

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the June 21, 2001 Meeting of the Regional Aviation Committee

Attendee	Affiliation
Allan A'Hara	DMJM Aviation
Dave Bors	McFarland-Johnson, Inc.
Rick Childs	AV Consult & Assoc.
Michael S. D'Aries	Penn Airways, Inc.
Everitt B. duPont	New Garden Flying Field
Justin Edwards	Trenton Mercer Airport
Jack Fetsko	Spitfire Aerodrome
Charlie Hostetter	McFarland Johnson, Inc.
James Homoki	Michael Baker, Jr., Inc.
Richard Horstmann	Edwards & Kelley
David Hunt	Wilbur Smith Associates
Heidi Kahme	Citizen
Mike Kolesar	PennDOT, Bureau of Aviation
Paul Krupp	BRRAM
Norman Lamar	PennDOT, Bureau of Aviation
Jack Martins	Urban Engineers, Inc.
Bob Matthews	South Jersey Regional Airport
Aimee McCormick	FAA Harrisburg ADO
Dr. Alan J. Miller	FAA
Roger Moog	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Stephen Mullin	Econsult Corp.
William T. Mummery	McFarland - Johnson, Inc.
Steve Najarian	Aero Club of Pennsylvania
Reiner Pelzer	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Robert D. Powell	Raintree Airport
Fred Pourki	Philadelphia International Airport
Dan Rusk	Airframe Management, Inc.
Alex Sheves	Chester County Airport
Barbara Snyder	S.J. Regional Airport
Fran Strouse	Delta Airport Consultants
Mark Tiger	DMJM Aviation, Inc.
Thabet Zakaria	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

- 1) Introduction - Justin Edwards, Trenton Mercer Airport Manager chaired the meeting for Emmett O'Hare who was on military duty. Mr. Edwards introduced himself and asked attendees to do the same.

- 2) Minutes of the March 15, 2001 RAC Meeting - Mike D'Aries noted that on page 3, the corrected name of the corporation which now owns Pottstown Limerick Airport is Excelon Generation Company L.L.C.

On page 6 item 5, Mr. O'Hare noted that the item headed by New Jersey should read, "Mr. O'Hare noted that the State's block grant paperwork requirements, including ALP, EA and licensing issues, have slowed down capital construction projects. He reported that the FAA and NJDOT are working to refine the process to expedite all of the necessary permits and approvals. Splitting projects into separate design and construction grants was discussed as a possible solution."

- 3) Status of Regional Aviation Systems Plan (RASP) Implementation

Philadelphia International - Fred Pourki of PHL reported that the commuter terminal F has opened. It is 185,000 sq. ft. in size, all on one floor, and has two gates currently in use by AirTran and 36 by US Airways. A new 3,400 car parking garage is being built nearby. The new international terminal I will be open, in June 2002. It was noted by Mr. Edwards that highway lanes on I-95 will be shut down at night for the airport access ramp construction. Allan A'Hara of DMJM, the airport master plan consultant added that AirTran will move its operations to the new hammerhead gates on Terminal D when they are completed.

The floor was then turned over to Mr. A'Hara for a short summary of the PHL master plan and capacity issue. He noted that landside capacity increases via ramp and terminal expansion is underway, but ground airside capacity must be expanded to avoid delay with future growth in demand. Although FAA supports more airside capacity, the airport's small size of 2,300 acres limits options. Moving UPS so that a fully separated parallel runway system can be constructed would have major financial and political impacts. Mr. A'Hara noted that the PRM landing system should be operational in August 2001 and allow simultaneous operations on 7/27 and 8/26 runways. He further commented that US Airways needs more capacity so bad that it has slowed RJ acquisition due to insufficient operating slots. Rick Childs asked about the capacity constraint of airspace. Mr. A'Hara said that in the current east coast airspace redesign undertaken by FAA, PHL is a priority and will be accommodated. Mr. Edwards asked about sufficient safety areas, to which Mr. O'Hara said the airport is in negotiation with Viacom to acquire additional property for the safety area for runway 9 right. All other feasible options for capacity improvements are being studied in the ongoing master plan focusing on a 5-10 year airport improvement program. Mr. Moog added that the PHL part 150 noise study is being continued with special consideration for lessening impacts on the Tinicum and Eastwick neighborhoods.

