

TRIANGLE NORTH EXECUTIVE AIRPORT COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Minutes

The Triangle North Executive Airport Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman John Allers on February 10, 2015 in the conference room of the Triangle North Executive Airport.

In attendance were Commissioners: John Allers, Herman Dickens, Guy Martin, Don Lancaster and Phillip Stover. Also, in attendance were Steve Merritt (Airport Manager), Pete Tomlinson (Davis, Sturges & Tomlinson), Carey Johnson (Franklin Times), Greg Upper (Triangle Skydiving Center), Bruce Allen (Concerned Citizen), Jason Elliott (Michael Baker Engineering), and Todd Huvad (Aircraft Merchants). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners Taylor Bartholomew and David Bunn.

The second agenda item was review and approval of minutes from the December 9, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Stover motioned that the minutes be approved as read, with Commissioner Martin seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The third item on the agenda was public comments. Chairman Allers called for comments from the public. Greg Upper, with Triangle Skydiving Center, said several months ago we discussed RV parking because our operation is growing more and more and our parking lot is overflowing. Mr. Upper said he wanted to make an offer to the County for a flat fee of \$500 per year for use of the property and how much he uses it is up to him. Mr. Upper said he'll spend the \$3,000 to have the electrical installed and he'll lease the spaces accordingly. Mr. Upper said he is doing this as a convenience for his customers and it will probably take several years to recoup the money, but this will be much easier than renting the spaces for \$20 per month and then if somebody doesn't pay you, it's hard to collect. Commissioner Stover motioned to approve this flat fee and for Mr. Merritt to take this to the County Commissioners for their review and approval. Commissioner Dickens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The fourth item on the agenda was the airport operations update by Steve Merritt. Mr. Merritt said sales were good in January. We sold about 1,900 more gallons than last January and the weekends have been good. The price of fuel has leveled off, but it will probably be inching back up soon. Mr. Merritt said the EMS people have moved in the hangar next door. They are here full time now and one of their trucks has been moved here from Bunn. They are a very good tenant and we charge them no rent.

The fifth item on the agenda was the budget update by Steve Merritt. Mr. Merritt said things are running smoothly at the airport, and we are at about 50% of our scheduled expenses.

The sixth item on the agenda was update on taxiway construction for former Anne Gordon property by Steve Merritt. Mr. Merritt said Jason Elliott with Michael Baker Engineering, is in attendance to discuss this. Mr. Elliott passed out a preliminary design overview for the proposed layout of the industrial area site. Mr. Elliott said they have worked with Mr. Merritt, Planning & Inspections, and Public Utilities, and have come up with estimates for each phase. Mr. Elliott said

they also updated the ALP (Airport Layout Plan) to show the full build-out of the area and they also designated a jump zone. Mr. Elliott said the County proposed extending the existing water line to a point near Bryant Rd. where a meter would be installed for the airport to tie into. A service line would also be ran from that and underground power would be brought in. Mr. Merritt said one of the things they are talking about is putting power lines across the road at Triangle North Franklin and putting them underground.

Commissioner Stover said it doesn't appear as if we have provided for expansion of the terminal building. Chairman Allers said expansion for the terminal building has been included in the TIP.

Mr. Elliott said the estimate for Phase 1 is \$1.4 million. Mr. Merritt said we are going to need some more matching funds from the Division of Aviation. Commissioner Stover motioned that we proceed under the condition that we have the funds necessary to move ahead with Phase 1 of the project. Commissioner Dickens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Allers asked Mr. Merritt about the account for the ad valorem taxes for the airport and how much was in that account. Mr. Merritt said he has no idea and he can't seem to find out if an account has been set up and if so, how much is in that account. Chairman Allers said he has asked this question several times before and no one seems to have the answer. Commissioner Lancaster said he would contact the Finance department and find out.

The seventh item on the agenda was discussion of airport services pricing strategy by Steve Merritt. Mr. Merritt said at the last meeting, we discussed our pricing strategies and discounts offered for certain groups and customers. Mr. Merritt passed out the updated pricing strategy list for the Commission to review. Commissioner Lancaster asked that a change be made referencing customers who are flying a public benefit flying mission and they receive a \$1.00 per gallon discount. Commissioner Lancaster asked that Mr. Merritt notify the Commission first before he offers this discount to any groups who aren't on the list already. Commissioner Lancaster motioned to approve the pricing strategy list, with Commissioner Dickens seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

In other business:

- Commissioner Stover said some members of the Pilots Association have expressed their concerns about the safety agreement with the skydivers. In particular, the issue of parachutes crossing the landing pattern at less than 2,500 MSL (Mean Sea Level). Commissioner Stover said they have had a very vigorous discussion about this and he's suggested that we get together to discuss their concerns, so that we can figure out how the jumpers and planes can continue to work together and share the sky. Greg Upper said if the winds are out of the east, then we are not jumping because that usually means bad weather is coming. Obviously, if the winds shift on us, we may not realize that and sometimes the winds are out of our control. We have a policy where we tell everybody do not cross the runway below a 1,000 feet. In the six years (100,000+ jumps) the jump operations have been at the airport, this has happened only 2 or 3 times, and we do everything we can to see that it doesn't, but things do happen that are out of our control. Commissioner Stover said we need to reassemble the group to talk and revise the guidelines and they are looking at more than just the FARs. Mr. Merritt said if they are upset about it, we can call the FAA and have them come out to investigate and although he doesn't want to do that, at this point, he thinks maybe we should. Mr. Merritt said he

feels they just can't distinguish between what's unsafe and what makes them feel uncomfortable. We can't tell the jumpers no or the gliders or the ultralights. We do our best to encourage them to operate friendly, but what some of the members of the Pilots Association want us to do, we don't have the authority to do. Todd Huvad, owner of Aircraft Merchants, said he's tried to spend time with the individuals that are having problems with the jump operations. It has occurred to him that there are only a couple of people who are very upset about this and being very vocal. He said he has yet to witness an incident where something happened with our planes and jumpers. Commissioner Stover said it has been said that some of the pilots in the jump planes were less than courteous and in some instances, didn't announce their location. Mr. Upper said we try to make as many radio calls as we can and if you are hearing silence, it may not be because the pilot is being rude, but that he may be on another channel. Mr. Upper said he could handle this at a personnel level, if this is found to be true. Bruce Allen commented that Mr. Merritt said that safety is not the airport's business, but Mr. Allen says safety is a concern of the FAA. Mr. Allen said he would like to encourage the Commission to contact the FAA to invite them to investigate this issue, because while he was an employee of the airport, there were multiple people complaining. The consensus of the Airport Commission was that they would support a meeting of all interested parties to try and work out these issues and come to an agreement that would work for everyone concerned. If they are not able to do so, they may discuss the possibility of bringing in the FAA.

- Commissioner Stover said another issue that came up with the Pilots Association was that there wasn't very much information in the AF/D (Airport Facility Directory) or on the AOPA (Airport Owners & Pilots Association) website about operations at the airport that might impact transient pilots, such as location of the drop zone and the presence of gliders, training and helicopter operations. Mr. Upper said he could help Mr. Merritt to write this.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.