

Winter Haven Regional Airport (KGIF)
Airport Advisory Committee
August 12, 2021

Airport Advisory Committee Meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Bruce Lyon, Chairman

Roll call conducted by Alex Vacha, Airport Manager

In Attendance: Bruce Lyon, Chairman (via Zoom); Eddie McGuire, Vice Chairman; Alan Anderson, Alternate Member, via Zoom (arrived at approximately 3:30 p.m.); Alex Vacha, Airport Director (via Zoom); Eric Labbe, Department of Economic Opportunity & Community Investment Director; J.P. Powell, City Commissioner/Airport Liaison (via Zoom)

Absent: Ben Shipps; Katie Worthington Decker; Jeff Donalson; Eric Crump, Polk State College Liaison

Approval of AAC Meeting Minutes by Chairman Lyon

- a. Motion was made by Alan Anderson to approve the AAC Meeting Minutes from July 7, 2021. Vice Chairman McGuire seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Old Business (Alex Vacha):

- a. FDOT Inspection – Obstructions (Trees) identified on Runway 5 approach end
 - i. A portion of the obstructions, not located in the wetland area, are being removed (See item 6. a.)
 - ii. FDOT funds are being requested to remove the obstructions that are located inside of the wetland area
 - iii. The State of Florida sends an inspector annually to inspect and certify our airport; last year, they identified this Runway 5 area which contains trees that needed to be removed to be in compliance; we have been working over the past year to gather funding and put together a plan for the tree removal
- b. TECO poles around T-Hangars (16) all scheduled for LED conversion – Completed (July, 2021); Airport staff will conduct an inspection to see if there are dark areas that still need additional lighting, which will be funded next fiscal year beginning October 1, 2021

New Business (Alex Vacha):

- a. Obstruction removal project – Cropland Services has been hired to begin clearing some of the non-wetland area tree obstructions – August, 2021
- b. FDOT annual airport inspection – July 16 – We received our 2021 Airport Operating License in the mail
- c. Alex Vacha attended the 2021 Florida Airports Council (FAC) Conference in Jacksonville, Florida – July 19-21; this was an excellent conference, which was well attended; Many vendors and airport consultants were also in attendance
- d. New Airport Operations Technician II – Troy Heidel – August, 2021, which brings us back to a full staff
- e. Flight Training 101, owned and operated by Robert Taylor, has been on our field for more than 4 years; Robert recently sold the Flight Training portion of his business to Ray Montell and will keep his Maintenance Business to service these aircraft; Ray Montell has secured additional office space in Building #10, which includes a portion of the common area; he has installed 5 TV's, computers, cubicles, created a conference room and a flight simulator room; At this time, they have approximately 139 students

Airport Project Updates (Alex Vacha)

- a. FBO Update
 - i. AvGas sales are already higher than last year with two more months left in the fiscal year
 - ii. Jet-A sales are also doing very well
 - iii. Industry wide, General Aviation activity is up, although commercial service has leveled out because of COVID travel restrictions; Commissioner Powell mentioned that the corporate world is taking advantage of virtual meetings rather than sending representatives to meetings in their corporate jets
 - iv. Phillips 66 is our fuel providers branding; with this branding comes a lot of advantages and training opportunities, such as FBO quality control assistance; Alex Vacha attended one of their training webinars recently, which was phenomenal, entitled "Critical Fuel Focus Areas during Aircraft

Investigations”; when an accident occurs at your airport, what are the next steps?; they also discussed record keeping; many additional webinars are available for our staff to access

