

MEETING SUMMARY

Air Transportation Advisory Committee February 2, 2017

The Air Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) convened at 1:00 p.m. on February 2, 2017, at NCTCOG Offices.

Voting Members in Attendance

Judy Demoney, Chair, Mid-Way Regional Airport
Karen VanWinkle Vice Chair, Arlington Municipal Airport
Keith Barrett, Caddo Mills Airport
Joey Boyd, City of Rockwall
Christian Childs, Alliance Airport
Gary Hawkins, Granbury Airport
Quentin Hix, Denton Enterprise Airport
Joel Jenkinson, Addison Airport
Craig Mammel, DFW Airport
Wayne Sanderson, Mineral Wells Airport
Ken Wiegand, McKinney National Airport
Sharlette Wright, Cleburne Regional Airport

Non-Voting Members in Attendance

Aaron Barth, City of Fort Worth, Spinks Airport
Jeff Kloska, Meacham Airport
David Schaumburg, Denton Enterprise Airport

Others in Attendance

Trent Ballard, Arlington Municipal Airport
Collin Bible, Garver
Carolyn Bitner-Collins, DeSoto High School
Bob Brown, Parsens Brinkerhoff
Tex Collins, Civil Air Patrol
Emily Conway, DFW Airport
Michael Mallonee, KSA Engineering (remote)
Eric Pratt, McKinney National Airport
Samuel Tan, DFW Airport
Karen Ulferts, AUVSI
Apoorva Bajaj, CASA Radar Program

NCTCOG Staff in Attendance

Natalie Bettger
Lisa Key
Rachel Linnewiel
Amanda Wilson
Ernest Huffman

Meeting Summary Outline

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Orientation to Agenda
3. Approval of October 6, 2016 Meeting Summary
4. Joint Land Use Study/Joining Forces
5. Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Subcommittee
6. Aviation Education/STEM
7. ATAC Funding Subcommittee Update
8. Other Business

NOTE: Summary items below not in order of appearance on published agenda.

1. Welcome and Introductions: Judy Demoney, Chair

Judy welcomed all attendees. She noted that introductions would be delayed until Commissioner Victor Vandergriff, with the Texas Transportation Commission, joined the meeting to brief the Committee on aviation funding. Judy added that the agenda items would not necessarily be discussed in order of the agenda. She also noted that a long-time Committee member, Quentin Hix of Denton Enterprise Airport, would be retiring in February. Ernest Huffman was introduced as the new Aviation Planner on NCTCOG staff.

2. Approval of October 6, 2016 Meeting Summary, Judy Demoney, Chair

The meeting summary of October 6, 2016, was approved as submitted. Gary Hawkins (M); Sharlette Wright (S). The motion passed unanimously.

3. Orientation to Agenda: Natalie Bettger, NCTCOG

Natalie Bettger reminded the Committee to ensure microphones were turned on so that remote participants could hear speakers and noted that the WebEx link was sent out for remote presentation viewing. She then gave an orientation to the agenda noting that the ATAC Funding Subcommittee item was intended to be a brief update, but as Commissioner Vandergriff had recently met with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), he had some updates that he requested to share with the Committee.

Commissioner Vandergriff joined the meeting and was welcomed by the Chair. The Commissioner and all attendees introduced themselves. Judy noted that Christian Childs would be replacing Chris Ash as the representative from Alliance Airport and that Wayne Sanderson was replacing Bobby Bateman, also retiring, from Mineral Wells Airport.

4. ATAC Funding Subcommittee Update, Natalie Bettger, NCTCOG

Natalie provided background on the organization of the ATAC Funding Subcommittee. Based on information that was shared with the Committee in previous meetings, the Funding Subcommittee was formed to begin reviewing funding related to regional General Aviation (GA) facilities and to help foster greater transparency and a better understanding of the funding process as it passes through TxDOT and FAA. The intent is to improve regional GA facility competitiveness across the State and the country in terms of projects that are selected for funding and ensure Texas is receiving a fair share of the funding allocations. The ATAC Funding Subcommittee previously reached out to the Commissioner to help make progress in this area. The Commissioner attended the ATAC meeting to share what he has learned after multiple conversations with TxDOT and FAA and recommend possible activities that could promote the Committee's funding initiative.

