

# City of Clearwater

*Main Library - Council Chambers  
100 N. Osceola Avenue  
Clearwater, FL 33755*



## Meeting Minutes

**Wednesday, May 5, 2021**

**3:00 PM**

**Main Library - Council Chambers**

## **Airpark Advisory Board**

**Roll Call**

**Present** 3 - Chair Kelli O'Donnell, Board Member John Renton, and Board Member George Davis

**Absent:** 3 - Vice-Chair Paul A. Doric, Board Member Richard Porraro, Ex Officio Member W. Bruce Brock

**Also Present** - Ed Chesney, P.E. – Marine & Aviation Director, Patricia O. Sullivan – Board Reporter

Awaiting approval

**1. Call To Order**

*The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. at the Main Library.*

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**2.1 Approval of February 3, 2021 Airpark Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

**Member Renton moved to approve minutes of the February 3, 2021 Airpark Advisory Board meeting as submitted in written summation. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

**3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda**

*Councilmember Kathleen Beckman introduced herself to the board and thanked members for their service and civic engagement.*

**4. New Business Items**

**4.1 Fixed Base Operator (FBO) Verbal Update**

*FBO (Fixed Base Operator) representative/Airpark Manager Barbara Cooper reported on tenant levels and visitors. She said the Airpark had been busy and all hangars were rented. She said relocating tenants from Hangar C had gone well. In response to a question, she said the wait-list for tie-downs was short; the Airpark provided temporary tie-downs during events.*

**5. Old Business Items**

**5.1 Discuss updates on Hangar C project**

*Marine & Aviation Director Ed Chesney said asbestos abatement was necessary before Hangar C was razed. The metal replacement hangar, purchased before costs escalated, was stored on site. Pad and utility work was underway. Upon inspection, Clearwater Fire determined that fire protection near Hangar C did not meet Code and ordered installation of a*

*new fire hydrant and water line; the Airpark was required to meet fire safety requirements. Engineering and design costs for the hydrant's underground tie-in were estimated at \$60,000 to \$120,000; FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) had sufficient funds on hand and approved reimbursing the City for 80% of the costs.*

*In response to questions, Mr. Chesney said old Airpark as-built drawings did not show the location of underground utilities; recent as-built drawings included that information. The project, overseen by Ms. Cooper and Marine & Aviation Operations Manager Michael MacDonald, was on schedule; completion was anticipated before the 180 day contract expires and snowbirds return.*

## **6. Director's Report**

*Mr. Chesney said the Airpark's 2003 Rules and Regulations, updated in 2020, consolidated Air Traffic Rules for all aircraft into one section. He read the section related to helicopters. The Airpark had received a concern that the update watered down rules to make the Airpark more helicopter friendly.*

*It was commented rules required airplanes to make a full stop when landing and then proceed to the end of the runway.*

*Ms. Cooper said the Airpark's runways were not long enough for airplanes to practice stop and go maneuvers.*

*FBO David King said Rule 8b excluded helicopters for clarification. He said the rules were written to be more understandable and address all safety issues affecting the community and Airpark. He said helicopters rarely touched down on the runways but did hover 4 feet above and then sidestep off the runway. He said helicopter student training required pattern work. He said the Airpark tried to maintain separation between helicopters and airplanes; helicopters exited the runway area via the quickest safest way. He said helicopters used the 3 pads in front of the FBO office for most take offs and landings; it also was acceptable for helicopters to take off from the taxiway. He said the City dictated that all flights follow the same traffic patterns although helicopters and airplanes fly at separate altitudes.*

*Support was expressed for the Rules and Regulations as updated. Greater separation between airplane and helicopter operations was preferred. It was noted no close encounters between airplanes and helicopters had occurred at the Airpark.*

*Mr. King said helicopters can slow down and hover while waiting for an airplane to land. He noted the Airpark was only 100 yards from St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport air space. He said all pilots needed to pay attention at all times.*

*Mr. King said he brought his decibel reader to nearby neighborhoods that had made noise complaints. He said lawnmower noise levels were greater than overhead planes. He said he had offered to buy insulation for one homeowner with single pane windows and no insulation. He said airplanes had to observe the published flight pattern. He said he had sat in the living room of the house closest to the Airpark and could hardly hear the helicopter overhead; the house had new windows and insulation. He said helicopter noise was louder when the weather cooled. He said flight training was important to fill pilot positions with major airlines and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) helicopters.*

*Mr. Chesney said the Airpark consultant's yearlong process to update the Airpark's Master Plan began early in the pandemic; an update was required every 20 years. FDOT paid 80% of the \$100,000 cost. The Master Plan benefited the Airpark and community; FDOT will only reimburse the City for items listed in the Master Plan. The updated Master Plan included a new terminal to replace the doublewide modular building, improved security, and minor expansion of the Airpark onto the Landings Golf Course which had been part of the 90 year-old Airpark's original footprint before the 1970s. For safety, the Master Plan proposed that surrounding areas remain vacant to protect the Airpark from development encroachment. He will present the Master Plan to the City Council in June for approval.*

*Mr. King said demand for hangar space had tripled but the Airpark had no space for expansion. Ms. Cooper estimated 125 people were on the hangar waitlist; the Airpark received up to 5 inquiries each day for hangar space.*

*Mr. Chesney said a recent survey indicated Airpark lease charges were in line with nearby airports. Tenants tended to stay long-term. Leases required tenants to own their airplanes and to park them in their hangars; tenants were prohibited from using hangars for dead storage. Ms. Cooper said the lease had deadlines for tenants to complete airplane repairs but had no requirement for tenants to fly their aircraft*

*Mr. King said outside personnel could not repair airplanes on Airpark property; he expressed concern re the quality of offsite repairs. Ms. Cooper said new tenants were required to submit proof of insurance and copies of their annuals to verify their airplanes were airworthy. Mr. King said afterwards, the Airpark only could encourage tenants to provide updated proof of insurance.*

*In response to a question, Mr. Chesney said the Airpark received \$30,000 from the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act. The funds will be used for shade hangar rehabilitation including sandblasting, epoxy repairs, and repainting. The grant will not pay for all related costs;*

*Airpark reserves will cover remaining expenses.*

## **7. Board Members to be Heard**

*Chair O'Donnell requested better communication prior to meetings re new and retiring members, for letters of complaint to be shared with the board, and for the link to the Master Plan to be provided.*

*Chair O'Donnell expressed concern re the runup to the failed referendum that planned to replace the Landings with warehouses. She said the Airpark Board should have been part of the conversation as the project would have encroached on the Airpark and eliminated the safety of the golf course's open space if an emergency occurred. She supported returning the property to the Airpark when it no longer operates as a golf course.*

## **8. Adjourn**

*The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.*

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Chair – Airpark Advisory Board

Attest:

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Board Reporter