Aviation Advisory Committee
October 15, 2008
Milton, Florida

The Aviation Advisory Committee met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Carlos Diaz and members Theodore Elbert, Wayne Nelms, Clay McCutchan, Randy Compton, and Randy Roy (NAS Whiting Field representative). Mike Harris was absent due to being out of town on business. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker), County Engineer (Roger Blaylock), and Administrative Services Manager (Tammy Simmons). The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

McCutchan moved approval of the minutes from the September 17, 2008 meeting; Elbert seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman/Member Issues

Diaz stated the gate is now operational. The opening device on the security fence was upgraded from residential equipment to commercial and seems to be working well.

Diaz commented on an evaluation of the airport and how the county can approach trying to figure out the economic impact at the airport in the surrounding community. Also previously discussed was the evaluation of hangar fees as there is a question as to if the fee structure is the appropriate one or not. Airport evaluations approach the issue of setting correct hangar fees for the type and location of airports. Diaz looked into this and found out that studies have been done on airport evaluations as far as economic impact to a community and studies have shown that airports provide a significant economic benefit to the community. Diaz contacted first AOPA (Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association) which has some data of a general nature and is very supportive of airport and flying community groups pushing for these evaluations. Wilbur Smith Associates, Inc. did a national study that showed the economic impact of general aviation airports exceeded $42 billion dollars a year. Most of the data that AOPA has comes from a study that was done on Virginia Airports in the state of Virginia; however, they did identify that an airport has a direct impact and indirect impact in what they call an induced impact, in other words, money that is spent by a municipality in operating and maintaining an airport is returned by its beneficial economic impact with a multiplier effective 2 to 3. Wilbur Smith Associates did a Florida Airports Economic Impact Study in 2000. Peter Prince is mentioned in the document and shows that Peter Prince does return to the community some where on the level of around $200,000 dollars annually in local direct economic impact. Because the runway length limits the ability of larger aircraft to come in and out our numbers are lower than other Florida airports. Diaz looked into Wilbur Smith and it seemed that they are a huge national company. Diaz contacted Jack Randal Poteet & Associates (http://www.airportappraisal.com/aboutPrincipal.php) and they would be willing to do both an economic impact study as well as an Airport evaluation study for hangar fees; the study for effective market rent appraisals and evaluations of hangar fees would cost around $20,000, the conomic impact study would be north of $100,000. One of the things Poteet questioned Diaz, was what do you plan to do with the data froman economic impact? Diaz stated we have a very supportive county and a very supportive county commission. He is not sure if the county would specifically want to have an economic impact study; however, it was brought up in terms of evaluation of hangar fees and that can be done separately for much less. Diaz felt this would be the only way to get an objective based number other than arbitrary as we have done in the past. AOPA does suggest the local airport community do their own study; AOPA has some sample questionnaires to take to residential and business areas. Diaz expressed an airport economic impact study is too expensive to do if we do not have a specific reason why we want it, one reason could be to justify increased expenditure of county money as opposed to trying to leave the airport as a complete enterprise zone. If we want to look at hangar fees in an objective manner and not arbitrary to give us a good idea of what the hangar fee should be then the quoted cost would be $19,950 from Poteet. Diaz stated that he has been in his new hangar for awhile; and has counted three electric meters so it looks like there are three people in the new hangars. Diaz questioned how many new hangars were built? Diaz questioned if any of the old hangars are open?

Simmons reported that the county has leased 10 of the new hangars, we have 14 still available, we have contacted 14 people and have 6 to go that have not previously been contacted. There is a total of 69 people on the hangar waiting list, 49 of them have choose to go to bottom of list. Simmons responded we built 24 new. Simmons responded there are no old hangars available, as they have come open; we filled them from the waiting list. Simmons stated we had over a 100 people on the waiting list, then we went through them before leasing the new hangars to make sure only interested people were on the list, 100 of them stayed on the list. But we then whittled that down to 69 through the actual leasing of the new hangars. We will let them go to the bottom of the list and then they have to work themselves back up, if they insist on staying on the list. I think we are going to lease these hangars, I don't think it's going to be a problem.

Walker copied and distributed the Technical Summary for the Florida Airports Economic Impact Study dated August 2000 and prepared by Wilbur Smith Associates, Inc. as provided by Diaz. Walker stated he feels it would be good to look at this document.

