

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Watsonville Airport Advisory Committee Council Chambers 275 Main Street, 4th Floor, Watsonville, California Minutes

January 24, 2024

7:00 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Thomas Dienwiebel (Representing Watsonville Pilot's Association), Glen Ceresa (Representing Airport Area County Residents), Mercedes Eulitt (Representing Airport Area City Residents), Theresa Byers (Representing Monterey Bay Ninety-Nines), Scott Randolph (EAA #119), Larry Lease (Non-Aviation Business Community)

Absent:, Dave Guerrieri (Representing on field Aviation Business Community)

Staff members present: Airport Director, Rayvon Williams, Administrative Analyst, Alexandra Aguado

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Lead by Theresa Byers

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - Oral Communications from the Commissioners & Members of the Public

Chris Laws- The airport is an asset and we should take care of it. Unfortunately, its importance is only recognized when there is a disaster/earthquake. The City tends to run off small businesses and anyone who gets in the way of a plan that doesn't look larger and far off.

Barry Porter- The airport is a huge asset to the community for business and for safety. It is the only public airport in the County of Santa Cruz. It has two runways, one which is under fire at the moment. Both are required to have a safe airport. The marine layer covers the airport a large portion of the time and 9-27 is often the only safe option of getting in and out of the airport. It is important to have a safe operating environment for the tenants, visitors, business, firefighting and emergency services. Housing is needed in the area but other options need to be considered.

Ryan Ramirez- President of WPA. Seconds everything said prior. The published Zoom meeting is invalid.

Don Whiteside- The airport lives in an integrated environment with the Watsonville Community Hospital. Anything that this community does to limit the ability of the airport to serve the community affects the hospital. Part of the hospital's future is having a viable working safe airport.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Motion Approving Minutes for November 1, 2023, Meeting- Motion was initiated by Eulitt and Seconded by Lease. Quorum met. Minutes passed.

5. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

5.a. WAAC Members appoint new Chairperson and Vice Chair per ByLaws

Rayvon thanks Glen Ceresa for his service.

New Chair- Scott Randolph

Vice Chair is Dave Guerrieri

5.b. Presentation: “Yes on N”

Presentation by Marcus Pimental, Watsonville Community Hospital Board member and Chari of “Yes on N” ballot initiative.

Theresa Byers- Will the tax only be for the City of Watsonville or is it for Santa Cruz County? It will apply to the boundary of the district; Rio Del Mar, Freedom Blvd. Aptos, Seascape, La Selva Beach, Corralitos, Watsonville, Pajaro, Las Lomas, and edges of Aromas.

Glen Ceresa- How long is the bond? 30 years. How much would the tax be? The tax would be \$70-\$200 per year.

Mercedes Eulitt- Will the tax be on property? Any property owned in the district. Property tax is based on assessed value, not market value. What is the percentage is of property owners versus total population? The population in the district is about 120,000. Anything with an assessed tax valuation will be taxed.

Glen Ceresa- Will there be enough beds to serve 120,000 people? There are 106 beds in the hospital and we do plan to extend capacity.

5.c. Director’s Report

- I. Quarterly Financial Report
 - a. Airport Fund Balance- \$703,701.00
 - b. \$928K award from the FAA for the Security Gate Upgrade, Wash Rack and F150 Ford Lightning
- II. Share draft of presentation to City Council regarding FAA’s guidance on Rwy 9-27 shortening or deactivating

2018- Annual meeting with the FAA regarding future development and request for grants. FAA informed us that there was a question for them from Flight Procedures based on the implementation of RNAV 2, which is a GPS approach. It was determined that there was a visibility zone issue. There is a defined distance above the ground at certain points on the Runway that must not be obstructed and hangars Hotel-Kilo impact that. The airport requested a modification to standard. The District Office in San Francisco liked it and gave the airport the OK but, in the meantime, file a NOTAM restricting take offs on 27. The modification couldn’t be implemented until it was reviewed by the Western Region in Los Angeles. The Western Region in Los Angeles reviewed it and said they spoke to Flight Procedures and said it cannot be done. The airport had two options; Demolish 31 hangars and 2 end rooms or relocate the threshold. We told them that we would leave things as they were and at the next Airport Layout Plan we would relocate the threshold (2022-2023).

