LAKE ELMO AIRPORT FEDERAL EA / STATE EAW

Community Engagement Panel Meeting #2 Minutes

Lake Elmo Public Library
May 25, 2017
6:00 P.M.

Panel Attendees	**Representing**
John Renwick	Airport Tenant/User
Marlon Gunderson	Airport Tenant/User and City of Lake Elmo Resident
Keith Bergmann	City of Lake Elmo Resident
Stephen Wensman	City of Lake Elmo Planning Director
Mary Vierling	West Lakeland Township Resident
Dave Schultz	West Lakeland Township Supervisor
Stephen Buckingham	Baytown Township Resident
Ann Pung-Terwedo	Washington County Public Works Planner
Chad Leqve	Metropolitan Airports Commission Director of Environment
Neil Ralston	Metropolitan Airports Commission Airport Planner
Michael Madigan	MAC Commissioner District F

Other Attendees	**Representing**
Dana Nelson	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Joe Harris	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Patrick Hogan	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Melissa Scovronski	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Brad Juffer	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Gary Schmidt	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Evan Barrett	Mead & Hunt
Colleen Bosold	Mead & Hunt

Absent Panel Members	**Representing**
Robin Anthony	Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce
Kent Grandlienard	Baytown Township Supervisor

The attached report represents this writer's interpretation of items discussed during the meeting. Any corrections or additional information should be brought to our attention for clarification.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Conduct a debrief of the May 11th public event and get the Community Engagement Panel's (CEP's) feedback on what went well and what could be improved for future public events.
- Introduce the Purpose & Need and Alternatives portions of the environmental process, and get feedback from the CEP on the material presented.
- Continue to equip CEP members to be the point of contact for information sharing, both to and from the community and MAC, and to respond to inquiries from their constituent groups.

Items discussed and Q&A were as follows:

Dana Nelson started off the meeting with a recap of the CEP's role, participants and guidelines. She then shared statistics on the May 11th public event, including number of attendees and written comments as well as a breakdown of the types of comments received, breakdown of attendees by city/township, and common themes of the questions and comments. At that point, she asked the CEP if there were common question/comment themes the group thought were missing from the list based on what they heard and discussions they had at the public event.

John Renwick said he talked to a woman at the public event who was concerned about emergency response times and asked if it made sense to have emergency responders attend a future CEP meeting. Dave Schultz reported there are no fire hydrants in Baytown Township, and that fire trucks have to haul in water from the nearest fire hydrant, which was reported to be a quarter mile west of Manning Avenue in Lake Elmo, meaning they will have to go around the proposed curve shown for some of the 30th Street North realignment alternatives to obtain water. There was some discussion of whether the planned realignment of Stillwater Boulevard would result in hydrants closer to the area in question.

Dana Nelson then asked for feedback and a discussion on the following three items relating to the public meeting:

- What are your thoughts on advanced notification for the meeting, venue/room set-up, and information presented at the meeting?
- Are there opportunities for improvement?
- How do we make it easier for each person to get their question/comment heard during the meeting?

Keith Bergmann said he didn't know how to get people to ask the real questions that were concerning them, like where does the MAC get the funding for capital improvements. He reported that after the public meeting, in talking to several people, it seemed their biggest concern was the 30th Street North realignment, but nobody brought that up during the Q&A portion of the public event. He expressed concern that people didn't voice their honest concerns at the public event.

Stephen Buckingham noted that some of the people were fearful of increased jet traffic and noise and their voices in the discussion were louder than the rest.

Mary Vierling suggested there were so many issues that came up, that people lost focus on their main problem or question.

Keith Bergmann proposed taking the topics of concern and addressing them at the next public meeting.

John Renwick said he thought the one-on-one discussions before and after the formal presentation and Q&A session were the most valuable part of the meeting.

Dana Nelson asked if we should consider lengthening the time at the informational boards for the next public event (but not the length of the overall event). She stated that approximately 55 of the 60 members of the public in attendance signed up to receive the e-news updates for the project.

Dana then explained that the project team will be expanding the FAQs on the project website to respond to the common questions and comments heard during the public event, and provided a list of those new FAQs to be developed (see presentation "Next Steps" slide for list of questions). The group agreed that the list of questions presented were representative of the scope of questions/concerns that were raised by the public.

Dana then turned the meeting over to Evan Barrett, the project manager from Mead & Hunt, which is the consultant in the environmental review process. Evan began the presentation with a recap of the environmental process. He stated that the last time the CEP met, in February, the project was in the scoping phase. He reported we are now in phases 2 and 3, the Purpose & Need and Alternatives Analysis portions of the environmental process. He also went over the project schedule.

Evan then explained what the Purpose & Need are according to FAA guidance, and defined what they are specifically for this project at Lake Elmo Airport. He then went into detail on the four Purpose & Need objectives for Lake Elmo Airport.

