

**Airport Advisory Board Minutes  
September 9, 2021 5:30pm  
Airport Administration Building  
8807 Airport Boulevard  
Leesburg, Florida**

Attendance: Tweet Coleman  
Fred Griffin, Jr.  
Byron Oldham  
Alan Reisman

**Call to Order**

Chairman Alan Reisman called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

Chairman Reisman gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes from July 8, 2021**

Tweet Coleman made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 8, 2021 meeting. Fred Griffin, Jr. seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Cracker Barrel Old Country Store – 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment to Ground Lease**

Airport Manager (AM) Tracey Dean said the lease originated in 2002 with a 15-year term and three five-year renewal options. Each renewal option included a roughly 10% increase in the lease amount. The second renewal is due. Cracker Barrel has requested to exercise the renewal option but they want to keep the lease rate at the current amount during this next 5-year period – no increase. They have also proposed to add three more five-year renewal options to the agreement. Those additional options include rate increases. AM Dean noted that keeping the rate the same for the upcoming renewal option is a loss of about \$26,000. The value of the three additional five-year terms is about \$1 million.

Chairman Reisman asked what the next step would be if this agreement is not approved. AM Dean said it is ultimately up to the City Commission whether or not to accept the terms offered. She thinks that adding the additional renewals shows they have long-term plans to stay at this location.

Chairman Reisman asked if this is less than what we did for Ruby Tuesday. AM Dean said they are different situations because Ruby Tuesday was filing bankruptcy. They presented us with the option of accepting their proposal for decreased rent or they would close the restaurant.

Byron Oldham said if we say no to the request, their only option is to build another restaurant. He said 10% over five years is a 2% escalator which is a marginal

increase for this property. He thinks a lot of people will try to take advantage of what happened in the last year or two. He thinks we have the leverage in this situation. Without them providing financials that show a loss of revenue, he thinks the answer should be no.

Fred Griffin, Jr. said he thinks this is a good proposal. We don't need to lose any more businesses in the City, and they do have the option to go somewhere else or even give an ultimatum to us like Ruby Tuesday did. He would say yes.

Chairman Reisman asked for clarification that the proposal is only for the next five years to be stagnant. AM Deans said that is correct. Only the upcoming five-year term would stay at the same rate. The next terms after that would include an increase. She noted they were very responsible on the COVID agreement amendment that deferred their rent. It was paid back on time as agreed. She believes they like this location and want to stay here.

Byron Oldham asked if they reached out to AM Dean about this proposal. AM Dean said they contacted the City Manager. The renewal is due in June, 2022 and they must request to exercise their option within 6-9 months before then. At first, she was not 100% in favor, partly because of the realtor fees (5%) involved with the original lease, including the first three renewal options. Those fees total about \$78,000. She requested that the proposed amendment state that the additional renewals (4-6) will not include a commission fee for the realtor and Cracker Barrel agreed to that.

Byron Oldham said he feels like corporations are going to ask for things like this but he thinks there should be a necessity. He believes there should be a financial reason for this request. He certainly doesn't want to see them leave the city, but there is no indication that is going to happen. He will vote no without seeing a reason or some logic for the reduction. Tweet Coleman asked if the Board can postpone making a decision until they have financial information from Cracker Barrel.

AM Dean said she can certainly ask them for financials. They are meeting with their Real Estate Board tomorrow to review this same amendment. She said the current term does not expire until June, 2022. Byron Oldham noted there has been a lot of financial assistance available to businesses during the pandemic.

Bart Brainerd asked if this would affect the grant assurances. AM Dean said she did not believe so. Jack Thompson from GAI said non-aeronautical leases are reviewed by the FAA, however a lease renewal is not a change in scope or change in function of the property. He also noted that he just looked online to check Cracker Barrel performance, and from 2019 third quarter to 2021 third quarter it shows revenue being down 3½ %.

AM Dean said Byron Oldham made a good point about whether they attempted to take advantage of any of the COVID help that was available for businesses. She

can ask about that in addition to asking for financials. She will get as much information as they are willing to provide.