Doylestown/Quakertown - Harry Scarlett, Bucks County Airport Authority

member phoned in that 14 hangars are going up at Doylestown. Property is being purchased to protect the RPZ and they are considering extending the runway from 3,200 ft. to 3,800 ft. At Quakertown, a new FBO, Bi-Plane Adventure/Flight Concepts, is operating under contract with the Authority. New self-service fuel tanks are available, and the search for bog turtles as part of their EA is costing \$44,000.

Camden County - Reiner Pelzer of DVRPC said the owner has placed the airport on the market to the highest bidder, raising the possibility of closure. Everitt DuPont asked about the number of based aircraft, which is currently 40.

Trenton Mercer - Justin said additional funds have been accepted to complete the master plan and environmental assessment. Pfizer, the drug company, is building a 90,000 sq. ft. corporate hangar. The airport is accepting bids for a vacant 100,000 sq. ft. building with runway access, and other new corporate hangars are being negotiated. A runway safety area study is underway. The airport has received air carrier inquiries as the larger commercial airports reach capacity.

Chester County - Al Sheves said the airport has received a PennDOT grant for apron expansion and obstruction removal. New hangars are being planned on the west side of the airport.

South Jersey Regional - Bob Matthews reported that the consultant company, Michael Baker, is doing a runway safety area study. Dan Rusk is assisting them with hangar construction. A new permanent fuel tank was approved by Lumberton Township. The pending master plan with three alternatives for runway extension is an issue since the airport feels the township will not approve any of the alternatives. He feels that the cost to the local area and region of not building the extension should be studied to provide contrast.

Pottstown Limerick -Mike D'Aries commented that four new hangars and terminal improvements have been completed. Obstruction marking upgrades are underway.

Wings - Fran Strouse of Kimball and Assoc. who works for Wings, reported on the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania striking down State Law 2210, which gave control over Wings development exclusively to the Township of Whitpain. He said that the court found the law problematic since it didn't apply to other counties and since it transferred the authority of the state of Pennsylvania to the township in violation of block grant agreements with FAA. Mr. Moog added that the appeal period ended June 4 and no appeal to the decision was registered. Whitpain Township, however, is encouraged its new state legislator, Catherine Harper, to introduce legislation similar to 2210, applicable statewide.

Independently, FAA provided to Wings a discretionary grant to build the runway previous to the court decision. Construction is on schedule. While the runway is closed, fixed-wing activity has moved to Pottstown Limerick while helicopters continue to use Wings under a PennDOT temporary license. The airport is advertising for an AWOS III.

New Garden - Everitt DuPont said the airport has completed its crack sealing project and acquired a snow plow. The June 3 Airshow was successful with 3,200 people attending, many of which were new development residents in the neighborhood.

Brandywine - Steve Narjarian noted ten new T-hangars have been built and an area is being cleared for new ramps. Dave Bors of McFarland-Johnson said the airport has received a block grant for a new master plan.

Cecil County - Bob Powell described the new T-hangars and maintenance hangar plans. REIL and PAPI have been installed on runway 31. Paving of auto parking and access road is underway. They are attempting to widen the runway during the summer, but will need assistance from Maryland officials.

Spitfire Aerodrome - Jack Fetsko said the runway will be reconstructed and closed for 30 days in August. DMJM Consultants has been approved by NJDOT to do the new ALP. The new owner, Mr. Fetsko, is in dialogue with NJDOT concerning funding options for future capital expansion and reliever eligibility.

Pennridge - Dave Bors said the airport received a Pennsylvania state grant for correction of licensing issues. They are still pursuing the runway extension, and the airport is researching ways to develop its non-aviation land in a way compatible to airport operations and financial survival.

