

AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Time: 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Location: Bryan Room, Institute of Aviation

Members Present: Steve Carter (Chair), Tom Berns, Mike DeLorenzo, Jayne DeLuce, William Dick, John Frasca, Karl Gnad, Alan Nudo, Jud Nogle, Laurel Prussing, Seamus Reilly, Craig Rost, Dan Sholem, Bill Volk, Laura Weis

Others Present: Bill Ferguson, Pat Pioletti

Members Absent: Deb Busey, Lori Cowdrey Benso, Amanda Fulfer, Bill Giannetti, Gozen Hartman, Bruce Knight, Marvin Lacy, Max Mitchell, Robert McCleary, and Chris Schroeder

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions – Chair Steve Carter began the Airport Advisory Committee at 3:42 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

Update on University Items – Mike DeLorenzo provided updates on several of the Task Force recommendations the university currently has in progress.

- *Executive Director of Willard Airport* – Mike reported the search for the Executive Director is almost finished. The finalists have been interviewed and the committee is currently reviewing all information before selecting a candidate to fill the position.
- *Air Service Development* – Mike noted he and Bruce Walden recently met with Sixel consultant Jack Penning to prepare for scheduled meetings with several airline companies at an upcoming air service conference.
- *Construction Updates* – At Mike's request, Pat Pioletti provided an update on the current construction projects at the airport. Pat reported the following:
 - o *Runway Project* - The project is currently in the paving portion for the additions to the runways. It is expected that the project will finish on time at the end of this year.
 - o *AA's Rebranding* - American Airlines (AA) has started their remodeling project related to its rebranding after the completion of its merger with US Airways. The areas within the terminal that are being remodeled include the ticketing area and portions of the gate area.
 - o *FlightStar Expansion* – The expansion of FlightStar's facilities has begun. Work to update the utilities for hangar 10 and preparing the site for a new water tower has been completed. Construction to expand hangar 10 will not begin until next Spring. This is the hangar that houses American Airline jets when they stay overnight for maintenance. Work to expand hangar 8 has also started. The additional space in this facility will be used for interior renovations in the airplanes.

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Updates from Subcommittees

1. Airport Development - Dick Helton

Subcommittee Chair Dick Helton was unable to attend the meeting, but did send Steve Carter with an update from the meeting. The group is exploring options on how to protect the areas surrounding the runways with some type of overlay zone. The group is reviewing the options with Champaign County and Village of Savoy officials to determine the best options for all parties involved.

2. Governance - Steve Carter

Subcommittee Chair Steve Carter asked Craig Rost to provide an update on the planned economic impact study of Willard Airport. Craig reported he and Alan Nudo have gathered the financial support from seven local businesses for the Economic Impact Study. This money - \$1,000 from each company - is going to help pay for the report to be completed by Sixel Consulting. Alan and Craig are working on a grant application for funding from the Realtors' Board. If work on the economic impact study can begin in October, then it will be completed by the end of the year.

Once the study is completed and a new Executive Director of Willard is appointed, the next step will be to gain more support for economic development at the airport from the community businesses and local government bodies.

3. Ground Transportation - Karl Gnadt

Subcommittee Chair Karl Gnadt reported that work continued on creating recommendations for taxi cab companies. There is a fine line between protecting the rights of small businesses and the regulations of taxis for the good of the consumer. This is making it difficult to finalize recommendations for the Advisory Committee. With no simple solution being determined, the responsibility to create regulations falls back on the university. The university's legal department is exploring the options available for regulating taxis while they are on university property.

4. Marketing - Jayne DeLuce

Subcommittee Chair Jayne DeLuce shared a fact sheet on the airport to committee members that was compiled by Sixel Consulting. The marketing campaign began on August 19 and reports are indicating ticket sales have increased by 15% since the start of the campaign. The street team had a tent at the Urbana Sweet Corn festival. There were several comments heard that indicate people do not realize Willard Airport provides flights to the public. The street team was also at the first Illini football game and plans to set up at three more football games this season.

The advertising campaign on local media venues is in progress. There has been a notable increase in advertising by other local regional airports since the Fly Champaign-Urbana

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campaign started. This was an expected result of the new marketing campaign. It was noted this could be seen as a positive since it provides a way for a conversation to begin about regional airports and the services offered at Willard Airport. It also provides the chance to debunk the myths surrounding airline service at Willard.

Another project for the marketing subcommittee involves making businesses involved in conferences that will be held in the community aware of Willard Airport and ask them to include it in their travel information for conference guests. Local hotels will be contacted and asked to include Willard Airport in their travel options and to have Willard as the first airport on the list of flight options to/from the community. Currently, most information related to conferences does not include information for flying to Champaign-Urbana.

Regional Aviation Development - Seamus Reilly

Subcommittee Chair Seamus Reilly reported subcommittee did meet in September. It was discussed that one of the major assets of the local aviation community is the Institute of Aviation, along with FlightStar as a provider to the major airline carriers. The group is exploring how to expand the number of avionic partners in the community and region.

The feedback and questions posed by the finalists for the Executive Director position at Willard proved to be very informative for the subcommittee members. Each candidate brought with them another idea or question that aided the group in their review of how to expand development at Willard.

Seamus and other members of the subcommittee are developing a long-range plan for the facility and will include the Executive Director in the project, once the person is appointed. They are also exploring how best to use the leverage already within the community for the aviation industry for additional growth at Willard Airport.

Wrap Up & Adjourn

Chair Steve Carter wrapped up the meeting by thanking everyone for their efforts to keep the group moving forward in implementing the recommendations last year's Airport Task Force. He again reminded everyone of the Fly Champaign-Urbana's street teams being at the upcoming home Illini football games and told them to be watching for the group's tenet as they attend the games.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, December 3, 2015

3:30-5:00 p.m.

Bryan Room, Institute of Aviation