Byron Oldham made a motion to request that Cracker Barrel provide annual financials showing a hardship in order to consider this proposal. The motion was seconded by Fred Griffin, Jr. and approved unanimously.

## **Project Update**

US Customs and Border Protection Interior Remodel: Jack Thompson from GAI said doors have been one of the major missing pieces in the project. They are supposed to arrive soon. A big concern with the door on this side is that because the door and doorframe are both bullet-proof there is a special installation process. The security and access control feature is also behind due to a chip issue and may not be done until the end of the year. The ballistic drywall is done and just needs painting. USCBP has advised that if we can get the doors in and building perimeter secured, they will move in and wait to do all of the security features at the same time. It is hoped that the officer will be able to move in next week.

RW 13/31 Rehab (paused): AM Dean said there is no change to this project. It is still is paused. Flight Services did come by and check the PAPI lights. RW 13 is certified and back in service. RW 31 did not pass due to tree obstructions. She is waiting for the final report to determine which trees are causing the problem. The plan is still for contractor to come back at the end of the year to remark the runway numbers on 3/21 (to 4/22) and change associated signage.

Main Ramp Resurfacing: Jack Thompson from GAI said the bid opening was last week. Two bids were received. One came in around the anticipated amount and the other did not. The apparent low bidder is a local firm and they have a lot airport experience. The bid information was sent to FDOT and they hope to have the grant documents back in the next few days. AM Dean will take the grant to the City Commission in October. Once that is done, they can begin discussing the schedule with the contractor. Tweet Coleman asked how much the bid is for. Jack Thompson said it was \$2.25 million. Our estimated cost was \$2.5 million. He noted that the next bidder was almost double that amount. Chairman Reisman asked AM Dean why this will not go to the Commission until October. AM Dean said the Purchasing Manager is out until late this month and there are still a couple things pieces they need to do. Also, there will need to be a budget adjustment. Overall it is a cleaner process to wait until October.

Chairman Reisman asked if the start date is in the bid. Jack Thompson said the bids are good for 90 days. AM Dean said because the apron project has such strict phases, the contractor has to focus on each piece being done in the time allotted due to the impact on businesses. She noted that until the official Notice to Proceed is issued, they cannot discuss a timeline. AM Dean said the contractor does have an option to move their start date out if they need to. Jack Thompson said it was discussed at the pre-bid meeting that there is leeway on the start date. However,

once it is started the contractor must complete the entire project within the timeframe specified. There were five contractors who attended the pre-bid meeting, but only two submitted bids. He noted that scheduling and phasing were emphasized several times during the pre-bid process.

Tweet Coleman asked how long the project will take. Jack Thompson said it should be done in about four months. Some areas are milling and overlay and some areas require reconstruction. The areas needing reconstruction will take longer than those only requiring an overlay. Tweet Coleman asked for the lifespan of the work. Jack Thompson said it should last 20 years. If there is maintenance done in 10 years, it should last another 20 beyond that. The design itself calls for 20 years.

Public Works Lift Station Rehab: AM Dean said the final walk through with the contractor is scheduled for tomorrow morning. It is in service and the smell seems to be better. It definitely looks better. The poles are set for chain link fence and some sod has been laid. The areas without sod will be hydroseeded. The generator was set today. It is almost complete.

Chairman Reisman asked what will be done to prevent wash outs in this area. Bart Brainerd said dirt is also being washed across the road from where the cars are parked. AM Dean said perhaps when the Wilco Drive improvements are addressed they could look at curbing. Bart Brainerd said that would only be a temporary fix because eventually the dirt will build up to be as high as the curb and start washing out again. AM Dean said she will have to look into this further.

### **Airport Manager Update**

- Wilco Drive Entrance Improvements

AM Dean said the agenda packets include drawings from a proposal that was made previously with columns and an arch. Wilco is the main entrance so it needs to be emphasized and Echo needs to be downplayed. As everyone is aware, Wilco has several issues including buried utilities and the elevation difference between the sides of the road and the right of way. There are many challenges. The City Commission felt the cost of the previous proposal was too high. It was estimated at \$300,000. At the recent workshop, she was asked to talk to this Board for suggestions/ideas including a possible budget.

