or so. Jeff Reed stated the cost ranges from \$150 - \$200k to get to CFI level.

8. Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

9. Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2025, at 6 p.m. at 21911 Rudder Lane (EOC), Georgetown, DE.

A motion to adjourn was made by Andrew Harton, seconded by Dustin Berlinger. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: *Patty Bodenweiser - Delaware Coastal Airport*