

**Airport Advisory Board Minutes
June 8, 2023 5:30pm
Airport Administration Building
8807 Airport Boulevard
Leesburg, Florida**

Attendance: Darel Craine
Joel Hargis
Marvin King
Byron Oldham

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Byron Oldham called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Marvin King gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes from May 11, 2023

Joel Hargis made a motion to approve the minutes. Darel Craine seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Project Update

FY 2022 Hangar Design: Airport Manager (AM) Dean said this project is still waiting for the City's DRC (Development Review Committee) to complete its review. There are still some comments pending from the Electric Department. Once DRC is done it will go immediately to Procurement. It should take them about two weeks to get it out to bid for Phase I construction.

Wildlife Hazard Assessment: AM Dean said the status of this project is unchanged. It is about $\frac{3}{4}$ done and should be completed in September.

Fuel Farm: AM Dean said this project is at about 40% of design. There is nothing substantial to update. The stormwater permit application is still at St. Johns. They hope to have that back in the next month. There will be a meeting to discuss the design when it gets to 50%.

Taxiways Alpha & Delta Rehab Design: AM Dean said the survey is complete. The geo-tech is in process. They are on site now doing core samples at various locations within the project site. The schematic design is underway.

Veterans Road Infrastructure Design/Construction: AM Dean said the design is almost 100% complete. They are waiting for the St. Johns permit. It will go to DRC for review in about two weeks.

Airport Manager Update

- City Commission – Airport Impacts/Issues

AM Dean advised there are no Commission items to report on.

FDOT Vertiport Final Report

AM Dean said at the last meeting they discussed the initial report she had received from FDOT on vertiports. She received the final report from FDOT the day after that meeting and has provided copies of it to the Board for review.

It includes references to an engineering brief and a FAA brief that are about the design of vertiports. The brief information is not included in this report but she can send the link to the Board members if they are interested in looking at it. It sounds like it includes some basic design guidelines. FAA has said they hope to have a full circular on this issue published in the mid 20's. She would guess 2025 or 2026. She advised Board members to let her know if they have any questions or feedback after reviewing the report and she will reach out to FDOT.

Byron Oldham thanked AM Dean for providing this information. He said based on the small amount of space vertiports need, he believes this is something we should definitely explore. Joel Hargis said some of the start dates and completion dates in the report seem pretty aggressive compared to what we have been discussing. He questioned if that is directed towards people who are ready now. AM Dean said Jack Thomason from GAI has been to some of the meetings referred in the report. The next time he is at a meeting he can probably give a good summary of it.

Darel Craine asked if FDOT will put out a synopsis of the meetings that we can look at. AM Dean said from what she saw when she went through the report, a lot of that information is included in it. It also seems that FAA and FDOT plan to provide guidance to local levels. She will be on the lookout for that information. A lot of issues related to the vertiports are P&Z issues. Many local government P&Z departments are not familiar with aviation issues and it also needs to be remembered that a vertiport does not have to be built on a public airfield – it can be done privately. The planning issues need to be addressed in a manner that someone with no aviation background can understand so it can be properly implemented. Joel Hargis said he sees that as an advantage for us. AM Dean said our P&Z staff does have aviation experience so that is helpful. She noted that they helped assemble the maps as part of the Master Plan process. That puts us in a better position than some other areas.

Joe Hargis said the report lists establishing pilot programs as #1 on the list of timelines/recommendations. Darel Craine said the infrastructure and zoning on page 8 are interesting as far as what they will require local airports and governments to do. Since last meeting, he thought quite a bit about what Byron Oldham said regarding the advantage of our airport being on a lake when it comes to test flights. Byron Oldham said he thinks we have a unique opportunity and would be a good location for a test site.

Joe Hargis said at some point we need to court early developers and manufacturers. Darel Craine said we need to get our name and willingness to work with them out to developers. Byron Oldham said at the last meeting he mentioned that he would be willing to draft a letter to send out on behalf of the Board that would explain the benefits our airport offers as a test site and what we can bring to the table. It could be sent to the FAA or prospective companies.