Chairman Reisman noted that the height of the arch was an issue for when they bring aircraft in on trailers. AM Dean said it was designed to highway standards. Chairman Reisman noted that when they trailer the Blackhawks, they are taller than highway overpasses. He thinks the current sign is good. He suggested dressing up the landscaping in that area. He likes how the palms look on Dixie. When the pond is cleaned up, that area could be landscaped as well. Tweet Coleman suggested using just the columns from the proposal - no arch – as well as adding landscaping. Byron Oldham asked if there are funds already budgeted for this. AM Dean said at one point there were funds included in the budget, but probably only enough for

design and it is no longer included. Byron Oldham said it is hard to miss an airport. You might miss the driveway, but you can always turn around. He thinks the idea of using the columns is good and it would match the gateway at 441/27.

Chairman Reisman asked if the Echo entrance can be cleaned up. AM Dean said Public Works is supposed to do some landscaping in the small median and the banner poles are going to be painted black and the signs will get new inserts with the airport logo. Byron Oldham asked if we want to do anything to Echo if we are trying to emphasize Wilco. Chairman Reisman said he would rather see just plain grass than deteriorating landscaping and grass would be easier to maintain.

Tweet Coleman noted that she has served on the Boards at colleges, and they often get support from benefactors for improvements by granting naming rights or something similar. You never know how much people will give until you ask them. Perhaps the Pringle family would be willing to donate to help fund the entrance project. It's amazing what people will give if they are just asked. AM Dean said she would need to check with the City Manager and City Attorney to see if that is something we can do.

She asked for confirmation that everyone believes we should keep the existing sign and work columns and additional landscaping into a design. Byron Oldham said yes – keep the sign and integrate it into the design.

AM Dean noted that improvements for the pond are being revisited by the Public Works Stormwater Division. They are looking at possibly clearing it all, laying sod and making it mowable. Some of that work might be done in house with the Stormwater staff.

- City Commission – Airport Impacts/Issues

AM Dean gave an overview of the discussion items from the August 12<sup>th</sup> Joint Workshop with the City Commission.

1 – Projects: Continue moving forward with the fuel farm design and apron construction projects. The fuel farm is in FY 22.

2 – Design t-hangars: A t-hangar plan will be designed by the engineers and paid for with airport cash. That way the project will be shovel ready when construction grant funds are available. They are looking at the 3+ acres just east of the new box hangars. The design process will begin after October 1<sup>st</sup>.

She is working with FDOT to try and move the t-hangar construction funds to Fiscal Year (FY) '22. They may be able to get partial construction dollars at the end of the City's FY '22 which would be the start for FDOT's FY '23.

3 - Wilco Pond improvements as were already discussed

4 - Develop a plan to market the property on the north side of US 441. She needs to follow up with the City Manager for more on this issue.

Chairman Reisman said that the Airport Monthly Report for June includes a comment that DRJ was inquiring about purchasing more land. AM Dean said they previously purchased 7.2 acres and now would like to buy additional land north of that site. The City Manager will be advising that this is unlikely to be allowed due to a previous agreement in place with Silver Lake Estates which says that area will be kept residential.

Chairman Reisman asked about leaks in the Subaru dealership roof. AM Dean said she is still investigating that matter. The body shop building roof was recently replaced. The current leak is in the showroom building. Chairman Reisman asked if there is a cost estimate for the repair. AM Dean said they are still discussing who is responsible for fixing it. There has been some discussion of renegotiating the lease terms and incorporating a solution for the roof issue. Tweet Coleman asked if there is a warranty on the roof. AM Dean said they have been unable to locate any records indicating the roof was ever replaced. It may have just been repaired at different times. That is one reason they are considering a new lease.

### **New Business**

There was no new business to discuss.

### **Adjournment**

Byron Oldham made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Fred Griffin, Jr. and the meeting adjourned at 6:26pm.

*Alan Reisman*  
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Chairman

*Pam Hester*  
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Recorder