The airport added the threshold relocation in the new Airport Master Plan.

The Airport Design Criteria requires that we have a connector taxiway. Why can’t pilots taxi down to the east end of Charlie, have the chevrons on the runway, roll down the runway and then take off on the threshold? A threshold must have a 90-degree taxiway. The airport would have to construct a taxiway at the 870ft reduction mark. The cost would be \$200-230k. To construct the taxiway connector from Charlie to the threshold, we would go across tar plant. We would need a Take Permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife to kill the tar plant.

2023- The FAA informed us that they would approve the Master Plan Update but they were no longer going to fund the crosswind runway. There are 900 general aviation airports in the

United States and 600 of them have crosswind runways. Those 600 general aviation airports with crosswind runways are being deemed as not worth continued investment by the FAA. The airport submitted a document to make a cogent argument and the FAA denied it. Why can't the airport pay for it? We cannot spend funds without prior approval from the City Council. The City Council's preference is Option 2 or 3.

- a. Option One
 - i. Relocation of Crosswind Runway 9-27 Threshold by 870 ft.
- b. Option Two**
 - i. Relocation of Crosswind Runway 9-27 Threshold by 1590 ft.**
- c. Option Three**
 - i. Deactivate Crosswind Runway 9-27**
- d. Option Four
 - i. Deactivate Municipal Airport

Rayvon requested guidance from the FAA in October, 2023 to relocate the runway and to deactivate the runway. The relocation of the threshold can take anywhere from 9 months to 18 months to a year. The FAA is opposed to deactivating the crosswind runway. The deactivation would require airspace considerations, environmental considerations, and a new Master Plan Update.

Barry Porter- Does the same time line apply to the deactivation of crosswind runway 9-27? No. It would be much longer.

Thomas Dienwiebel- Even if the airport wanted to fund the threshold relocation, would it need City Council approval? Yes.

Barry Porter- Will you be presenting what you are sharing at the next City Council meeting? No, I will be presenting the actual guidance to relocate the threshold or deactivate the runway.

Jeremy Lezin- Which of the various options would you advocate for? Option 1.

Scott Randolph- If people have an opinion on this, when should they show up to a Council meeting? When is the council meeting that matters? All meetings matter. There is a public meeting on February 10th.

Glen Ceresa- The conversation during the council meetings is where to build more housing. They are looking at Buena Vista and Kmart's old location.

Scott Berry- Has the City identified an area where they want to build? Which zone is impacting their future growth? The airport cannot answer that. Is there anything we can do to find a solution that works for all parties?

Jacob Boracca- At the last City planning meeting, one of the points was to annex Buena Vista into the city limits to build on that side. Is there a homeowners committee or anything that the WPA can help preserve that area? Scott Randolph- Historically, yes.

Rayvon Williams- The city manager believes that the airport is an asset to the City of Watsonville. The value of the airport must be recognized by the city council and the city members of the community. The city manager wants to sit down and have a discussion with 2-3 pilots before the next council meeting.

- III. FAA Updates on Proposed Nordic Naturals Land release- ON HOLD. An environmental assessment needs to be completed by Nordic Naturals.
- IV. Security Gate project and Vehicle/Pedestrian Access Training
 - a. Airport staff will create a video in which we explain the procedures and policies for vehicle access and operation on movement and safety areas of the airport. A 10-question test will be required.
 - b. Reissue hangar permits
 - c. Issue 2 access cards
- V. Suggested Tail-Gate Entry education campaign
 - a. Prevent tailgating- Wait for gate project to be in effect before we work on tailgate entry education campaign.

The updated Rules and Regulations and the pertinent comments on the proposed regulations are posted on the website. <https://www.watsonville.gov/1365/Airport-Compliance-Documents>

Hangar Inspections 2024 were completed on January 10-11, 2024.

Second Weekend Fuel Sales are back!

Is Gami fuel coming to Watsonville? If available, we would have it.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS None

7. NEW BUSINESS None

8. ADJOURNMENT – at 8:55 PM

Motion was initiated by Lease and Seconded by Dienwiebel. Motion passed.

The next Committee meeting will be held on April 24, 2024