

Airport Advisory Committee
37 Green Street, City Council Chambers
Approved Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2024

Committee Members in Attendance:

Councilor Jeff Foote; Councilor Ali Sekou (*arrived at 4:40 p.m.*); Warren Runde; Rita Castonguay-Hunt and Rick Bartle

Absent:

Gail Wolek; Jim MacKay; Sathesh Mani

Staff:

Tim Thompson, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development; David Gill, Director of Parks & Recreation

Public:

David Rolla, Concord Aviation Services (CAS)

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The returning committee members introduced themselves to new members, Councilor Foote and Councilor Sekou.

2. Selection of Chair

Mr. Runde motioned to nominate Ms. Castonguay-Hunt as chair. Councilor Foote seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

3. Adoption of November 9, 2023 Minutes (Public & Non-Public)

Mr. Runde moved the approval of the November 9, 2023 public & sealed, non-public minutes. Mr. Bartle seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

4. Review of Keach Park Athletic Field Lights project (David Gill, Director of Parks & Recreation)

Parks and Recreation Director David Gill gave an overview of the project, which will be for a new youth soccer field at Keach Park. The primary purpose of the discussion with the committee is to receive feedback on the proposed field lighting and if there are concerns with impacts to aircraft using the Airport. The funds have been approved for the design of the field and lights, which is being prepared by HL Turner Group. The field and lights would be approximately 2,300' from the northern end of runway 17-35. The department has held one public meeting so far, and more are planned as the design progresses. Mr. Gill stated he would return to the committee once the design for the lighting is finalized. The preliminary thought is that there would be 4 light poles, approximately 70' tall.

Mr. Bartle recommended that Turner Group touch base with Jacobs Engineering, the Airport's engineering consultant throughout the design process. He stated his belief that the FAA would likely have no finding of hazard in their process, but that the committee's main concern is determining if the location of the new lighting impedes the line of sight for pilots taking off or landing.

Ms. Castonguay-Hunt recommended that the lighting be properly shielded to prevent light trespass beyond the bottom lens of the lights.

Airport Manager David Rolla suggested that a 3-D lighting plan be prepared for the site, so that the illumination levels at 70' in height can be measured and not just the levels on the ground.

Mr. Runde asked if the light fixtures themselves would be above or below the tree line. Mr. Gill responded that they are designed to be just below the top of the park's tree line. He also noted that there would be a crane necessary during construction that would be coordinated with all applicable federal, state, and local agencies.

Councilor Sekou said that there seemed to be some misconceptions on the approval of the project as it was discussed at the first public meeting. Mr. Gill responded that the CIP funds for design have been approved and City Council approval would be needed before any construction takes place. Councilor Sekou questioned the process used for notification of abutters as they were not involved in any discussions until the City took on the project.

Councilor Foote stated he understood the challenges that took place at the initial public meeting, which took a turn into discussions about neighborhood concerns regarding crime, property maintenance, trash, and other issues. He relayed his experience as a municipal employee in Bedford and stated his belief that only an artificial turf field would be a proper solution given the field availability limits necessary for natural grass.

5. FY2025 Budget and Committee Work Plan and FY2025 Discussion/United Therapeutics Hangar Update

Mr. Thompson asked the committee for any suggestions they may have for the FY25 budget or any items they wanted to work on in the next year. He also updated the committee on the progress at the United Therapeutics (UT) hangar, which is nearing completion and should be seeking occupancy permits in the coming months.

Mr. Bartle asked about increases in rent/leases. Mr. Thompson stated that the lease rates would be brought up to date in the proposed budget. Ms. Castonguay-Hunt asked if we are seeing an increase in planes, and if the UT aircraft would count toward that number or be based elsewhere. Councilor Foote inquired about the types of aircraft UT has. Mr. Rolla stated he was unsure about the specifics of UT's fleet of aircraft, but that they were typically corporate jets and high-end aircraft. He also stated that he expects that the UT fleet would not be based in the Concord hangar, but at one of their other facilities closer to their corporate headquarters in Maryland or their research headquarters in North Carolina.

Mr. Bartle asked in the final FY23 numbers were available. Mr. Thompson stated he would get that information for the committee, and stated that he will follow up with Mr. Bartle to meet regarding marketing the development zones.

6. Grant Updates

Mr. Thompson informed the committee that the latest grant request for the terminal was in the works and the Engineering Division has been given indications that the FAA may be moving Concord up in the queue, so that the grant could potentially be awarded to the City in the coming months. The grant breakdown would be 90% federal funds, 5% state, 5% City, though the amount of the grant may not be enough to cover the entire project, so there may be additional local funding necessary. He stated that he would keep the committee informed as the process progresses.

Mr. Thompson also noted that there may be some work done at the State Police Hangar. He and Deputy City Manager Matt Walsh will be meeting with the State Police at the site in the coming weeks.

7. Airport Manager Update

Mr. Rolla stated that the discussions previously in the meeting covered the topics he was prepared to bring up. He offered to meet the new Councilors at the Airport to give a tour/orientation.

Mr. Bartle asked about waitlists for space in the existing hangars. Mr. Rolla stated that space has opened up on a few occasions in the past year or so. Typically new planes come in as older ones are sold and moved off the property. Overall, 10 planes left Concord and 9 came in to replace them. There were 14 names on the waitlist when the last opening materialized, some had already found space elsewhere, others still have not obtained a plane yet. There are currently 6 people on the waitlist for space at the existing hangars. He estimated that statewide there is probably a 90-95% occupancy rate at hangars. There are 13 similar airports to Concord and 13 privately owned public airports in New Hampshire.

Councilor Sekou asked about typical rent for hangar space. Mr. Rolla said that the sale price for a space at a hangar is around \$120,000 right now. Mr. Runde stated that the last space at the Condo Hangar sold for \$115,000. Mr. Rolla stated that not much leasing is taking place right now, but that for CAS they are charging \$750 per month.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Bartle moved to adjourn. Councilor Sekou seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Thompson, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development