

**METROPOLITAN AIRPORTS COMMISSION
ANOKA COUNTY-BLAINE AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, 1 December 2008, 11:00am
Air Traffic Control Tower Conference Room – Blaine Airport

Commissioners B. Haake, A. Enerson, J. Keinath, J. Plasch, K. Swanson, D. Kelso, T. Ryan, C. Arneson

Present

MAC Staff: S. Skramstad, J. Harris, C. Leqve, B. Rief

Others: J. Erickson – City of Mounds View; K. Glidden – City of Mounds View; A. Westerberg – MAC Commissioner

1. Approval of the 15 October 2008 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as written and distributed.

2. County Resolution Supporting Efforts to Increase Runway Length

Scott Skramstad, MAC, reminded the Commission that at its previous meeting discussion was held regarding community concerns over rumors regarding extending the east-west runway to 6000 feet. **Skramstad** further reminded the Commission that at that same meeting, the MAC informed Commission members that talk regarding an extension was initiated by Anoka County and not by the MAC, and that the MAC had not been approached by the County regarding an extension of the east-west runway. **Skramstad** stated that that is still the case as of today's meeting and that any discussions the County and county members may be having regarding the runway are outside of the MAC's Long-term Comprehensive Planning process. He noted that the MAC is in the process of updating the Long-Term Comprehensive Plan for Anoka County – Blaine Airport (ANE) and that that update does not call for an extension of the east-west runway to 6000 feet. He reminded the Commission that ANE is classified as a "minor use" airport, limiting runway length to 5000 feet. Any efforts to extend the runways beyond 5000 feet would involve conducting extensive environmental review, including an Environmental Impact Statement, which is typically a multi-year process. **Skramstad** noted that, in addition, approval for an extension would be required from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Minnesota State Legislature and the Metropolitan Council.

Joe Harris, MAC, noted that today's meeting was called in response to the public meeting Anoka County had planned to hold on 2 December 2008. He stated that that meeting has since been cancelled.

Barbara Haake, Mounds View, noted that the Metropolitan Council's Chapter 10 refers to transportation-related plans for airports including ANE and she asked when that information was put together.

Bridget Rief, MAC, clarified that the Metropolitan Council is in the process of updating its 2030 Transportation Policy and that part of that policy deals with aviation transportation. She noted that

the policy identifies airports in the metropolitan region and how they're classified, and whether they're classified by the Metropolitan Council, the FAA, or the MN Department of Transportation. She noted the policy is available on-line and is open for public comment. **Rief** stated that following the policy update, the Metropolitan Council will also update its State Aviation Guide where it will examine each airport in-depth, analyzing the forecast, activity and economy related to each airport.

3. Long-term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) Update

Bridget Rief, MAC, reminded the Commission the MAC is in the process of updating its Long-term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) for the Anoka County-Blaine Airport (ANE), the Flying Cloud Airport (FCM) and the St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP). She noted the LTCPs for Crystal Airport, Lake Elmo Airport and Airlake Airport are being completed this month, with presentation of the plans to the Metropolitan Airports Full Commission for adoption.

Rief noted that the LTCPs conducted by the MAC are similar to plans conducted by cities or counties in that the following takes place:

- Airport inventories are summarized (runways, taxiways, aprons, hangar areas, FBOs, Air Traffic Control Tower, and navigational aids)
- Operations forecasts and forecasts for based-aircraft are prepared
- Facility requirements and development needs are considered, given an airport's role in the reliever system and the types of services it is intended to provide
- Noise and environmental reviews are conducted
- Land use and zoning issues are examined
- Costs and schedules are determined
- Public information programs, including components designed to address cities, counties, and tenants, are conducted

Rief noted that an item's inclusion in an LTCP does not mean that it will take place, noting that the LTCP for Airlake Airport calls for an extension of its runway to 5000 feet but that the timeline for doing that is 10-15 years and that many things could change in that time. She noted that the previous LTCP for ANE called for the construction of two sets of parallel runways but that such runways were not constructed. She pointed out that the parallel runways concept will be re-visited in the updated LTCP although forecasts do not support a need for more than two runways at this time.

Rief noted that ANE is classified as a B-II airport by the FAA, meaning that it is designed for aircraft with a wingspan less than 79 feet and an approach speed of 91 knots or more but less than 121 knots. She pointed out that this does not mean that aircraft with a greater wingspan or approach speed cannot land or depart from ANE – it is up to each individual pilot to determine whether or not s/he can safely land at or depart from this facility. **Rief** noted that the MN Department of Transportation classifies ANE as a “key airport”, having a paved and lighted runway of 5000 feet or more; that the Metropolitan Council classifies ANE as a “minor airport”; and that the MAC defines ANE as a “primary reliever airport”.

