



Special Committee on the Airport

March 13, 2013 – 6:00 PM - **Minutes**
New Bedford Regional Airport, 2nd Floor Conference Room

**** View Agenda ****

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON THE AIRPORT

DATE: MARCH 13, 2013

TIME: 6:13 P.M.

PLACE: NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL AIRPORT - CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS JAMES OLIVERIA, CHAIRMAN; DAVID ALVES, VICE-CHAIRMAN; BRUCE DUARTE, JR. (7:07); BRIAN GOMES

ABSENT: COUNCILLOR STEVEN MARTINS

* * *

Councillor Oliveira called the Airport Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. A MEMO from Councillor Martins stating he was unable to attend due to a prior commitment was read into the record and received and placed on file by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Gomes. Councillor Oliveira also mention that he spoke with Councillor Duarte and he will be late in attending tonight's meeting

* * *

Councillor Alves made a motion to start the discussions on all three matters, which was seconded by Councillor Gomes.

Mr. Paul Barton, Airport Commission Chairman, reported to the Committee Members that he and the Commission Members are pleased with the progress that has been made on the new Master Plan. He indicated that ridership through the airport continues to rise and that their goal is to increase the economic development at the airport. He praised the consultants for their work and input.

Tom Vick, Airport Manager, echoed Mr. Barton's comments and stated that he and the Commission have focused on changing the culture at the airport to become more business and economic development focused than ever before. He stated that the airport's relationship with Bridgewater's Aviation School continues to improve and prove to be quite beneficial for both organizations. He is excited that they will be trying new things in the near future; and that with trying new things will come failures. However, he stated, these "failures" will be "successful failures" as they will learn from each mistake made. He stressed that it is not logical to think this airport will ever become a Logan or Green. However, he is confident that this airport can in deed become more profitable by focusing and building upon its specific strengths as it relates to smaller aircraft, etc. With small airports decreasing and downsizing and even closing across the county, New Bedford is in fact growing in activity.

Mr. Vick then presented a letter that he received yesterday from the FAA stating that the FAA may be closing its FAA Tower at the New Bedford Regional Airport. Mr. Vick stated that they will make a strong effort to demonstrate to the FAA how crucial this tower is to not only the New Bedford Airport, but also to the security of the national airspace. This letter was received and place on file on a motion by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Gomes.

Bob Mallard and Jim Nichols from Airport Solutions, the consultants working with the Commission on projects, particularly the Master Plan Development, provided the Committee with an in depth, quadrant by quadrant update on the Master Plan. They stressed that many parts of this plan would most likely take between 10 and 20 years to become reality. For example, moving a taxiway closer to the runway would be one thing that would most likely take approximately 10-15 years.

On motion by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council that the City Council, Administration and the City's Legislative Delegation go on record in support of the new terminal project as is detailed in the developing Master Plan. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: That the City Council send a letter to the Federal Aviation Administration seeking that they reevaluate their recent decision to close the FAA Control Tower Operation at the New Bedford Regional Airport in that it is a major and valuable resource for the US Coast Guard, Bridgewater University's Aviation School, and the Community at Large; and further that it is a major resource to the region and has significant importance to the security of our national airspace. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Alves, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the Mayor that the airport sign located at Hathaway Road and Shawmut Avenue be repaired as soon as possible; and further, that the sign on Downey Street be lit up as well. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Alves and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To ask Mr. Tom Vick to inquire with Compliance Officer Eric Cohen as to what efforts are being or will be made to ensure that local labor will be used as much as possible when the development projects at the airport begin. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Gomes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Alves.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Committees