

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the September 16, 2004 Meeting of the Regional Aviation Committee

Attendee	Affiliation
Martine Belanger	Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Teresa Castronuovo	Michael Baker
Rick Childs	L. Robert Kimball & Associates
Mike D'Aries	Pottstown-Limerick Airport
Tom Dougherty	Montgomery County Aviation LLC
Everitt B. DuPont	New Garden Airport
Elaine Farashian	Aero Club of PA
Jim Fels	FAA Harrisburg ADO
Jack Fetsko	Spitfire Airport
Pete Griffies	Griffies Associates, Inc.
Scott Hansen	WILMPACO
Robert Ihlein	Borough of Pottstown
Joe Kellicutt	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Jay Kontra	Montgomery County Aviation
Paul Krupp	BRRAM
Bill Leavens	AOPA
John Mininger	Bucks County Airport Authority
Roger Moog	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Bob Mueller	Wings Field
Steve Najarian	Aero Club of Pennsylvania
David Nelson	Brandywine Airport
Reiner Pelzer	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Robert Powell	Cecil County Airport
Dan Rusk	Reinhart & Rusk, Inc.
Harry Scarlett	Bucks Co. Airport Authority
Brad Shelton	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Fran Strouse	L. Robert Kimball
John Taylor	Brandywine Airport
Mark Tiger	DMJM Aviation
Lane Wiggers	Windsock Aviation Development
Thabet Zakaria	DVRPC

1) Introduction

Roger Moog of DVRPC asked attendees to introduce themselves and their affiliation. He thanked the owners and operators of Wings Field for hosting this meeting and providing a comfortable environment for aviation dialogue.

2) Minutes of the June 17, 2004 Regional Aviation Committee (RAC) Meeting

Minutes were accepted as distributed.

3) Status of Regional Aviation Systems Plan (RASP) Implemented

Philadelphia International - Roger Moog commented on the number of low cost carriers at PHL including Southwest, Frontier, ATA, Air Tran and USA 3000. With the increased gates at PHL from 65 to 120 since 2001, the LCC's could increase service to compensate for USAirways reductions domestically, if that occurs. PHL is experiencing a change in service due to these carriers resulting in more total passengers, lower fares and less hub and spoke service.

Doylestown - Harry Scarlett, Airport Authority member said the stormwater management project is underway. Possible land acquisition across Stoney Lane is under consideration, and the airports master plan preparation is progressing.

Quakertown - Joan Mininger, Bucks Co. Airport Authority, said their ongoing master plan will call for a B-II classification for the airport with a 60' wide runway and 135' separation with the taxiway. A 200 ft extension of the runway safety area is also contemplated. New hangars are being built but have been delayed by construction issues.

Vansant - Mr. Mininger said this airport, now under county ownership, will stay a turf strip.

Chester County - Reiner Pelzer of DVRPC said the airport is negotiating with Keystone Heliport, the new tenant and the Bureau of Aviation of PENNDOT regarding operational issues and flight paths for the Keystone facility. Noise and operational issues will be considered.

Pottstown Municipal - Robert Ihlein of the Borough, said progress at the airport has been slow but a new FBO, TNT Air, Inc. has been found. Two grants have been programmed, by PENNDOT, for apron reconstruction and to purchase an easement for obstruction removal. October 9 is the scheduled community day with free activities for neighbors.

Wings - Bob Mueller, representing the airport owners, reported on several issues. The new FBO, Montgomery Aviation with Tom Dougherty and Jay Contra, have improved operations greatly in six months. The flight school is very active as well

as the maintenance shop. The lounge has been improved and free food is available to transient crews and others. Airside, the transient apron is still opposed by the neighbors and being contested in court. The airport says the apron will reduce noise and pollution impacts on nearby homes, but neighbors are afraid of bigger aircraft. Focused community outreach by the airport is being used to prove the benefits of the project to neighbors. Wings also responded publicly to a local politician, using attacks on the airport as part of her election platform. The airport is in touch with State Senator Rafferty regarding support for responsible development at Wings. The 15th Annual Vintage Aircraft Day raised \$30,000 for Angel Flight. Jim Fels added that the FAA funded community outreach effort, after the runway extension was built, was arranged by US Representative Joe Hoeffel and made some progress in explaining airport development to neighbors.