- b. Taxiway C Extension (Design & Construction)
 - i. Carr & Collier, Inc. (Contractor) Hanson Professional Services, Inc. (CEI) and AVCON, Inc. (CA)
 - ii. Final close-out underway. Waiting to receive final reimbursements from the F.A.A. & the F.D.O.T.
- b. Airport Security Improvements
 - i. ITB-21-31 Re-Bid – Security Improvements – Posted July 23, 2021 (Deadline August 27, 2021)
 - ii. Pre-bid meeting was held Wednesday, August 11, 2021
 - iii. FDOT construction phase funding expected September, 2021
- c. Taxiway B Rehabilitation, Lighting & Signage (Construction)
 - i. Design complete
 - ii. The bid has been advertised
 - iii. The contractor has been selected
 - iv. FAA grant application submitted - \$3,544,038
 - v. We anticipate the F.A.A. grant announcement in September, 2021
- d. Business, Marketing, and Management Program Development – Hanson Professional Services, Inc. & Clark/Nikdel/Powell, Inc. (CNP Agency)
 - i. Draft development layouts presented to the Airport Advisory Committee – Blake Swafford – July 7, 2021; the presentation was interactive and received comments and suggestions from the public; based on the feedback received, Hanson is finalizing the development plans for those areas and is continuing to work on additional components of the Airport Business Plan; Additional public input will be obtained for the airport’s operational documents once those are submitted for review in the next few weeks
 - ii. Marketing Plan Development, Develop Administrative Best Management Practices, and Develop Airport Operational Documents currently underway

Public Comments:

- a. Citizen David Lane shared the following comments:
 - i. Enjoyed Blake Swafford’s presentation last month of the possible economic development opportunities at the airport; Happy to see that the City of Winter Haven officials and Commissioner Powell are very supportive of the airport development
 - ii. Would like to know the meaning behind the word “Regional” in the airport name; Mr. Vacha read the definition of a Regional Airport from the F.A.A.’s website, “A Regional Airport supports Regional economies by connecting communities to Regional and National markets generally located in metropolitan areas and serve relatively large populations. Regional airports have high levels of activity with some jets and multi-engine and propeller aircraft. The metropolitan areas in which Regional airports are located can be metropolitan statistical areas with an urban core population with at least 50,000 or micropolitan statistical areas with a core urban population of between 10,000 and 50,000”
 - iii. Mr. Lane spent time browsing various Central Florida airport websites to see how we compare; he was particularly impressed with the Kissimmee Gateway Airport website, which ties the City into the airport and it ties in how patrons of the airport can participate in City activities.
 - iv. Legend Airways is a flight school and charter service to Key West at the Lakeland Linder Airport; they hosted a booth at one of the Lakeland First Friday events recently to tell the community about their business; Mr. Lane thought this would be a good idea for some of the Winter Haven Airport tenants to consider when the City of Winter Haven hosts events for the community

Committee Member Comments:

- a. Eric Labbe stated the official 2020 U.S. Census was released today; the Winter Haven population grew from approximately 33,000 people in 2010 to 49,219 people in 2020, which is more than 45% growth; Polk County has grown by 20%; Lakeland has grown by 15%; the only Central Florida city that has grown more than Winter Haven in the past 10 years is Davenport which grew from 2,800 to 9,000 people
- b. Commissioner Powell expressed his approval for the fantastic fuel sales numbers; Thank you to the committee members who have taken the time to make our airport better; Thank you to Alex Vacha for his great leadership; Thank you to Vice-Chairman McGuire to bringing the investors for future executive hangar

development; Commissioner Powell is committed to do whatever he needs to do to help the airport move forward

- c. City Manager Mike Herr stated Mr. Lane's comments were spot on; the airport is headed in the right direction; various things are contributing to the future development of the airport
 - i. Installation of underground utilities at the airport by the City of Winter Haven
 - ii. Upcoming Development Plan and Marketing Plan from Hanson Professional Services

At the City Commission meeting on August 17th, they will be proposing changing the Airport from a Division to a Department; therefore, Alex Vacha will become a Department Head and will report directly to City Manager Mike Herr

Next Meeting Date and Time:

- a. The next regularly scheduled AAC meeting will be Thursday, September 9 2021 at 3:00 p.m. in the Jack Brown Conference Room.

Adjourn – Vice-Chairman McGuire

Meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jana Wasmund.