While discussing Purpose & Need Objective 2 (minimize incompatible land uses in the RPZs), Neil Ralston added that another objective in relocating Runway 14/32 is to maintain a clear RPZ relative to Washington County's proposed widening of Manning Avenue from two to four lanes in the next five years. He explained that a roadway expansion would require FAA approval if it were to occur within the RPZ and is, therefore one of the driving factors for relocating the runway.

While discussing Purpose & Need Objective 3 and talking about "useful loads," a citizen observing the CEP meeting asked Evan to clarify what he meant by "load" and asked if that meant bigger jets/planes. Evan answered that a useful load refers to passengers, cargo, and fuel carried aboard an aircraft, and that jet aircraft requirements were not considered as part of the Purpose & Need for the project. Chad Leqve explained that the useful load numbers represent how effective/useable the current runway length can be given each individual aircraft's takeoff and landing performance requirements. Chad then talked about the MAC system of airports and how Lake Elmo Airport is an important part of the system for accommodating smaller aircraft.

Evan Barrett then discussed the FAA guidance for the range of alternatives that should be considered, followed by what this means specifically for Lake Elmo Airport in terms of the criteria used to identify reasonable alternatives and the five categories of concepts that will be considered.

Stephen Buckingham asked how many turboprop aircraft are currently based at the airport, and noted they are essentially a jet engine with a propeller. He also asked where they get fuel. Joe Harris and Neil Ralston answered there is one based at the airport, and Neil said it obtains fuel at either Anoka County or St. Paul Downtown airports.

Mary Vierling asked how many helicopters are based at Lake Elmo Airport. Joe Harris said there were two helicopters based at the Airport. A citizen observing the CEP meeting said there are several aircraft that fly low over Lake McDonald and expressed frustration about it.

John Renwick explained to the group that in addition to being on the CEP and a pilot at the airport, he wears several other hats. He's the Lake Elmo Airport volunteer for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) as well as a representative on the MAC Reliever Airports Advisory Council, which meets with the MAC Commissioners to discuss issues and concerns. He offered that he is happy to listen to the concerns of others in the community – not just the tenants – and to see if he can work with the airport tenants to resolve any issues at that level. John also noted that he's asked the MAC to provide on-airport signage on the airport's noise abatement policy and procedures.

Dave Schultz expressed frustration about citizen reports regarding aircraft operating loudly and early in the morning. He also noted the airport seems busier than ever in the last few months. He said there's a twin-engine plane that has flown very low – just above his treetops – and he has called Dana Nelson to report the issue.

A citizen observing the CEP meeting said pilots should adjust the pitch of the propeller to reduce noise.

Keith Bergmann asked why it was important to maintain the existing runway orientations. Evan Barrett answered that the airfield is currently laid out in a way that was most compatible with other airport infrastructure, and it would be more cost-effective to maintain those orientations. He also noted that maintaining the orientations would prevent significant changes to existing aircraft flight patterns near the airport. Neil Ralston also mentioned that the orientations provide optimal wind coverage. John Renwick suggested that the real goal in this respect is to try and use the land the MAC has most effectively. Evan and Neil confirmed that.

Evan Barrett then presented the No-Action Alternative and the five Primary Runway 14/32 Alternatives.

A citizen observing the CEP meeting then asked why it was necessary to have the airport here if there's an airport in New Richmond that serves bigger aircraft and questioned the sincerity of the MAC's public outreach efforts. Marlon Gunderson stated that these improvements have been in a master plan since the 1960s. Chad Leqve responded that the MAC is doing its best to find an optimal solution to the needed improvements at Lake Elmo Airport to make the airfield safer. He noted that if you look at the record of discussions on this project, one would see that MAC began with a plan for a 3,900-foot primary runway. When studying it in the recent Long-Term Comprehensive Planning (LTCP) process, the proposed length was reduced to 3,600 feet. After receiving public input as part of the LTCP, the proposed length was further reduced to 3,500 feet. The EA is now looking at an option with a displaced threshold to further consider input from the public. He stated it would be hard to argue that the MAC's efforts are insincere. However, he acknowledged that it's unlikely that everyone involved is going to be completely happy at the end of this process.

A citizen observing the CEP meeting voiced concerns about property values decreasing as a result of the airport improvements as he suspects larger aircraft will start using the airport.

John Renwick stated that he doesn't see that the runway improvements would change the character of the airport and the aircraft that use it.

Evan Barrett then presented the 30th Street North Realignment Alternatives.

Stephen Buckingham expressed safety concerns over the "hairpin curve" on 30th Street North and emergency vehicle response times.