Elbert stated that the question is if the county would like to have this information or not. And if so, questioned Walker if the county has any capability of internally doing this kind of study.

Walker stated he didn't feel we would, with our current staffing and capabilities, he was not sure we could do even the self study that Diaz was talking about.

Elbert questioned ifwe could get some assistance from the University?

Walker stated one of the things we had talked about at the last meeting was trying to see what kind of assistance we could get from Dr. Harper and the Hass Center as far as what they could do, I assume there would be a fee, probably considerably less than Wilber Smith.

Elbert stated we do have a member of Flight Watch, Bill Carper, whom is a previous Dean of the College of Business at the University; Elbert questioned if some how through the Flight Watch organization he would be interested in this. Elbert questioned the committee if they wanted someone from Flight Watch to approach him?

Walker stated it would be fine with him; however, the rates were raised only by$25.

Diaz stated the economic impact of most other airports partially the ones with long runways like Crestview and Fairhope is huge compared to what Peter Prince can offer.

Nelms stated the difference with Crestview is the 8000' runway and the industrial park that the runway supports is primarily industry. Nelms further stated he thinks it is an unfair comparison if you compare the industrial complex that is adjacent to Bob Sikes and the Crestview Airport with what we have available here.

Diaz responded the study shows the difference in these things.

McCutchan stated we are confined by airspace restrictions and geographic land restrictions. Bob Sikes has hardly any of the air space problems we have, its unlimited runway almost.

Compton stated Sikes is much more commercially suitable.

Walker stated one of the attractions of the Whiting Aviation Park is if we can work out an arrangement with the Navy the access to the runway would obviate the need for expansion of our runway and would provide commercial opportunities with access to the runway not only just an industrial park but an industrial park that would be almost uniquely suited for aviation related.

Nelms requested an update on the status of the agreement in conjunction with the Whiting Aviation Park from Roy.

Roy replied the Whiting Aviation Park was an initiative with the Peter Prince problem with the conflicts in the flight pass and the air space in and around Whiting Field. The conceptual idea was approved to set up the Whiting Aviation Park, it has gone throughan EA study, FONSI (The Finding of no Significant Impact), through the region and to CNIC (Commander of Naval Installations Command) to see if it is going to be approved or not. Once we get the final word on that then we will be able to provide more of an update.

Nelms stated the last statement that Roy made would indicate that the administrative work that has been done up to this point is now in Washington at the Commander Naval Installations Command who will make his final recommendation before this is signed off, it will have to be signed off by the Secretary of the Navy to allow that agreement to go forward. Nelms is hopeful that there is going to be a favorable recommendation by CNIC4 to move forward to the Secretary of the Navy and hopefully within the next 5-6 months we should have some sort of decision by the Secretary of the Navy as to whether or not we can move forward, where the County can work with the Navy on some sort of limited use access to the runways at Whiting Field. If that happens, Whiting Aviation Park is going to be a big improvement in terms of economic impact onaviation related industry's here in Santa Rosa County.

Diaz questioned that the Whiting Park is separate from the joint use of the runways.

Roy stated that if the conception of the Aviation Whiting Park is approved then they will go forward with it and you would have a limited use agreement that would be written up between us and the county to establish use of the runway.

Blaylock stated there is no Whiting Aviation Park with out an agreement.

Nelms stated the county owns the property and if this agreement comes to fruition it will allow users of the aviation park to have limited use of those 6000' runways at South Whiting Field, it would give a through the fence access but it will be totally controlled by the United States Navy. The last understanding that I had of that agreement was that there would be no general aviation use of that, none. It is totally incompatible with the mission up there. All of these things would have to be negotiated with the Navy officials by the users of the park.

McCutchan stated we spend all our time and effort on Peter Prince, what about the aviation needs of Santa Rosa County as a whole, and what about other airports. What are the possibilities? We just talked about Whiting, what is the latest on Holley? McCutchan further stated there use to be a lot of people in the north end of the county that were very active in aviation and most of the air fields have dried up, there are private air fields but there is not one public air field in the north end and maybe we need one, its time to put a grass strip or something up there where we can be air minded, at one time there were 9 airports and 25-30 airplanes just around Jay, Florida itself. Does the north end of the county need an airport? If Holley ever goes civilian/commercial its going to be like Destin, it'll be the second Destin if we do it right and my only concern is I want the Navy to have everything they need to do their job but if they ever declare that airport surplus I see where aviation could have a very big impact and I'm concerned about developers moving in there and using that land. I think we can share it, I think there is enough property there and enough facilities where you could have aviation, you could have industry, and you could have private stuff there if you wanted.