Penns Landing Heliport - Mr. Moog said DVRPC will do some preliminary work in its CASP XIX work program to establish the possibility of FAA funding for Penns Landing. Specific questions involve sponsorship, site feasibility and eligibility under NPIAS guidelines.

4. Continuing Planning Activities

A. DVRPC 2025 RASP - Mr. Moog gave a power point presentation summarizing the new Regional Aviation Plan adopted by the DVRPC Board in April 2001. The RASP 2025 anticipates slow growth in G.A. and faster growth in commercial demand. Expansion of commercial airports, selected runway extensions, and more hangars in the suburbs were called for. Specific feedback from the public includes:

- Full EIS, more commercial service, connection with Amtrak wanted at

Trenton-Mercer.

- Relieve PHL with LVI and ACI.
- At SJR, how can DVRPC support 5,000' runway when local government opposes?
- Why should private airport owners be subsidized, and private corps who use these airports?
- Public acquisition should be encouraged.

Mike Kolesar of PennDOT commented that the PennDOT Statewide System Plan (SASP) is underway including a pavement management component. DVRPC is working with PennDOT to establish consistent planning goals. Mike D'Aries said all state and regional plans need to emphasize economic impacts of aviation, and of not investing in aviation. New Jersey's SASP is also underway with input from DVRPC.

- B. Local Issues Impacting Airport Development - The subjects of Wings development was revisited. Mike D'Aries asked if the 5% of the 10% local share for Wings 90/10 federal grant can be funded by the state or locals. Yes is the answer, PennDOT often funds a portion of the local match. The sponsor may also have to provide 5%. Rick Childs asked about Wings receiving timely permits from the township, since the township doesn't support the project. Fran Strouse responded that Whippain will act fairly on permit approval for all businesses. Someone asked about the \$100,000 environmental study to be funded by FAA concerning noise, once the runway is extended. Amy McCormick of FAA said the first EA which was done before extension, looked at proposed five year development, while the later study will examine impacts of the completed project and recommend mitigation projects or changes to usage.
- C. DVRPC Operations Counting Program - Reiner Pelzer presented the results of the year 2000-2001 DVRPC regional counting program. Six airports were included; Pennridge, Wings, Vansant, Spitfire, Quakertown, and Trenton Robbinsville. Generally, traffic at these airports has been less than in 1997, the previous counting period. These historic counts, since 1995, caused DVRPC to lower 2025 GA projections in its new RASP. Amy McCormick asked if counted airports use those estimates in their 5010 submittals. Norm Lamarr of PennDOT said that the Bureau enters the counted number instead of the airport estimate. Fran Strouse asked if the counting machines can identify the type of aircraft, which it currently cannot. Amy McCormick said there is updated software which, from sound, can identify aircraft type, to identify number of operations of critical aircraft. Reiner will notify airports to be counted in year 2001.

5. Capital Programming

Federal Programs - Amy McCormick said FAA requires airports to submit a 5 year CIP by early spring and submit specific project applications by June 1. All EA's and ALP's must be current for a project to be considered. The FY 2001 AIP program is winding down and some airports, like Wings, have gotten discretionary grants. FAA Harrisburg ADO is changing its office location and phone numbers.

PA State Funding Programs - Mike Kolesar noted that in FY 2001 PennDOT distributed \$7.5 million in state funds and \$10 million in block grant projects. In FY 2002 that total should go up. June 30 is the end of the PA fiscal year and all final bills are due shortly thereafter. Pre-apps for new projects are due 6/30, and all projects need environmental clearances, approved ALP and 5 year ACIP/12 year capital plan. Licensing problems are a priority for PennDOT funding. Tentative state allocations will be announced by September. Norm Lamar added that June 30 deadline applications should arrive early if possible.

Regional Capital Programming Activities - It was noted that due to hiring issues, PennDOT is shorthanded and this may effect distribution of funds to airports. Amy McCormick suggested that the regional planning agencies like DVRPC and SPRPC can aid in the funding distribution process by organizing local sponsors and establishing priorities. FAA is funding DVRPC to broaden its activities in the funding program development area. Bob Matthews of South Jersey Regional said that the politics of aviation funding needs to be stimulated at the states levels.