Rief noted that, according to MN Department of Transportation 2007 data:

- 437 aircraft are based at ANE

- 40.5% of aircraft owners reside in Anoka County; 22.9% reside in Ramsey County; 22% reside in Hennepin County; and 14.6% reside in other counties
- Forecasts out to 2025 show a decrease in based aircraft from 437 to 414 (-5.3%)
- The high forecast out to 2025 is for 465 based aircraft at ANE, and the low forecast is 375; fuel prices and the state of the economy will have an impact on actual numbers
- The historical high of based aircraft at ANE was 490 in 2003
- There were 80,517 operations at ANE in 2007
- The forecast number of operations at ANE out to 2025 is 75,053 – a decrease of 5,464 operations (-6.8%); however, jet activity at ANE is forecasted to increase over the next 20 years
- The high forecast of operations out to 2025 is 104,986 and the low forecast is 52,704
- The historical high number of operations at ANE since the Air Traffic Control Tower opened in 1996 and such data were tracked is 156,546 in 2000

Rief noted that, as of today, no one has approached the MAC with any development requests for ANE so the proposed public information process would follow the timeline as distributed to the Commission. She noted that a more involved public information process would be required if the MAC were asked to analyze a development request such as a runway extension, which would involve the state legislature. **Rief** stated that a 30-day written public comment period will be initiated after the MAC Full Commission has adopted the preferred alternative LTCP. She noted that ANE Commission members can contact her at any time if they have any questions regarding the LTCP process. After the 30-day written comment period has closed, the MAC will submit the LTCP to the Metropolitan Council for review after which it will be presented to the MAC Full Commission for final adoption.

Jack Plasch, Lexington, asked if the MAC knows at this time whether or not the runway at ANE will be extended to 6000 feet. **Chad Leqve, MAC**, stated that the MAC does not have any information at this time that would justify extending the runway to 6000 feet. He reiterated Skramstad's earlier points that a need for an extension would have to be demonstrated and then review and approval by the FAA would be required, in addition to the necessity of environmental reviews being conducted and re-classification of the airport by state statute, before such an extension could be implemented. **Dave Kelso, Circle Pines**, stated that it appears the MAC does not have a position on the runway extension issue and that the MAC did not initiate discussions regarding a runway extension. **Leqve** confirmed that that is the case. **Clark Arneson, City of Blaine**, asked who would initiate a request for a runway extension as part of the MAC's LTCP for ANE. **Leqve** stated that anyone could make such a request during any of the meetings the MAC will hold with airport users, community members, tenants, etc., and at any time throughout the process. **Jim Keinath, City of Circle Pines**, asked if the ANE Commission would be notified of any such requests in advance of public information meetings. **Rief** said that would be the case.

Haake noted that she contacted the Metropolitan Council regarding its 2030 Transportation Policy update and was informed the public comment period for that document closed on 6 November 2008. She noted that, given that part of that policy relates to aviation transportation, the ANE Commission members are not receiving timely notification of information that affects the airport. In addition, **Haake** asked if the currently existing 5000-foot runway at ANE is long enough to safely accommodate air traffic and, if it is not, if the safety factor will be used as an end-run tactic for justifying extending the runway to 6000 feet. **Rief** stated that the ideal length for a runway at an

airport like ANE, according to FAA runway calculations, is 5470 feet (which allows for operations in all weather conditions) but that Minnesota state law limited the length of the runway to 5000 feet. She stated that it is conceivable the FAA would consider the current runway length insufficient, but she pointed out that extending the runway would involve re-evaluating the "design aircraft" used to determine runway length at the airport, as well as analysis of operations at the airport. She pointed out that a Gulfstream-V aircraft, which is not classified as a B-II aircraft, can land and depart from ANE once or twice a year without any detriment to the runway pavement. **Haake** asked what the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) would be on a 6000-foot runway. **Rief** stated that the length of an RPZ depends on the type of approach a runway has, not the runway's length, and pointed out that Runway 27 is a precision instrument approach so the RPZ would be the same size even if the runway were extended. She noted that state protection zones, however, may be impacted by runway length.

Nothing that St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP) has a 6000-foot runway **Keinath** asked what types of aircraft would use ANE if the runway were extended to 6000 feet. **Scott Skramstad, MAC**, noted that Gulfstream-V aircraft use STP as well as Gulfstream-III and Lear jet aircraft. **Rief** pointed out there is currently nothing preventing such aircraft from using ANE at this time and **Skramstad** noted that such aircraft did use ANE during the Republican National Convention. **Kelso** stated that it seems the public's perception is that extending the runway at ANE will invite larger aircraft such as cargo jets and DC-9s to utilize ANE. **Joe Harris, MAC**, pointed out that accommodating such aircraft would require significant and numerous changes at an airport and he pointed out that Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport already accommodate such aircraft and is located only 15 miles from ANE.

