

FURNEAUX GROUP AVIATION SPECIAL COMMITTEE
Unconfirmed Minutes

DATE: Wednesday 30th August 2017
VENUE: Rose Garden Room, FAEC, Whitemark
COMMENCING: 1.00pm

PRESENT:

Mayor Carol Cox	Chair
Cr P Rhodes	Council
Brian Barnewall	Works and Services Manager (Airport Manager)
Peter Barron	Charter Aircraft (1.06 – 2.07pm) (phone)
Michael Buck	Flinders Island Tourism & Business Assoc. (1.00 - 1.55pm)
Linda Nicol	Community Representative
Arun Kendall	Department of State Growth (phone)

GUEST

Dennis Cooper Presentation to Committee

APOLOGIES:

Cr K Stockton	Council
Noel Bowland	(Sharp Airlines) RPT Operator
John Loudon	Multi-Purpose Centre

STAFF AND CONSULTANTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Bill Boehm	General Manager
Jacci Viney	Development Services Coordinator
Vicki Warden	Executive Officer (Minute Taker)

Welcome to Arun Kendall, new Department of State Growth representative, and introduction of all committee members.

CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Note: The Mover and the Seconder listed as confirming the previous minutes in the 21st February 2017 Unconfirmed Minutes were incorrectly recorded. It has now been updated.

Moved: M Buck **Seconded:** Cr P Rhodes

That the minutes from the meeting held on the 21st February 2017 are a true record.

CARRIED

DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

The Chair asked if any Councillors will be declaring a Pecuniary Interest with the response being no.

CORRESPONDENCE IN

Nil

CORRESPONDENCE OUT

2017.08.18 Committee Members – notice of meeting on 30th August 2017

Item 1 Public Submissions

A request for public submissions was advertised in the Island News on 03rd August and closed on the 24th August February. No submissions were received. Denis Cooper made a submission to the committee in person.

Submission:

I fly regularly with Frank Willebrand who is very keen to have a hangar at Whitemark airport for protection of his plane. Corrosion is a major issue for plane owners flying around Flinders who don't have a hangar. The ideal location for a hangar is near Leedham's as it gets protection from wind. It's common for airports to have additional hangars for planes. When will Council finalise their plans for hangars? If Council comes up with a lease agreement, the leasee could build the hangar then the income and activity would remain local. Also the current landing fees for the airvan are excessive at \$40 per landing and need to be reviewed.

Discussion:

This has been discussed and agreed that there would be specific plans for hangars and leasing out areas for hangars. The strategic direction for the airport is to have commercial users located on the terminal side and private operators on Leedham's hangar side. New security requirements coming in may result in screening in the future which will have to be taken into consideration.

The airport was surveyed last week and Council will be able to come up with a plan very soon. There are a number of private pilots desperate to lease land and build a hangar for protection of their plane.

A consultant has looked at a wide range of airports and found that our current landing fees are comparable with all other airports. For a commercial operator, the landing fee covers full access to the tarmac and terminal building and amenities in Whitemark. In Launceston you can wait half an hour to get access for your passenger and you pay a landing fee and a gate fee. It's the level of service that you get for the landing fee that's important and Whitemark provides good service. Council owns the airport. Do we let ratepayers pay for the businesses' landing fees or do we let the businesses pay?

Council is open to discussing an annual agreement relating to landing fees.

Item 2 Airport Update

Staffing:

Brian Barnewall is now Airport Manager as well as Works & Services Manager with Cody Swan in charge of the on-ground operations. Jacqui Viney is assisting Brian with project work as required and specific expertise will be recruited in when needed.

Hangars:

Staff have invited feedback on hangar needs from the small commercial operators and had discussions with private hangar owners as well as one commercial operator. The desire is to work with the master plan to come up with a blueprint for the future. These discussions have highlighted a whole range of issues and differences in needs but Council will make the final decision on the look, feel, and plan of the hangars. Separation of private and commercial operators will help with possible changing security needs.

The survey will show all existing structures at the airport in 2D and 3D. Staff will be able to present a proposed plan in the next few weeks.

ACTION: Brian and Jacci to develop a proposed plan for the airport to bring back to the Aviation Committee for consideration.

Fuel:

A lot of private pilots won't come to Flinders because of the fuel call-out fee and the cost of the fuel. Some pilots are coming in groups of 4 or 5 planes and all are being charged a call-out fee to get fuel at the same time. Swipe card for fuel would be the best but it would be expensive. The fuel tank has been tested and it passes inspection but some exterior rust needs treatment. The tank is owned by Sharp. Council needs to put together an agreement that details what Council's expectations are regarding the fuel. Despite previously not wishing to take it on, Council may have to investigate taking on the fuel facility as it's a vital resource for the Island.

Marketing:

If encouraging more business into the airport, how are we going to market it? Linda Nicol can put staff in touch with all the flying clubs within Australia.

Thinking of ways to use the terminal better and encourage visitation but we don't have the infrastructure to accommodate increased visitation. Some groups have had a bad experience and won't come back and we don't want that to happen again. Need more car hire, bus hire, tour operators, accommodation, restaurants etc.

Will increase links with airport associations and with FITBA. Staff believe the airport should have its own website.

Storage Units:

Storage units at the airport was another potential money-making project that appears to have fallen off the list. A report was presented to council some time ago on this project and costings were undertaken. Discussions with users have highlighted the desire for vehicle storage. Staff will investigate the status of this potential project.

Runway:

A section of the back runway was successfully stabilised with foam by Hi-way Stabilisers. They predict the foam stabilisation should last about 25 years. A reflectograph is coming to the Island and will take measurements on the repair. A good result is expected. Staff are optimistic that the runway will last and deal with the metro landings. From a technical viewpoint we are well placed to invest in this technology. Only some small patching is now needed. Staff hope that in summer of 2019 they will be in a position to make a decision on whether or not to stabilise the whole runway. It may be worth considering expanding the envelope of the runway to take bigger aircraft in the future.

Item 3 Solar Array at the Airport Update

The frames have been made for the solar panels and they should be re-erected next week.

Item 4 Passenger Numbers (Information)

RPT passenger numbers for all airports can be found by visiting the following website however figures for the Year ending 30th June 2017 have not yet been released.

http://bitre.gov.au/publications/ongoing/airport_traffic_data.aspx.

Item 5 Airport Budget

The 2017-18 Airport budget was provided for the committee's information. Final figures for 2016-17 will be released with the Annual Report in December.

The Budget was based on the previous year's budget as it is not known how the recent changes to airport operations will impact the budget over the next 12 months. Without depreciation the airport has the ability over time to break even. We receive about \$35,000 extra in our FAGs each year to assist with the operation of the airport however the Auditors haven't allowed it to be shown in the financials as a direct income. The aim is to present the airport as a stand-alone business which will show the amount of Council revenue that more or less subsidises airport operations. The airport works its best when the Community is in a healthy condition therefore it will improve as the population increases.

Item 6 Other Business

Killiecrankie airport is under receivership and the condition of the strip is deteriorating. Some concern about the safety aspects and liability if there is an accident.

Council does not have any responsibility for other airstrips on the Island. The pilot takes on the risk when landing on private strips and on the outer islands. If there is an issue with a strip the owners should be put out a NOTAM with a warning.

Next Meeting: When the airport staff have a plan to present.

Meeting Closed: 2.07pm.