6. Old Business

A. PA Aviation Advisory Committee Activities - This high level committee, formed by legislation promoted by Ed Holl of Montgomery County in August 2000, is currently addressing the following issues by doing research at the subcommittee level and reporting to the Secretary of Transportation and Governor.

- 1) Funding Programs and increased transportation funds to aviation
- 2) Zoning implementation
- 3) Licensing issues and transfer of airports ownership
- 4) Legislation impacting airports
- 5) Getting funds out quicker and incorporating planning activities

B. NJ Aviation Association Activities - Justin Edwards who is a board member of this corporate/aviation supporter group said they are looking for additional members among corps., pilots, consultants and individuals. The activities and objectives, so far, of this group include:

- 1) Advance recommendations of NJ General Aviation Study Commission

- 2) Move aviation away from DOT politics
- 3) Consider airports applying to FAA directly, outside block grant mechanisms
- 4) Expand NJ Transportation Trust Fund dollars to purchase airports
- 5) Tax relief for private/public use airports
- 6) County airport authorities to acquire privately owned airports

C. Northeast Corridor Airspace Redesign - This study is getting a strong level of input from PHL and Trenton-Mercer. Charlie Isdell, PHL director is a participant. The airlines that must schedule efficiently through the airspace are also participating. PHL's master plan is being coordinated with airspace design decisions. Allan A'Hara added that the public is involved in evaluation of EIS procedures for any new airspace. Mr. Edwards added that Trenton Mercer is using the process to get more airspace for that airport which will reduce noise.

D. Other Issues - Bill Mummery noted that the Aviation Council of Pennsylvania is hiring a lobbyist to represent Aviation in Pennsylvania to legislators. Reiner Pelzer said he understands that Willow Grove NAS is, at some level, considering joint use again.

7. New Business

Dan Rusk noted the brisk sales of corporate jets and said this will necessitate the extension of runway in the suburbs. There has been a drastic upswing in the market. Bill Mummery noted the dates of the PA Aviation Conference October 10-12, 2001, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The next meeting of the DVRPC Regional Aviation Committee is Thursday, September 13, 2001.

8. Public Attendees Comments

- Paul Krupp of BRRAM asked that the resolution of Yardley Borough of April 13 regarding development of Trenton Mercer Airport be included in the mailing for the September 13, 2001 DVRPC RAC meeting. Mr. Moog agreed. Arlene Feldman FAA Regional Administrator and Congressman Greenwood have also been petitioned on this issue. Mr. Edwards said that a variety of resolutions in support of airport development are also available.
- Heidi Kahme of PLANE cautioned that since United, and Continental and other airlines may be experiencing reductions in traffic, we should not overbuild our capacity based on unrealistic projections of demand. Allan A'Hara noted the airlines are going through difficult financial times with losses of business travelers and higher fuel costs. Fran Strouse added that revenues are also impacted by internet ticket buying for lower prices. Ms. Kahme continued by asking if benefit/cost analysis is required by FAA

for projects over \$5 million. Ms. McCormick said yes, for discretionary grants.

- The question was then raised regarding a proposed air service study for the Trenton Mercer market. Ms. Kahme suggested that Trenton Mercer may be too close to Newark and PHL to expand its market. Although it was claimed that ten airlines have served Trenton Mercer and left within recent years, several attendees felt that the I-95 location of Trenton Mercer and the delays at Newark and PHL will increase the Trenton market over time, presuming attractive service at Trenton. Bill Mummery reminded everyone that aviation capital grants are from user fees and not general tax revenues, thereby airports are entitled to these funds, and they are not a drain on non-aviation programs.

Fred Pourki added that economic downturns are generally short but traffic projections are long term and we are still, in the region, playing catch up on capacity. Fuel prices for aviation, it was suggested will not prohibit flying, since fuel prices impact all modes. Ms. Kahme concluded by saying that there needs to be better coordination between aviation development planning and residential/land use planning, which was agreed by all.