New Garden - Everitt Dupont said revenue diversion and compliance issues at FAA are holding up acquisition of the airport by the township. Jim Fels said current AIP rules include sale proceeds as revenue. Fran Strouse said policy needs to be changed not to tie up private equity due to small grants. Bill Leavens asked Mr. Fels if a rewrite or reinterpretation of the regulations is possible to which he responded yes, either or both actions ultimately, as the regs apply to non-commercial airports. The PA aviation Council and Deputy Secretary Daboin have requested action from FAA Headquarters to exclude small airports from this compliance requirement.

Cecil Co. - Bob Powell said the new ALP is complete as is the storm water management project. New AVGAS and jet fuel tanks are being installed. Land acquisition to the northwest is on track to be used to extend the runway. GPS approach is being tested by FAA. Fran Strouse said the mapping and the 405 survey are needed and are the responsibility of the airport, before FAA will certify the approach. Mr. Powell noted that Maryland State is helping with initial costs. John Mininger asked if there exists an appeal process if the approach is rejected. Mr. Strouse said yes. ATC in the area ultimately controls approach issuance, Mr. Fels concluded.

Spitfire - Jack Fetzko, the owner, noted that NJ Division of Aeronautics has purchased development rights to the airport, guaranteeing its preservation and future improvement. The runway will be resurfaced soon. Rick Childs of Kimball Associates noted that in the new AIP legislation, a purchase of development rights program was introduced nationally, based on the New Jersey model.

Pennridge - Joe Kellicutt, of McFarland Johnson, said that an \$800,000 state of PA grant has been programmed to build a new ramp. Dan Rusks company will develop twenty hangars on that ramp.

News of other Airports

Twin Pines - Bill Leavens, AOPA rep for the region noted that this airport is forming a pilots organization to own the airport. Negotiations are occurring with NJDEP Green Acres to purchase development rights there. Tom Thatcher, Director of the NJ Division of Aeronautics faxed a memo describing statewide preservation efforts. Eight privately owned airports have been locked into the state system including South Jersey Regional and Camden County in the DVRPC region. Spitfire and Trenton Robbinsville rights purchase are near complete or under negotiation, respectively. Flying W and Cross Keys are still not locked into a perpetual operation.

Penns Landing/Sterling Heliport - Mr. Moog described the multi-year effort to qualify Sterling Heliport, the existing privately owned (on a public pier) successful facility serving a Center City Philadelphia for AIP funding of the Environmental Assessment (EA), perhaps leading to AIP capital grant funds through PENNDOT. Sponsor eligibility, environmental impacts, adequate approaches, and alternate sites all must be examined. At the June 24, 2004 DVRPC Board meeting, the Commission endorsed the EA funding and acknowledged the importance of an adequate capacity heliport for Philadelphia's future. The facility is therefore a regional priority on the 2025 RASP. Integrating the potential \$10 million cost into PENNDOT's multi-year ACIP programming will cause other projects to be delayed. Mr. Fels will request airspace review by FAA of new approaches created if the pier is extended. Also approach obstructions from passing ships must be examined. If approaches are not adequate the expansion should not occur and the EA study would be unnecessary.

4) Continuing Planning Activities

- a) Regional General Aviation Security Study. This subcontracted study, done by CTI Corp. of Maryland, is complete. Mr. Moog distributed generalized risk level conclusions and proposed counter measures for GA airports. Specific risk assessment have been sent to each of the twenty two study airports privately, so as not to publicize lapses. Fran Strouse noted that security investments at airports are AIP eligible. Jim Fels, representing the FAA Harrisburg ADO, suggested that the DVRPC study conclusions be shared with TSA and he provided a contact. Bob Powell noted that the security report done by NASAO and other aviation organizations was too general, with "one size fits all" recommendations. The security report in its entirety have already been distributed to NJ, Delaware and PA aviation officials.
- b) PA State Jet Fuel Tax Increase Debate - In light of the trend of reduced revenues from jet fuel tax into the PA Aviation Restricted Account, which funds the Bureau and state airport grants, the PA Aviation Council and others have proposed to increase the jet fuel tax from 1.8¢ per gallon to 2.5¢. The tax was last increased in 1984. Roger Moog is chairing the subcommittee of the PA Governors Aviation Advisory Committee which will provide a recommendation to the Administration on the matter in