Commissioner Vandergriff noted that he is a member of the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC), the governing body of the TxDOT. He noted that he has served on a State appointed board for 11 consecutive years, first with the North Texas Tollway Authority and now with the Texas Transportation Commission. The Commissioner was instrumental in the creation of the Department of Motor Vehicles and served as Chair for four years.

The Commissioner stated he met with the ATAC Funding Subcommittee approximately four months ago where the Subcommittee shared facts and figures indicating there may be a need

for additional transparency, regarding aviation funding and the project selection process. The Subcommittee had expressed the following concerns/requests related to project selection and funding:

1. Texas may not be receiving its fair share of regional allocation funds from FAA and the TTC may need to work with TxDOT to boost that allocation.
2. Airports do not have a clear understanding of the project prioritization and selection process.
3. All members of the TxDOT Aviation Advisory Committee are users of the system versus managers of the system. Will TxDOT consider incorporating more segments of the general aviation sector to serve on the committee in the future?

In late September or October 2016, the Commissioner noted an upcoming TTC agenda item to award airport grants in November. Those were put on hold until December to allow more time to explore the nature of the grants and the project selection process. In conversations with TxDOT, the Commissioner learned that some of the projects were funded with Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE) funding and others were funded with discretionary or state funding.

The Funding Subcommittee shared with the Commissioner their understanding that regional airports were not spending the \$150,000 Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE) annual funding allocated per airport in a timely manner, so that the FAA withheld that funding even though it recently awarded a substantial amount to a single airport. During discussions with TxDOT and the FAA, the FAA stated that Texas did not lose funding as the primary source of funding was awarded to Alliance Airport for runway expansion. TxDOT and FAA acknowledged that the FAA had awarded funding to Alliance Airport during the three years that aviation funding had been withdrawn. If TxDOT, GA airport managers, nor Alliance were made aware that Alliance had been awarded discretionary funding during the three years that none of the other GA airports received discretionary funding, that is an issue and that approach needs to be addressed. Commissioner Vandergriff acknowledged that he understood frustrations associated with the lack of communication and information shared regarding these funds.

Additionally, the Commissioner noted that TxDOT is in agreement that more communication and a better process for project selection is needed. TxDOT also stated that the current process for project selection is FAA driven. The Commissioner received documentation outlining project selection guidelines and rules from the FAA. TxDOT stated that communication to GA airport managers, related to the project selection process, had not occurred for a long time. TxDOT agrees that meetings are needed to share information and discuss the project selection process. The Commissioner encouraged GA airport managers to meet with FAA to better understand the project selection process, however, he recommended that funding allocations meetings should include TxDOT and the airports. The Commissioner committed his time and active participation to help facilitate those meetings.

The Commissioner also observed that FAA, TxDOT, and GA airport managers need to meet soon to openly and honestly discuss the process for project prioritization and selection. It is vital that GA airport managers fully understand the project selection process and selection criteria to compete efficiently for project funding. Commissioner Vandergriff advocates for more transparency, dialogue, and communication with active stakeholder engagement.

The FAA and TxDOT have suggested holding the recommended project selection process meeting at the Annual Texas Aviation Conference in April. The Commissioner does not believe that this would be the best forum due to the large number of attendees and overlapping interests and has objected to this forum. TxDOT has also offered a WebEx hosted meeting from TxDOT Aviation headquarters to which the Commissioner also objected. He strongly believes that TxDOT and FAA should attend this meeting at NCTCOG offices to offer a more centralized location, so that as many as possible GA airport managers can attend. The conversation should include project selection criteria, process, and prioritization.

Going forward, as aviation grants are considered by TTC, Commissioner Vandergriff has made it clear that he will not vote for any state or federal discretionary funding until the FAA and TxDOT meet with GA airport managers, establish a dialogue, collectively examine the current project selection criteria, and establish a definitive process. The Committee expressed its sincere appreciation for the Commissioner's interest, participation, and advocacy.

There was a question regarding what happens to the annual \$150,000 NPE funding that the airports are required to return to TxDOT when it is not spent. As three years of discretionary funding was lost because the NPE funding was not spent, the FAA expects to transfer funding from multiple airports to a single airport with a larger project where the combined funding will be spent. In practice, that should mean that if an airport had to return NPE funding, it should have a credit for an equal amount in the future. As an airport continues to develop a larger priority project, those funds should then be transferred back to that airport.

