

DeKalb County Airport Advisory Board (AAB) Minutes

The DeKalb County Airport Advisory Board met on Monday, June 10th, 2024 at 6:00 PM via Zoom Video Conference call.

Members Present: Doug Miller (AAB Chair), Larry Scheinpflug (Vice Chair), Will Childs, Kevin Fowler, Reuben Jones, Mike Reeves

Members Absent: Chris Richard

Others Present: Deputy Airport Director Hunter Hines, and Noise and Environmental Analyst Korey Barnes

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by AAB Chair, Doug Miller

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the May 2024 minutes was made by Mike Reeves and seconded by Larry Scheinpflug. Motion passed unanimously.

I. Information/Old Business

A. Airport Director's Report delivered by Deputy Airport Director (Hunter Hines):

1. PDK Minimum Standards/Rules and Regulations: Received the last document back from the consultants with comments. AAB will now review and discuss comments and will then finalize. They will submit the recommendations to the BOC for approval.
2. LED Airfield Project: Changing all airport lighting to LED. This is a Federally funded project. Project should be under way by Summer.
3. Doc Magnet Memorial Aviation Park: Rubber mulch taken out and replaced with playground grade artificial grass turf.
4. 3R/21L Replacement: Will remove all of the center runway slabs and be replaced. Currently in the RFP process. Should get back this week.
5. PDK Airport Landing Fees: Based on a suggestion initially made by Open DeKalb, PDK is in the initial stages of exploring a plan to charge landing fees for transient aircraft. No base tenants will be charged.
Two questions that came out of last meeting:
 1. Can you show a revenue line item that pertains to transient landing fees to account for all the fees that come in? Hunter Hines answered: a code amendment will be created that will state that the fees collected will only go to the airport.
 2. What is going to stop the airport from deciding that they want to charge base tenants? Hunter answered: Board to request a code amendment to be added that prevents a decision being made to charge base tenants. Next steps? Asking for Board recommendation to take a code amendment request to the BOC.

Public member questions and commentary, may pilots who attended meeting were in person:

Member of Public: Lack of success with user fees in Europe is why people like it here in the U.S.. The Government never says No to money. Never seen user fees work anywhere. Where did this idea come from? Hunter answered: Several huge projects ahead for the airport but we have limited funding.

Member of public: How come there are not more international flights at PDK? Hunter: We are being restricted on intl. because we don't have the right structure, for example, improved/dedicated CBP space.

Hunter Hines stated that he understands that we are mostly small guys in old hangars at PDK, but we can't rebuild hangars without additional revenue.

Pilot at PDK, Scott Ducker commented: If this is the 2nd busiest airport in the whole state, why do other smaller airports get State money yet we don't? Are the funds being appropriated appropriately? He feels the fees are too high for turbo jets at PDK. Why are we going to extra fees when there is other money coming in that should be going to this airport, i.e., fees from fuel and ad valorem. Hunter Hines responded: FAA only pays for safety stuff. They do not fund the admin building, t-hangars, etc.

Question from public: Planes that come in on a daily basis to an FBO, are they considered transient? Hunter answered: Yes. If you are paying rent to the airport, FBO, or are a subtenant, you are a base tenant.

Question from public: Why is there not funding in the Master plan? Hunter and Board Chair Doug Miller answered: The Master plan proposes that operations will increase, it is just a blueprint. We were hitting 245,000 operations in 1999, highest we've ever been, that number is now going down.

Question from public: How much will fee be annually and what will they be used for? Hunter answered: We don't know yet on amounts. We would like to see some improvements to facilities.

Question from public: Can fees be used to reduce base tenant costs? Will base tenants see any benefits from this windfall? Hunter answered: Possibly, but most base tenants want improvements.

Question from public: How will landing fees be assessed? Hunter Hines answered: We would first have to bid out to a contractor to manage the whole process, track all the data, collect, etc.

Question from the public: Has PDK airport asked the airport business owners how these fees would impact? Hunter Hines said he has asked the FBOs.

Board Vice Chair Larry Scheinpflug asked: What about transient maintenance folks? Hunter Hines answered: We have not reached out to yet.

Larry Scheinpflug asked: Does PDK have a yearly budget and is it public info? Hunter Hines answered: Yes, but it is not kept with the AAB.

Larry asked/commented: Why would the Director of the airport not have the budget right in front of them line by line? Why is the county holding this close to their chest, who is holding the county accountable? Why don't you have an accounting of what is coming in and what is going out and then ask for user's fees? Until that happens, I recommend that we table a vote on this. We can't ask for fees until the Airport Director has access to the budget. Board Chair Doug Miller commented: This needs to be taken up with the county commissioners if you don't like how PDK is funded.

AOPA representative Stacey Heaton asked/commented: Has the airport manager not seen the financial reports? Hunter Hines answered: They don't have line by line numbers. Stacey Heaton commented: Sounds like financials need to be looked at before a vote on user fees.

Board Member Mike Reeves commented: Zac Williamson is the COO for DeKalb County, but when was the last time he was here at the airport? There should be a two-way street, airport brings a lot of business to the county.

Doug Miller: we will table this for tonite to give Board members time to reach out to all county commissioners and ask for P&L statements, line by line, and balance sheet for the past five years.

AOPA rep. Stacey Heaton asked: What is the reserve policy for the enterprise fund? Hunter Hines answered: There is no policy.

Board Member Will Childs asked: Is there any capital gains assessment done for airport, independent from the Master plan? Hunter Hines answered: No.

Noise and Environmental Analyst Report May 2024: - N&E Analyst, Korey Barnes delivered the following report: **The May 2024 Noise Report** will be posted on the website in its entirety: **Total operations were 17,189** which is an increase of 19,42% as compared to May 2023. There were 493 voluntary curfew operations. Total 2024 year-to-date operations are **76,007** as compared to the total operations as of May 2023 of 71,140. In May 61% of operations were on a southerly flow, 39% were to the north, and 0% were on the NW/SE runway. **Noise complaints:** 83.4 households made 2,336 complaints. Minus the top two households, the average was 8,3 complaints per household. The majority of the complaints were made between 12:00PM and 5.59PM (45%). The Complaint Percentages by Zip Code chart shows that 70% of the complaints originated from the **30319**-zip code. A total of 282 advisory letters were sent to aircraft operators who flew during the Voluntary Curfew Period who were not identified as MedEvac and/or other emergency flights. Regarding High Noise Events, 51 advisory letters were sent to the operators whose aircraft exceeded the high noise event threshold(s).

Motion to accept the May 2024 Noise Reports was made by Mike Reeves and seconded by Will Childs. Motion passed unanimously.

B. **Other:**
NONE

II. **New Business:**
NONE

III. **Public Comments:**
Member of the Public sked what is the breakdown of taxes received at the airport? Hunter Hines answered and broke down the tax specifications.

Motion to adjourn was made at 7:34 p.m. Motion to accept was made by Mike Reeves and seconded Larry Scheinpflug.

Submitted by:

Lori Bell

Lori Bell (Secretary)

Approved as Submitted:

Doug Miller

Doug Miller (AAB Chair)