November. State legislators are going to propose a gas tax increase and a jet fuel tax increase sometime soon to ensure capture of more federal matching funds. The debate at the Advisory Committee level has been heated with all airlines and airline groups, lead by US Airways strongly opposing the tax increase, which will hit operating costs at a time of extreme oil cost increases. GA airports support the increase as overdue and the small commercial airports which rely on US Airways service, are neutral on the issue. Airlines feel the Bureau of Aviation can further economize and find other sources of revenue. Some big airports have suggested diverting their annual PENNDOT grants to smaller airports. The Bureau will clarify certain costs, revenues and potential savings to the Aviation Advisory Committee before an opinion is rendered.

- c) DVRPC Planning Studies - Roger Moog noted that DVRPC has received, in early September, its CASP XXII grant from FAA Harrisburg. Two major activities will be an update of the Region Aviation Plan from 2025 to 2030, and preparation of the PA side regional ACIP. This fall DVRPC staff is working with PENNDOT on zoning (land use analysis) and identifying regional suburban future jet ports. Jim Fels suggested that further research by DVRPC may be warranted regarding follow up on GA security study conclusions. He also emphasized the future need to develop land use controls for Pennsylvania to protect airport operations and the need to choose certain suburban airports as future new age business jet operations centers. Mr. Fels reflected that if FAA ultimately funds the EA for Penns Landing Heliport, that additional planning funds to support other DVRPC studies may be in short supply. Fran Strouse of Kimball suggested that in the future, DVRPC should take on the role of clearinghouse/sponsor for privately owned NPIAS airports in the region regarding master planning and ALP work. This would sidestep eligibility issues for some privately owned public use non-reliever airports.
 - d) AIP Funding Issues - DVRPC staff participated in a letter to FAA Headquarters regarding their interpretation of AIP guidelines concerning revenue diversion. Current decisions prevent the acquisition of New Garden Airport by the Township since the owners would not be allowed to take sale proceeds off airport. The letter signed by Sharon DaBoin for PENNDOT and Larry Krauter of the PA Aviation Council point out several process and constitutional issues regarding buyout of privately owned public airports. See the letter in December 16, 2004 RAC mailing.
- 5) Capital Programming
- a) Regional ACIP - Reiner Pelzer described the process DVRPC will use to develop the regional ACIP for FY 2006, including meetings with all PA airports in the region to prepare 12 year programs and short range

priorities. Jim Fels noted that with the escalation of project costs at airports, PENNDOT and block grants funds will be used for fewer projects with higher costs, since available AIP and state funds are not going up. So it is important that the regional ACIP represent agreed upon regional priorities, and that airports take turns from one year to the next in receiving grants. Fewer airports will be funded in any one year.

- b) FAA Funding Update - Jim Fels said that Vision 100, the new authorizing legislation, is underway and programs are being implemented. Regarding grants, the Harrisburg ADO is making all grant offers by August 30. They need to be accepted one month before close of FFY as well. The ADO will continue emphasis on closing out old grants more quickly.

6) Old Business

- a) Small Airports Committee - Everitt Dupont, Chair of this committee of the PA Aviation Council, said his group, in cooperation with PENNDOT Bureau of Aviation, has agreed upon a program guidance letter (PGL) which allow transfers of airport license and clarifies the use of waivers. This will ease pressure on airport owners who wish to sell and keep the airport open, and owners with non-standard physical components of their field.

7) New Business

- a) PA Aviation Conference - This year the conference will be held in Reading, September 30 - October 1.
- b) Airport Cooperative Research Program - Roger Moog directed attendees attention to the program description in the mailing. This research effort was created by Vision 100 and will provide ongoing funds to research issues impacting aviation and airports.
- c) Next meeting of the DVRPC RAC will be Thursday, December 16, 2004, back at DVRPC offices, Bourse Building, 5th and Market Street, Philadelphia, PA at 10:00 a.m.
- d) Public Comment - Paul Krupp asked whether the EA for the terminal expansion of Trenton Mercer Airport has been released and what is FAA's reaction? The EA in full can be downloaded from the county website, www.mercercounty.org.