Haake noted that the noise contour around ANE has shrunk and asked what impacts there would be to the noise contours around ANE if the runway were extended to 6000 feet, and what types of mitigation the MAC would have to provide to residents as a result of any changes. **Skramstad** stated a baseline noise contour is run as part of the Long-term Comprehensive Plan (LTCP) update. He noted that if any development were to take place after the LTCP process was finalized, it is likely another noise contour would be run as part of an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). **Skramstad** pointed out that the noise contour run as part of the EIS for extending the east-west runway to 5000 feet assumed 178,000 operations at the airport and showed the 65 DNL on airport property. He noted the 65 DNL is the federal standard for noise-impacted and non-compatible land use. He stated that there were just over 80,000 operations in 2007, which means that in all likelihood the noise contour would shrink in any development scenario taking place after the completion of the LTCP process. **Leqve** pointed out that increasing runway length does not guarantee larger aircraft would use the airport, and that the presence of larger aircraft at an airport does not necessarily mean a greater noise impact. He noted that new technologies have led to the development of quieter aircraft and that the composition of a fleet at any airport can impact the noise contour at that airport. **Harris** noted that the decision to use any given airport is a determination made by an aircraft's crew and that runway length is one factor a crew considers.

Tom Ryan, City of Blaine, clarified for the record that the City of Blaine was not involved in any discussions with Anoka County regarding a possible runway extension prior to the County's calling for a public meeting on the issue. He expressed frustration that no one person or entity has claimed responsibility for initiating discussions on the topic.

Haake stated that it seems to her the MAC is reacting to the runway extension situation and asked why the MAC is not fighting against it more publicly. **Andy Westerberg, MAC Commissioner**, pointed out that MAC Commission members have not been approached on the matter. **Harris** pointed out that if a company were to contact the MAC looking to relocate to any one of the reliever airports, that company would not be led to expect in any way any facilities beyond what currently exists at the airports – e.g., an extended runway. **Haake** stated that no one trusts what happens at the airport in terms of potential development and that communication regarding all possibilities should be made more transparent. **Harris** pointed out that attendance at the ANE Commission meetings, through which such information is conveyed, has been low for some time and that the Commission plays an important role in relating information back to its member cities and boards. **Westerberg** pointed out that, although it seems logical and reasonable for an outside entity to approach the MAC first on any ideas or initiatives regarding development at its airports, that does not happen and that until it is approached the MAC is not aware of such initiatives. **Haake** asked if the MAC would inform the ANE Commission if a bill is introduced at the state legislature regarding any of its airports. **Arneson** pointed out that such information can be tracked on-line. **Haake** stated that she does not trust the on-line information. **Harris** said **Haake's** request would be carried back to the MAC but that he was not aware of anyone at the MAC who tracked that information. **Kelso** asked if it's possible for an individual or entity to take a proposal regarding a MAC airport to the state legislature and receive approval for it, and then approach the MAC with a *fait accompli*, thereby circumventing the LTCP process. **Leqve** said it is not because both state and federal regulatory processes would necessarily have to be part of implementing any such proposal. He added that although a county can put forth any resolution it likes, no actual work on a development could take place without the extensive state and federal processes being conducted. He noted that if the MAC had been approached with the runway extension idea, groups such as the ANE Commission would have been notified and engaged quickly. **Ryan** pointed out that communication with and from the MAC has greatly improved over the years.

Plasch asked who would benefit from a runway extension at ANE. **Arlo Enerson, Anoka Airport**, said that any operator at ANE would benefit from an extension, as would Anoka County which invested in the Key Air development. It was re-stated, for the record, that no one individual or entity has taken responsibility for brining forth the idea of extending the runway at ANE to 6000 feet.

4. Other Items Not on the Agenda

Jack Plasch, Lexington, asked if aircraft landing at ANE must use the Instrument Landing System. **Scott Skramstad, MAC**, said that aircraft do not have to and that, under visual flight conditions, many aircraft do not. **Arlo Enerson, ANE Airport**, stated that aircraft do not, however, fly wherever they want but that they are given headings, turns and direction.

Kent Swanson, Lexington, asked if, given that runway length is a safety factor, the number of large aircraft using ANE is known. **Skramstad** said that information will be analyzed in the Long-term Comprehensive Plan, as well as information on numbers of based aircraft, numbers of operations, etc. **Chad Leqve, MAC**, clarified that the runway is safe. He noted that the arrival of larger aircraft at ANE for the Republican National Convention was not, simply by virtue of the aircraft being larger, an unsafe operation because of runway length. He stated that the issue is getting the true utility of such an aircraft given runway length.

Barbara Haake, Mounds View, suggested holding a public meeting for residents around ANE regarding the runway extension issue. **Leqve** advocated holding off on such a meeting given that very little information is known or available regarding how the runway extension discussion was initiated and who is responsible for bringing it forward. He noted that holding such a meeting without that information may exacerbate misunderstandings about the situation and may generate expectations that cannot be met.

Regarding the public information meetings for the ANE Long-term Comprehensive Plan process, **Haake** stated that the first public information meeting should be held before the draft Plan is published. **Bridget Rief, MAC**, said that the meeting will be held before the draft Plan is published.

Discussion was held regarding an informational meeting for residents wanting to learn more about how the airport operates and noise impacts. It was clarified that this would be a separate meeting from the public information meeting related to the LTCP. It was further clarified that this meeting would not be focused on the recent initiative regarding extending the runway at ANE to 6000 feet.

Plasch noted that the City of Lexington has requested the ANE Commission meet monthly.

5. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was set for 4:00pm on Wednesday, 21 January 2009. The meeting will be held at Blaine City Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christene Sirois, Recording Secretary
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