

# **SUSSEX COUNTY AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2011

## **Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Sussex County Airport Advisory Committee was called to order at 7:04 p.m. on March 23, 2011 at Sussex County Emergency Operations Center by Airport Committee Chairman, Jeff Reed.

## **Advisory Committee Members Present:**

Dave Baker, County Administrator

Julie Wheatley, Director, County Economic Development

Gus Croll

Richard Wilson

Jeff Reed

Mark Ryan

Jim Hickin, A.A.E., Sussex County Airport (Non-member)

## **Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Honorable Sam Wilson, County Council

Garrett Dernoga

Mike Izzo, P.E., Director, County Engineering Dept

Rick Garner

Larry Kelley

## **1. Approval of Agenda**

A Motion was made by Dave Baker, seconded by Mark Ryan, to approve the agenda, as posted. The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

## **2. Approval of Minutes**

A Motion was made by Gus Croll, seconded by Dave Baker, to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2011 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved by consent.

## **3. Public Comments**

There were no public comments at this time.

## **4. NASCAR Contacts Update**

Julie Wheatley opened the discussion by stating she had received a list of team contacts printed off the internet from Susan Wise. Julie has shared the list with Gerald Wingate who will get her an up to date list of contacts for the teams.

Dave Baker asked what county can do to attract planes that would qualify for FAA funding for 6000 ft. extension. Discussion centered around what incentives that could be

offered to the race teams to fly into Sussex County Airport. The incentives mentioned included transportation, fuel discounts, hotel packages, food, and DelDot decal for quick access into the track. Dave Baker suggested Julie Wheatley to call a few of NASCAR teams and find out what incentives they would need to fly into the airport and also asked Julie not to offer anything but see what incentives they need. Gus Croll offered to assist Julie with the calls. Dave asked that they let him know in the next week or so what resulted from the phone calls.

Jeff Reed and Gus Croll described their trip to Daytona and the amenities that attract people to go there. The amenities included the airport is accommodating, close to the track, and warmer weather.

Jeff Reed asked if we have brochures or website link for the airport showing the amenities that may be helpful in drawing teams here.

Gus Croll and Mark Ryan suggested calling NetJets to see if positioning their operations here would be helpful with the count for flight operations for the longer runway. Jim Hickin replied he would call but we don't have the runway length here, or an ILS.

Julie Wheatley asked about the marketing plan that the consultant did a presentation on recently at another meeting she attended. Jim Hickin said the consultant has offered to do a marketing plan for the airport but that it comes with a cost. He also commented that when other airports have used the marketing plan their numbers have improved.

Jim Hickin announced that the Runway Justification Study is on the County's website and suggested the committee members take time to look at it to see how the FAA comes up with number of flight operations. Jim Hickin is working with PATS and Northrop Grumman regarding aircraft that would count for flight operations.

Julie Wheatley suggested a concierge service in the lobby as an option. She also suggested updating the lobby area to include racks that would show information for lodging as well as other brochures for the area and possibly a TV in the waiting area. Jeff Reed mentioned the small size of our airport pilot's lounge compared to other airports, and also suggested possibly getting another computer with access to internet in the lounge. The one computer in there belongs to WSI and has only their software on it.

Jeff Reed asked Jim Hickin what planes need to come in to the airport to count toward the flight operations numbers. Jim replied please remember the planes that come in here of that size usually come in because they have a reason and the trip here meets their needs. Cost is a big factor in determining their destination.

## **5. Emergency Response**

Rick Garner was absent for the meeting. Jeff Reed led this discussion. Jeff commented that the Pilots Group went to Dover to tour the tower and stated that communication has been much better. Jim Hickin said he is ok with the Georgetown Fire Company and said the communication issue is resolved.

## **6. Wildlife Management**

Jeff Reed described a situation he encountered upon trying to depart the airport recently. He encountered deer on the runway and wanted to know what County is doing to control the situation. Jim Hickin relayed some facts regarding deer strikes and bird strikes that have been reported. Jeff Reed asked Jim to talk to Garrett regarding bird strikes. Jim also relayed some history regarding gaps in the fence and the efforts that have been made in keeping deer out. The fence was completed in 2009. Since then Jim has contacted representative from USDA who specializes in wildlife management and works with airports to assist them with handling the deer population. The representative came and did a one day assessment and completed an inventory of wildlife to include deer, foxes, geese, etc. USDA proposed a management program that would include habitat management of all the wildlife to include a three mile radius of the airport. The county hasn't accepted proposal. Jim said he would not suggest having various hunters come out and kill wildlife due to the liability issue. Dave Baker asked for other options instead of paying USDA. Mark Ryan stated that Pilots coming to PATS don't even come in at night due to deer. Jeff Reed suggested having people with knowledge of aviation do the hunting and have them sign a waiver. Dave Baker asked if State Police could do something. Jim Hickin will follow up with the State Police. Jim commented that we need to look at more than just the deer and have a wildlife management program.

## **7. Airport Update**

Jim Hickin updated the committee on the following projects:

1. Tie Down Ramp: Bid in the amount of \$166,000.00 has been awarded to A.P. Croll. Still on track for April 18, 2011 start date weather permitting. It is hopeful the tiedowns will be usable by July 4<sup>th</sup>. The apron will also be resealed and all should be ready by the end of summer. It takes 30 days for the sealer to cure. Thirteen tiedown spaces will be created with this project.
2. Runway Extension: Still on track for 500 ft extension. Environmental Assessment Open House will be May 3, 2011, West Complex at 6:00 p.m.. There will be notices in the paper; notice on website; Design Contract is still on schedule with consultant.
3. Airfield Lighting: The runway lights are working again "barely". We are in process of fixing much needed repairs. Workers are still not happy with the leakages of electricity. Jeff Reed commented the lights do appear brighter. Taxilights on Taxiway B are still not working.

## **8. Airport Policies (Continued) Minimum Standards**

Time did not permit any discussion on the airport policies.

**Adjournment:**

Gus Croll made a motion, and seconded by Dave Baker to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27, 2011 at Sussex County Emergency Operations Center.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Susan Wise, Clerk III Technician, Sussex County Airport