

AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 3, 2015

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

Location: Bryan Room, Institute of Aviation

Members Present: Steve Carter (Chair), Tom Berns, Deb Busey, Mike DeLorenzo (via phone), Jayne DeLuce, John Frasca, Bill Giannetti, Bruce Knight, Alan Nudo, Jud Nogle, Craig Rost, Chris Schroeder, and Bill Volk

Others Present: Gene Cossey, Bill Ferguson, Pat Pioletti, Bruce Walden, and Steve Wanzek

Members Absent: Lori Cowdrey Benso, William Dick, Amanda Fulfer, Karl Gnadt, Gozen Hartman, Marvin Lacy, Max Mitchell, Robert McCleary, Laurel Prussing, Seamus Reilly, Dan Sholem, and Laura Weis

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions – Steve Carter

Chair Carter welcomed everyone and introduced the new Executive Director of Willard Airport, Gene Cossey, to the Airport Advisory Committee. His first official day as Executive Director will be Monday, December 7.

Mr. Cossey complimented the committee on the work accomplished by both the Airport Advisory Committee and the Airport Task Force. He gave a quick summary of his previous roles in the airport industry. His 27-year career has included roles at airports in Oregon, Ohio and Iowa. Mr. Cossey stated he believes Willard Airport has plenty of potential for growth and this potential is one of the reasons he was interested in the position.

Update on University Items – Mike DeLorenzo

- *Air Service Development* – No significant updates at this time.
- *Construction Updates* – Steve Wanzek provided status updates for the ongoing construction projects. There has been a slight delay due to the weather on the widening of taxiway C. At this time, only a few clean up items remain before the project is completed. This multi-phase project will continue in the spring.
- *Fence Line Updates* – Mr. Wanzek provided the committee with a brief summary of a recent incident where a driver who was trying to elude police officers drove through the chain-link fence running parallel with Monticello Road. The driver continued on through Willard Airport property until he was stopped by Champaign County Sherriff deputies. Fortunately, there was minimal damage to airport property and repairs were completed by noon the next day.

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- *American Airlines Rebranding* – The American Airlines ticket area has been remodeled with the American Airlines new logos and color scheme. Jayne DeLuce asked Mr. Wanzek when this remodel is expected to be completed and the group briefly discussed having an open house to show off the renovations and introduce Gene as the new Executive Director to the community.

Updates from Subcommittees

1. Airport Development - Dick Helton

Chair Carter provided an update in Mr. Helton's absence. There was a short committee meeting since the last meeting in October. The subcommittee is working on the overlay zones for the airport runways.

2. Governance - Steve Carter

Chair Carter provided an update for the Governance subcommittee's work. The committee members agreed having an economic impact study and its results would help get local support in the future for an Airport Authority. The analysis will show how much impact the airport currently has on the economic development of the businesses in the surrounding community. Chair Carter then asked Craig Rost to provide a summary of the work he and Alan Nudo did to secure the funds for the report.

Mr. Rost explained that he and Mr. Nudo met with executives from multiple businesses in the area to gain verbal and financial support. The \$1,000 received from each company interested in the economic report will cover the cost for the study being conducted by Sixel Consulting. Additionally, a grant of \$5,000 was received by the Champaign County Realtors Association. Committee member Max Mitchell was credited for his work in applying for this grant from the Realtors Association. The total amount collected for the report is \$13,000. The goal is to have the Economic Impact Study completed and ready for the next Airport Advisory Committee meeting on February 4.

Mr. Rost also stated this report will project how much potential impact Willard Airport can have if air service is increased at Willard Airport. For an additional fee, Sixel Consulting are adding projections of how a route to Charlotte, NC will affect the area's economic development to the Economic Impact Study. This portion will be beneficial not only in discussions with airline carriers but potential financial support of a future Airport Advisory Board.

3. Ground Transportation - Karl Gnadt

In Karl Gnadt's absence, Mr. Rost reported that minor changes were made to the document being proposed for ground transportation guidelines at Willard Airport. The committee is waiting for the documents to be reviewed by University Counsel.

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4. Marketing - Jayne DeLuce

Jayne DeLuce reported on activity from the Marketing Subcommittee. There was a decrease in the number of people seen during the last football game on November 14 where I Fly CU volunteers were present at their booth handing out marketing materials. The weather was a factor in the low turnout. Ms. DeLuce commented people they speak with are mostly saying they did not realize Willard Airport was a functioning or publicly used airport. This is noted as one of the main reasons to have a larger presence in community outreach and marketing campaigns that can inform the public.

These public outreach events will continue with plans for the I Fly CU booth to be set up at four men's basketball games in the spring semester. Volunteers are needed for these events and Chair Carter asked the committee to assist, if possible. It would be beneficial to have some of the committee members at the booth to interact with the public.

The current marketing campaign includes advertising on digital buildings in Champaign, ads are running on WCIA and the Smile Politely website. The CUMTD is advertising I Fly CU on their buses and that agreement has been extended. The social media sites are being maintained and updates are regularly being done on each site.

Ms. DeLuce did present the newest marketing item – a postcard listing information related to air travel through Willard Airport. The cards show information such as how many flights are scheduled each day, how many cities can be reached with 1-stop flights and average cost savings for using Willard Airport instead of the larger airports within driving distance.

5. Regional Aviation Development - Seamus Reilly

Chair Carter reported on the subcommittee's work as Seamus Reilly was unable to attend this meeting. He explained this subcommittee is focusing on longer term issues that can produce additional economic development by establishing a network and creating collaboration between the airline and service related businesses within the community.

Additional Topics

Community Support - Craig Rost stated the Economic Impact Study will be beneficial in gathering support from companies within the community. He would like to start planning to revisit companies with other members of the Airport Advisory Committee, the Impact Study and take the opportunity to also introduce the new Executive Director to the business owners and operators sometime during the first part of 2016. There is a plan to get a group together to go visit with business members and start to discuss the airport's benefits for the community.

Tower project – Mike DeLorenzo and Bruce Walden shared there was discussion with Congressman Rodney Davis' office several months ago about money being allocated by the FAA for a new tower at Willard Airport. Congressman Davis' office did not believe the money would be allocated anytime in the near future. It appears the FAA has decided to divert the funds

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for updating towers to another project known as NextGen. This project updates the satellite GPS systems that aid pilots in landing. The FAA's plan appears to be to rely more on the satellites than the control tower operators.

Envoy's fleet - Bill Giannetti told the committee Envoy, American Airlines subsidiary that flies the routes in and out of Willard Airport, has received their first 175 series plane and is using it on another route. This is the 75 seat passenger plane that will replace the current planes used on the routes. Mr. Giannetti said these will have a visual impact when they are put in service at Willard Airport and can be seen as a way the service is improving.

Wrap Up & Adjourn

Chair Carter thanked everyone for their attendance and reminded them to take some of the new I Fly CU postcards to distribute. Meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, February 4, 2016

3:30-5:00 p.m.

Bryan Room, Institute of Aviation