Roy responded we have 13 outlying fields, we had 14, Saufley is back over to Pensacola. With the challenge of the T-6 Bravo coming on line, the first one arriving mid 2009, we are going to have some dynamics involved where you are going to have some fields that are going to be available for the T34-T6transition thenabout 2011-2012 you are going to have a pretty big mix of the T-6 Bravo and T-34, a 50/50 split. Another mission driver is the night division device training that we do at the field. The future goal of Holley is still partofthe strategic plan for us to meet mission.

McCutchan responded at least through 2015 you are going to be using Charlie's in the local area so we need Holley for that; T-6 will never be able to operate out of Holley?

Roy responded runway length is the hindrance for the T-6 Bravo; it needs 4000' and 5000' feet.

Compton stated Holley is already so encroached; can you make the runways long enough where it would be competitive with Destin or Jack Edwards? Compton questioned whether there would be room to come in with a diagonal.

Nelms stated Holley right now is set up with diagonals, I think the longest runway is slightly over 3000' about 3400'. They are kind of small, but the other thing to keep in mind is with the arrival of the SevenSpecial Forces group their looking for training areas and Holley for them is an airfield they can do their vertical and development kinds of training. DOD assets right now including these outlying fields are going to fit into the plans for the Seven Special Forces group and Eglin is going to experience a scheduling problem as they try to disperse operational training and recurring training for the Seven Special Forces group

integrating that with Strike Fighter along with their test and evaluation mission they have going on right now. I can see the potential for DOD wanting to hold these assets pretty close and use them for their training missions and operational missions inthe future.

McCutchan stated maybe we ought to start pushing harder on the Whiting Aviation Park because that looks like it is going to be the only thing available for the commercial, the heavy commercial and look for other opportunities. McCutchan stated we've just about gone as far as we can go with Peter Prince Airport.

Diaz stated unless you extend the runway you have, its like a root bound plant right now.

McCutchan stated we can continue developing it as a general aviation airport, the runways are long enough for that, we can build more hangars, I'm convinced every hangar you build your going to rent. I don't think we would ever run out of renters at the rate we are going, because a lot of people are buying airplanes.

Diaz questioned what about Santa Rosa Airport right south of us, what is the Navy using that for?

Royreplied it is a big bread winner for us for the helicopter.

Diaz questioned that they are just using it for mostly helicopters?

Roy responded yes.

Compton questioned what the plans are for Choctaw as far as using something on the south side for sharing.

Roy stated Choctaw is verybusy; it is an8000' runway.

Nelms stated it is in the big plan for the Strike Fighter. Because of the noise issue surrounding the F-35 over there right now, The Air Force is developing their plans that is going to push most of their routine training operations up to Duke Field and Choctaw so that these repetitive kinds of approaches and touch and goes won't be at home field where it has the biggest impact on the local community particularly Valparaiso and Niceville and those areas over there which are going to have to contend with an operational tempo that is going to increase significantly when the F-35 is introduced. That then makes Choctaw that much more important to the Strike Fighter as well as to the T-6 Bravo in introduction at Whiting Field.

McCutchan requested that we go ahead and do a public town hall meeting at Milton on a Saturday for all the hangar people to hear their concerns; he would like to notify all the hangar renters at least a month in advance.

Diaz statedthe committee thought it was a good idea and Diaz believes the spring will be a better time to do it because it is getting close to holiday seasonnow.

McCutchan stated maybe the winter;he doesn't think they should push it back.

McCutchan discussed the commercial hangar situation and questioned if we are going to find a way to rent those out to multiple renters?

Diaz stated that was up to the county and the last he heard the legal department was not real anxious to do that but its up to what the county wants to do with that, I think that pretty much we are not going to get a commercial operator operating turbo props or something big to put their airplanes there at an airport with a 3700' runway and no instrument approach so you are going to have to come up with some alternative.

McCutchan questioned if the committee could form a working group with the Sunshine laws and set down and discuss it as a small working group to figure out if there is a way to rent those hangars, do it safely, smart, and economically and cover all the liability issues.

Diaz suggested McCutchan come up with some ideas and present them two meetings from this meeting.