Dave Schultz expressed frustration over the idea of another cul-de-sac in West Lakeland Township as he stated they are difficult to maintain and plow. A citizen observing the CEP meeting added that large trucks are difficult to maneuver around a cul-de-sac. Several people stated they did not like cul-de-sacs or roundabouts, and noted that the postmaster doesn't like cul-de-sacs, either.

Chad Leqve asked the CEP members if they had a preference on roundabouts versus T-intersections. The general reaction was that it's a toss-up, and both are bad options. Dave Schultz, Mary Vierling and several citizens observing the CEP meeting expressed that they didn't like either option.

There was discussion and concern over the proposed curve in the road. Neil Ralston pointed out that 30th Street North already has curves in it at other points in the road.

Mary Vierling pointed out that there's a grade difference and asked if the grades had been considered in the 30th Street North realignment alternatives. A citizen observing the CEP meeting stated that he believed the elevation change is 24 feet. Neil Ralston confirmed there is a grade difference, and asked Evan Barrett to be sure the project team looks at that when analyzing the alternatives.

Chad Leqve pointed out that the Mead & Hunt team, in developing the alternatives presented tonight, has been looking at the LTCP comments, travel times, and the safety of the roadway design and curves. He expressed concern that the primary issues and concerns identified in the LTCP process were now changing and he asked if MAC and Mead & Hunt were on the right path or trying to hit a moving target. When asked what the true issues and concerns are regarding the 30th Street North realignment, the group's consensus was travel time and safety of the roadway design. Chad again reiterated that MAC and Mead & Hunt may not be able to make everyone completely happy, but is doing its best to address the public's primary concerns. Dave Schultz confirmed that yes, we are on the right path, and said that of the three alternatives that were being carried forward (3, 4A and 4B), he would prefer 3 over 4A or 4B.

Neil Ralston asked if there was a benefit to continuous traffic (no stop sign) on 30th Street North as proposed by Alternatives 4A and 4B. Several members of the CEP and citizen observers answered no – that they prefer a stop because they see a stop as being safer.

Marlon Gunderson suggested the idea of Alternative 4B modified to include a through road on Neal Avenue instead of a cul-de-sac. Evan said that the project team would look into this possibility.

A citizen observing the CEP meeting asked about the FAA's RPZ versus MnDOT's Clear Zone. Evan Barrett answered that the MnDOT Clear Zone is larger for this particular runway, and that Alternatives 4A and 4B propose "clipping" the outer corners of the MnDOT Clear Zone. Neil Ralston added that MnDOT wants the airport to own the property in the clear zone, which the MAC does in the case of Lake Elmo Airport. The observer then questioned whether the RPZ and Clear Zone were hard rules or only guidelines. Neil responded that the FAA has a hard stance regarding roads in the RPZ.

Evan Barrett then presented the Crosswind Runway 04/22 & Instrument Approach Alternatives. In both cases, the supplemental planning analysis did not identify any additional alternatives for these categories, so the preferred alternative from the LTCP would be carried forward for each of these. Evan then recapped the alternatives to be carried forward into the Environmental Assessment, and gave a

brief overview of the alternatives evaluation criteria that would be used to determine a preferred alternative for Runway 14/32 and the 30th Street North realignment.

The meeting was then opened to the CEP for general discussion and questions.

A citizen observing the CEP meeting asked if a date had been set yet for the next public event. Evan Barrett answered no, not yet, and stated the meeting will be publicized on the project website and through public notices in the local papers at least three weeks prior to the event.

Dave Schultz asked if he heard correctly, that by the next public event, the project team would have the runway and roadway alternatives whittled down to one with which to move forward? Evan Barrett answered, yes, we would have a preferred alternative for each of those by the next public event, and would be presenting those at that event.

Marlon Gunderson shared his perspective as a pilot, saying that in regards to the proposed runway length, "we're talking about the difference between a ridiculously short runway versus just a short runway." He noted the noise impacts on the runway end will be moved south a little bit due to the shift in the traffic pattern.

Keith Bergmann noted that it's clear the MAC is attempting to mitigate and accommodate noise concerns with the displaced threshold option.

John Renwick explained to the group what a displaced threshold is and noted it seemed like a good idea to him.

Dave Schultz asked Marlon Gunderson what kind of airplane he flies. Marlon answered a ¾-scale Piper Cub and another self-built aircraft. He stated he can only fly this airplane by himself out of this airport.

Dave Schultz stated that the runway flight path is over agricultural land now, but when the runway is shifted, it will be over homes. He then pointed out where there's a home in the flight path.

Mary Vierling commented that Neal Avenue is a narrower road than 30th Street North.

Dave Schultz noted that the township had recently had a traffic study done on Neal Avenue and 30th Street North, and found that there were over 1,500 cars a day on 30th Street North and over 100 cars per hour at rush hour.

Evan Barrett concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their time and input, encouraged attendance at the next public event, and said there would be further discussion on alternatives at the public event and next CEP meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.