Joel Hargis asked if there might be any special funding available to support vertiport programs. AM Dean said it might be possible. She can inquire about that. Joel Hargis said that is definitely something to consider. He noted that more pilots train in Florida than anywhere else in the world because of terrain and weather. It makes sense from the standpoint of engineering and development for them to start here.

New Business

AM Dean introduced Cindy Brown from Congressman Daniel Webster's office. We are very happy to have her in attendance tonight. Ms. Brown said she has left her contact information with AM Dean. If anyone has a message to pass on to the Congressman or would like to set up a meeting with him, she will be happy to assist.

AM Dean said there is going to be a 5K race at the airport in September. Commissioner Alan Reisman is heading that up. It benefits the Leesburg Police Department (LPD) Blue Foundation. Participants will be running on the runways and taxiways. She noted that a lot of airports do this; some even have events at night. The plan for the event has been submitted to FAA. Our plan was based on the one used at Flagler for their run, which they have been holding for 11 years. The engineers also helped by creating the course map that shows the route along with safety, security, etc. The event is open to the public. There are a lot of people already signed up. LPD will make up the safety team and will be staged at each turn out on the race course. There will also be vendors and sponsor tents set up in the start/finish area on the main ramp.

Commissioner Reisman said he thinks this will be good exposure for the airport. It is a way to get members of the general public out here. If anyone has aircraft they would like to display, that would be great.

Joel Hargis noted the route is on 13. He asked if the runway will be closed. AM Dean said she will be issuing a NOTAM to close the entire airport for 1 ½ hours (7:30am – 9:00am). She will act as the trailing vehicle to do a FOD check before the airport reopens. AM Dean said the schedule is for the staging to start at 7:30am. The race will start at 8:00am. It is expected to last a maximum of one hour.

The tower is aware of the event. Well in advance of the date she will send an email to her entire distribution list with the closure information. She will also make sure that the two primary flight schools that use the airport for training are notified way ahead

of time. She noted that she can only issue the NOTAM 72 hours in advance of the closure. Joel Hargis said this should be great publicity for the airport.

Ned Bowers said Skybolt will be attending the Paris Air Show again this year. Enterprise Florida helps them with that. He said that their international sales now exceed domestic. He noted he arrived late and missed the update on the hangar design project. He asked if someone can recap that for him. AM Dean said they are getting ready to go out to bid for Phase I construction. That includes the site work, some utility relocation, stormwater pond modifications and all the asphalt that is needed for the Phase II hangar construction. Ned Bowers asked where we are on the hangars. AM Dean said as she has mentioned before, this project must be phased in over several years. She said that he is on the list for two of the four maintenance hangars that are part of the project plan. It will be up to this Board and the City Commission to determine which types of hangars will be built first – t-hangars, box hangars or maintenance hangars. That decision will not be made for a while yet. Ned Bowers asked about the project funding. AM Dean said FDOT has provided \$1.5 million in grant dollars for Phase I based on the cost estimate. Once the actual bids are received, if there is a shortage, we can request additional funding. Ned Bowers thanked AM Dean for helping with the issue getting 480v power to their building. It was turned on this Monday and will allow them to move some equipment around and buy them some time before expanding. AM Dean said she cannot take the credit for that; it was all the Electric Department. She will pass the message along to them.

Marvin King said he met with Commissioner Berry a few days ago. She is setting up her priority list for projects in District 1. She wants to know if the airport projects impact or compete with projects in other areas of the City when it comes to funding. He told her it does not because the airport operates predominately on State and Federal grants that can only be used for aviation purposes. He wants to make sure he gave her correct information. AM Dean said that is correct. The grants used at the airport are strictly for aviation. Marvin King also said that even though the spreadsheet for airport funds shows it is operating in the black, those funds cannot be transferred to other areas of the City. AM Dean said that is also correct. She noted that all revenue generated on the airport by tenants must be spent on the airport for aviation needs.

Adjournment

Joel Hargis made a motion to adjourn. Marvin King seconded the motion to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 6:01pm.

Bo Wroten
Chairman

Pam Hester
Recorder