Some Committee members felt that smaller GA airports are given low priority and asked for the Commissioner's comments. The FAA had expressed that runway-focused projects will generally receive more funding and higher priority than smaller GA airports requesting hangar improvement or similar funding. Safety-related projects are also considered higher priority and therefore garner more funding.

There were comments related to a perceived division between reliever and non-reliever airports. Commissioner Vandergriff noted that there may be some internal challenges within TxDOT however the majority of TxDOT staff is open to new and more effective ideas and processes.

More Committee feedback centered on state discretionary funding for GA airports in the Southwest Region. Approximately 75% of state discretionary funding is allocated to commercial airports. The remaining ~ 25% is allocated to GA airports and for the Southwest Region, that equates to ~ \$35 million per year, or 1/3 of the state's discretionary funding. However, the Southwest Region has approximately 2/3 of the state's airports, aircraft, and activity. Many members agreed that Texas GA airports are woefully underfunded. Given the current congested airspace, GA reliever airports play a vital role and now is the time to expand capacity and plan for projected growth in operations. Adequate funding is critical in maintaining current facilities and achieving that growth.

The Committee shared that the total state funding for Texas has been \$16 million for at least 10 years and that number should be increased to keep up with and airport activity. It was felt that the state should do more to take care of smaller airports in the surrounding communities as they provide economic output to the communities and are often the lifeline to more rural areas.

5. Joint Land Use Study/Joining Forces, Amanda Wilson

Amanda Wilson briefed the Committee on the Regional Joint Land Use Study that will identify and recommend land-use strategies to help preserve several North Texas military installations and their ability to operate. In 2008, NCTCOG completed a joint land-use study around the Naval Air Station Fort Worth, Joint Reserve Base (NAS Fort Worth, JRB). The purpose of the study was to identify actions needed to enable the continued coexistence of the installation and the communities. In addition, a Regional Coordination Committee was formed to develop programs and projects to address encroachment issues.

Staff is now updating that study in addition to performing land-use studies around several other military bases and ancillary facilities. These include Fort Walters Training Center, Camp Maxey Training Center, Colonel Stone Army Reserve Center and Eagle Mountain Lake Facility Redmond Taylor Army Heliport. North Texas has a strong support for the military community and this initiative is an opportunity for better coordination and sharing of military resources across installations. The outcome will be a draft compatibility menu that includes recommended strategies for each installation and region wide for utilization by each of the impacted communities.

6. Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Subcommittee, Ernest Huffman

Ernest introduced himself to the Committee and shared his previous work experience. Noting that the FAA had recently released Part 107 regulations where the law enforcement is left off individual municipalities. The UAS Subcommittee was reconvened to develop a region-wide model ordinance for UAS enforcement of FAA guidelines to protect citizens and aviation facilities accordingly

7. Aviation Education/STEM, Ernest Huffman

This initiative was created to sustain an aviation education system that fosters regional aviation/aerospace careers. The Speakers Bureau initiative has been renewed to solicit anyone interested in speaking to students about their individual aviation/aerospace careers and experiences. Staff also asked that member share aviation-related event information for posting on the careers website.

Gary Hawkins, Granbury Airport, gave an update on the Eagles Nest Program at Granbury High School. Eagles Nest projects enable students, with the help of mentors and educators, to build an FAA Certified aircraft. Granbury High School students will build a Light Sport Aircraft (Van's Aircraft RV-12) with full glass instrumentation. The mentors teach the students and the students build the plane. Participating students expand their STEM education, get to be part of a great experience, and receive high school credits.

Craig Mammel, DFW Airport, announced that DFW has been working with the FAA on several UAS initiatives focusing on research detection and mitigation. The new Vice President of Operations at DFW has offered to attend an ATAC meeting and present an overview of those initiatives. Craig also extended an invitation to an informal presentation by DFW Department of Public Safety on February 7, addressing the benefits of UAS for first responders and situational awareness. Staff will forward this information to the Committee.

8. Other Business, Judy DeMoney

In addition to expressing appreciation to Commissioner Vandergriff, Judy thanked the members of the Funding Subcommittee and everyone who has worked hard to push the funding initiatives forward. She noted the next ATAC meeting date would be changing and that NCTCOG staff

would forward that date as soon as it has been finalized.

There was a comment about the upcoming FAA Advisory Circular in July that will address items that can be placed in airport hangars. Karen VanWinkle encouraged attendees to participate in the AAEE survey addressing GA airport hangar usage.

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned.