Notes from Airport Commission Planning Session
Held 30 September 2022
Danville Dental Associates Conference Room, 770 Piney Forest Rd., Danville, VA 24540

City Representatives:	Marc Adelman, Todd Pinekenstein, Alan Spencer, Earl Reynolds
Commission Members:	Sid Allgood, Jessie Barksdale, Stephen Daniel, Michael Duncan, Phil Hall, Bob Jiranek, Fred Shanks
Other:	Telly Tucker, President IALR

The group gathered at 1130 for a lunch and informal conversation. Nothing of significance to the airport was discussed as the impact of Hurricane Ian dominated the discussion. Sid is leaving this meeting and making a God's Pit Crew run down to the Fort Meyer, FL area.

Phil began the meeting at 12:00 with the call to order and roll call. The only absence from the Commission was Mr. Jackson, who was not expected to attend due to a work conflict. All other members were present. The agenda, incorporated herein by reference, was opened for discussion and three items were added. First, Mr. Hall asked for a discussion from Mr. Tucker on the role of the IALR and its responsibilities; second, Mr. Duncan offered that we add "and taxiways" long-range discussion topic on "identifying needs…runway;" and finally, a discussion on food service at the airport at some point during our meeting. The motion to amend the agenda was offered by Sid and seconded by Bob; all approved.

Phil asked for communications from visitors or airport commissioners regarding items not on the agenda. Being none; he moved onto the new business section and asked Mr. Tucker to share information about the Institute and discuss how it may play a role in the life of the airport. Telly mentioned that IALR was an outsider to the airport but also an impactor and a neighbor. The Institute is more than willing to help growth experiences in any meaningful way its neighbors (which include the Airport) feel may be beneficial.

Telly shared with us the five core activities of IALR that support its mission to have an "impact on the regional economy." He offered to share the executive summary of the IALR's strategic plan and, at least two members, asked him to do so. One key thing to understand is that IALR serves eight localities from Mecklenburg to Patrick County (including Franklin County) and the cities of Martinsville and Danville. Those core activities were:

1. Economic Development – Linda Green collaborates closely with Corrie Bobe – City Econ Dev Director, and Matt Rowe – Pittsylvania County's Econ Dev Director. The SVRA economic development focus covers those localities – except for Martinsville/Henry County, who opted not to participate in the SVRA.
2. Applied Research – including very sophisticated testing and applied research efforts that have local and national implications. He cited Aerofarms and that industry's interest and having a regional conference at IALR in the near future.

3. Advanced Learning – which includes GOTEC, the Piedmont Governor's School, etc. The former has become an international model (the nation of India is interested, too) building on the GOVA proposal that IALR and its partners implemented to expand the visibility of possible career opportunities for students via hands-on experiences. He also mentioned the just completed Career Fair (restarted after missing two years because of the pandemic) has become a model for much of the Commonwealth.
4. ICC (Conference Center) – an offering for space and support to conferences and commercial activities needing space for conferences, seminars, etc. He noted that the lack of an on-site hotel makes multi-day conference hosting difficult. It is a subject that continues to be revisited. He is hopeful that the casino will add to the demand for conferences and perhaps help drive enough demand to justify the hotel plan.
5. Advanced Manufacturing Division – which has grown dramatically with the addition of the Accelerated Training Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) model. A public announcement concerning this important program is forthcoming. Bob asked about competitive wages and incentives for participation. Telly provided details on the program its structure allowing participants to get the training the need, have housing, and come away with basic certifications and likely job offers with only the need to feed themselves (Michael's oversimplification of Telly's response). Marc asked about the USG's long-term commitment to the program; Telly said there is none but the practical application of successful program leads to more engagement as has been seen to date.

A discussion around IALR's ability to support airport-centric programs – specifically the aircraft maintenance technician training program – and Telly responded that he is aware that Drs. Franks and Wallace are working on the issue though he is not yet involved. Telly offered that Todd Yeatts is coming on board and he is a former Boeing executive. He will likely be our point person. He starts this month.

Bob asked about a longer runway – in a tongue and cheek way – to make sure that Telly knew about the issue. That led to a conversation about collecting an economic impact analysis on the anticipated/in-the-works improvements at KDAN. The consensus was that this was an important step both from a short-term and long-term perspective. The issue of how we use the South Ramp: do we open it up for commercial development or do we husband the resource until the A&P technician program can be launched?

Fred mentioned the commercial airline service topic; citing activity in Williamsburg. Tourism led to that service being offered. Discussion ensued and we recognized that very often the airlines will require a minimum guarantee of revenue seats to support a service offering in the beginning. Something to ponder…

Earl suggested that pursue the launch of a planning program – including all the stakeholders in gathering data and input – to begin with where we are and layer on where we want to or should go. He noted that we would likely get more items on our radar and on the radar of community leaders through that process.

Telly departed the meeting with everyone's thanks and a short break was held.

Alan offered a PowerPoint presentation (incorporated by reference) on the duties and responsibilities of the Airport Commission. Bob, noting he was not "an authority" on the rules he wanted to know about our ability to "lobby" on behalf of the Airport. Phil suggested that we engage in a different approach rather than outright lobbying when it comes to Council and the City Manager. Bob said that "we are a team" and Phil noted that we are also individuals (citizens) but there is need to be consistent on the message we are sending as a Commission. Bob mentioned Fred's extensive contacts and the concerns he hears from ordinary citizens about the airport. Phil noted that some of our recommendations do not get incorporated into Council decisions. Marc suggested that we reach out to Ken (Larking, City Manager) and this was encouraged by Phil. Sid asked if this approach allowed for a "broader" liaison effort; a discussion ensued concerning a subcommittee be formed to "contact" leadership. Marc mentioned that he reviews everything with the City Manager.

The fuel farm was the next topic. The Airport's AE firm is poised to bid the 20,000-gallon tank at the fuel farm. This additional capital investment would require a renegotiation of the FBO lease and the incorporation of minimum payments from the FBO to the City should fuel flow fee not cover the amortized payment. Funding of $500,000 of the $700,000 expected cost would come from the Bond fund allowed under this FY budget. The City Finance Director requires a decision from the FBO by 10/31/2022. At present Averett has not responded to the City's request to confirm the need for the funds. Should the FBO decide against or to delay the purchase, the project will not go forward under this FY budget. **[As of 10/5/22 the FBO decided to wait a year.]** AU appears to want to wait until the casino opens to gauge the need for the additional tank. Recent experience with jet fuel volume during a peak VIR weekend led to two loads being delivered over the course of the weekend which allowed everything to work out as expected. A key item will be the term of the lease as the City will want to collect the capitalized cost during the term so that term length could be measured in decades if the City were to agree. Fred asked for a copy of the original lease; Michael will go through his records and provide. Sid asked about an emergency back-up pump for the farm. There is not one. The City maintains some parts and has thus farm been able to keep the pumps up and running. Michael confirmed with the Commission that a self-service fuel facility was no longer under consideration. When asked why he was concerned, he reiterated that the impact on the existing ramp layout was quite consequential and the cost to install would be extraordinary. Michael was assured that this topic was no longer being actively considered.

T and Box hangars were the next short-term topic. Three Box are on the plans for taxiway H and are for storage only and must have the public-use requirement met (i.e., not built for one private client). Current only the first box hangar is being planned for the newly created pad on taxiway H. A brief explanation on the different types of hangars was held and Marc noted the space limitations on hangars that exists as defined in the Airport Master Plan. The discussion moved to the use of the South Ramp and hangar utilization at that site.

The South Ramp rubblization Phase 1 begins in NOV 22 and is expected to run until APR 23. This phase is funded and will fix & pave access to the ramp and rubblize the existing pad. Phase 2, which is not funded, is targeted to begin AUG 23 and be complete Spring 2024 will be to pave the South Ramp. The concern for use is how do we plan to use the South Ramp. At present there does not exist road access (currently it is a blue stone path) from the south gate to the ramp. Dept of Public Works is to develop a cost estimate for this work and it is necessary for the ramp to be ready-to-go for use and further development when the paving is complete. The consensus was that we should have a subcommittee to evaluate uses, end task(s), and develop the overall plan for the South Ramp. Sid asked about ground leases and Marc indicated that there is historical use of that tool to support development. A comment was made about "zoning" uses of the airport and the Master Plan is the document under which that concept falls.

This conversation migrated into a discussion about the Master Plan process, typically something that is done every ten years (unless the FAA dictates otherwise). Our window is coming up in 2025. Since an operational analysis is a key supporting document, we want to insure we have one to two years of casino related traffic to report. With the casino planning temporary operations before its full-blown completion in Winter 2024/2025, we should be able to capture some of that data in time. Marc explained that the Master Plan is a two-part document – the narrative and the Airport Layout Plan (the map we always refer to).

The topic of communications within the broader community and with City Council was the next topic. The consensus was we needed to be careful here; Phil was going to reach out to Ken Larking, City Manager and get his guidance on our interactions – on behalf of the airport – with members of Council and the broader regional community.

The next segment was Short-Term Concerns: First was the roof of the main terminal. The FAA equipment on the roof must remain and therefore the cost of a new roof is prohibitive. The plan is to resurface and the estimated cost is $400,000, subject to an 80/20 match requirement; that 20% must come from the City and the 80% from the State. We may have to push to next August (not recommended) or see if we can tap surplus funds from the 13/31 repaving contract to get the work done as soon as possible.

We need to do some parking lot maintenance and crack & seal on the Terminal Ramp.

A discussion around Marc's 12/31/2025 retirement was next. We are blessed to have his and Lisa's expertise but we recognize that neither will be here forever. How to influence the hiring process for (their) replacements was the question of the moment. The City Manager is the decider and we think a restructuring of the department by splitting Transportation from the Airport will make it more likely that we can find the right skill sets to meet the Airport's future needs. Ongoing discussion with city leadership should continue as we move closer to Marc's retirement.

Long-Term needs: The idea of food service at the terminal generated some discussion – settling on the FBO may consider a food cart rather than a café, etc. The idea of a Food Truck paddock was floated. The east side of the field generated some animated discussion. Access to closed 24, road access from Mountain Hill Road, egress from US58, and impact on the clearance requirement for 13/31 all pointed to the work that we will need to do as part of the Master Plan update. There is also the fact that we do not own certain parcels of property that would be impacted by any plan we devise.

The next segment was Bob's favorite: lengthening the runway. Much of this topic has been addressed and the topic continues to be one of interest but must be supported by the operational analysis. There is also a need to expand the width of Taxiway A. Larger jet craft can land and make the turn off the runway but the wheelbase of these jets exceeds the width of the taxiway making access to the ramp, impractical. Also the weight bearing load on the north end of 2/20 is only 66,000 lbs. versus the 130,000 lbs. at the other end. This dichotomy creates another limit on who can use our airfield. The recent C130 visitor had to be provided a waiver to come in.

There is concern that the perception of the traffic utilizing KDAN is not properly understood. Our General Aviation designation includes more that light aircraft and very small jets. The "heavier-iron" traffic utilization by VIR, the casino, and those who would use the mega-park should drive our thinking and planning.

We talked about the Tower's advisory services, touching on a previous session commentary by Gene about IFR operations and the impact timing for release for (heavier) traffic in IMC (instrument meteorological conditions). There is also interest in learning about the lack of an open sightline from the Tower to east end of 13/31. The Tower's hours of operation were discussed; considering 16 hours/day instead of the current 12. Staffing is an issue at the moment and the cost of extra staff (including benefit costs because the number of hours each will work moves most to full-time status) are considerations.

The concern about potential obstructions related to the tree lines on 31. Sid is to follow up with Marc, who has queried Brian (airport engineering firm rep) about the funding and regulatory issues around clearing out any obstructing growth. Someone mentioned reaching into other areas of the field but cost considerations quickly tapped down that thread of the conversation.

Lastly, the two old hangars on the terminal apron – AU's dual hangar and CAP's box hangar are very dated – and should be considered for removal and installation of more up-to-date facilities capable of supporting the growth we want to see. Where to move these important tenants and the costs associated with the effort requires thoughtful consideration and will be incorporated into our Master Plan process.

Meeting concluded about 4:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Duncan, Member