Elbert questioned the 3' hangar door setback in the new hangars that was discussed at the last meeting.

Diaz stated the door is an electric bi-fold door.

Blaylock responded that he had reviewed this with the project engineer, Michael Schmidt, who handled that with the design-build contractor, Blaylock stated this is a pinch zone, if someone is standing there, an aircraft, oranything else is within that 3', has a potential to be a pinch zone as the doors come down or if it goes through multi-wire failure and has a catastrophic drop, the doors weigh several tons so that is what they are warning against, that's just a manufactures warning, and that is all it is trying to tell you, do not stand in that 3' zone, it is not a prohibition against placing an aircraft or anything it is just a warning zone and he is going to be talking about cross-hatching that out in red and say do not stand, even thoughit is commonsense.

Diaz responded that nothing encroaches on it, the airplane can be right up to the door and when the door opens it doesn't encroach.

Elbert questioned if that alleviated Diaz's concerns.

Diaz responded that Roger had come out a couple weeks ago and we had operated the doors and looked at them, the concern he had was not mechanical safety, his concern was legal liability of operating the door when you have a manufacture warning that says don't put anything here, no person or structure can be here.

Elbert requested a copy of the master plan.

Blaylock responded that they are in reproduction and you can pick it up next week at the Engineering office or he will bring to the next meeting.

Elbert said he would wait until the next meeting. Discussion took place on the Mr. Mason complaint about not getting the A hangar. It was determined that this was not an issue.

Elbert questioned whenthe new hangar rates would go into effect.

Simmons responded that she hoped they would be in effect in November.

Elbert questioned if it would be possible for the agenda to identify exact agenda items and if the committee members would let Hunter know what they want on the agenda

FBO Issues

Dave Glass stated that they have been informed by the Navy that they are now 1 of 3 FBO's that are doing the initial flight training for military students and we can expect larger classes in the very near future.

Glass stated they have a stand-by generator they use for running the fuel system in the case of a massive power failure; therefore they have the capability of opening the new hangar doors in case of a sudden power failure.

Pensacola Flight Watch, Inc Issues

Dale Holbert stated it looks like the security gate is far more substantial with a very substance motor and cables, the only thing he can think of in the future that might help as far as longevity is down at the bottom at the open end they could put a slight extension and a couple of wheels to help with load, it may not be necessary, but it is an idea to think about in the future.

Holbert stated the Super Unicom(Automated Pilot Information System), seemed to work close to the airport, but seemed to be cutting out further away.

Holbert stated at the last meeting, Diaz brought up the fact that it might be better to have an AWOS (Automated Weather Observing System) and there was one that might be available for $47,000; he questioned if it was an AWOS-A, AWOS-1, AWOS-2, or AWOS-3? Holbert stated that there is a significant difference in them, and explained the difference, stating AWOS-3 is the granddaddy of all.

Diaz stated this was for the full thing.

Holbert stated that when they first got the Super Unicom one of the issues was the AWOS at that time, when I talked to Roger it was substantially more than $47,000 for an AWOS and there was also an area requirement that we didn't have the area to do it.

Diaz responded the area requirement may be a problemfor the AWOS.

Blaylock responded with an AWOS they were looking at 20 acres clear or something along those lines radius and then it was $120,000 at that time.

Diaz stated this is cheaper.

Holbert stated that is why he asked which one it was, because there might be significant difference between an AWOS-A and AWOS-3.

Diaz stated we have 20 acres clear.

Roger replied it may fit now if there has been a change, technology changes all the time but back then and that's been almost 10 years ago. The other thing is $47,000 is going to be a problem at Peter Prince.

Holbert stated as a safety feature one of the two is necessary, another thing, as he understands it, you can do in case an AWOS is not feasible, is to enhance the Super Unicom by adding onto with an altimeter and visibility setting. It might be worthwhile to look at anAWOS.

Holbert reported on the Aviation Discovery Park: they have all the honorary columns and plaques up, all they like now is the wall that is going to have donor bricks and donor plaques recognizing the different levels of donors to the park and they are going to have some type of platform under the sky shades. The radio man is trying to keep the radios working constantly.

Administrative/Engineer Items

Walker stated we covered allof our issues in the previous items.

Other Business

No business

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next meeting will be November 19, 2008. The town hall meeting will be scheduled at the November meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.