

Meeting Notes

Reynolds, Smith and Hills, Inc.

Date of Meeting: September 29, 2004

Location: City Hall, Council Chamber St. Marys, Georgia

Subject: Community Advisory Committee Meeting

In Attendance

- Deborah Hase – Mayor, St. Marys
- Bill Shanahan, City Manager, St. Marys
- Mark McAnaw – Woodbine City Council
- Sandra Rayson – Woodbine, City Administrator
- W. Burford Clark – Woodbine, Mayor
- Jeff Stanford – St. Marys Aviation
- Walt Yourstone – Camden Partnership
- Mike McKinnon – CO, Kings Bay Naval Base
- Cecily Hill – State Representative (District 180)
- Bob Noble – Executive Director (Joint Development Authority)
- Bill Sandifer, RS&H
- Russ Owen – RS&H

The following is a summary of the meeting that took place with the Community Advisory Committee for the Airport Feasibility & Site Selection Study being prepared by RS&H for the City of St. Mary's. The primary purpose of the meeting was to introduce to the Committee its role, the goals and objectives of the Study, and to openly discuss the procedure, schedule and issues pertaining to completion of the Study.

The meeting began with a brief introduction of the project team, which is being lead by Reynolds, Smith & Hills, Inc. The role of this committee is to provide guidance to the consultant team as it pertains to the political issues, public support, and implementation of the final product of the Study. Project goals include the development of a replacement airport facility that will meet the long-term system needs for an aviation facility in Camden County. The overall project, which includes completion of this Study, formal planning and environmental clearance of a selected airport site, land acquisition, design, construction and commissioning of the new airport will take approximately 3 to 5 years. There was discussion concerning funding mechanisms and the specific level of financial participation required by the FAA, State and Local sponsor to complete the project.

The Committee discussed whether or not the new airport should be a regional or local facility. The Georgia Aviation System Plan defines the airport as a Level 2 facility, which is more local than regional in nature. Mr. Sandifer discussed the need to be extremely forward thinking and looking for this project, to ensure a site was selected that would be

compatible with the surrounding community, and position the airport to take on a more regional role in the future. The Committee discussed the need to involve the surrounding counties, and it was pointed out that the surrounding counties (Brantley and Charlton) have expressed their support for the construction of a new airport, but everyone was uncertain exactly the type of support the surrounding counties would be willing to give. The discussion then focused on the role and powers of the Joint Development Authority (JDA) and again whether the JDA is a potential candidate to own and operate the new facility.

Mr. Sandifer distributed to the Committee various handout materials pertaining to the benefits of general aviation airports to the local community, and their potential economic impact. The Committee discussed the role the St. Marys airport plays in the Georgia Aviation System Plan, and its potential future role. There was general discussion among the Committee concerning the types of facilities a replacement airport must provide, and whom the best entity will be to own and operate the new airport. Many on the Committee believed that the JDA should be considered as an entity to own and operate the airport.

The next discussion focused on the airspace. Mr. Sandifer and Mr. McKinnon discussed the size of the Prohibited airspace that the Navy and FAA would agree to. Mr. McKinnon stated that he believes that the airspace restriction will stay the same. Mr. Sandifer said that RS&H will take a conservative approach and take a 5-mile-ring as a baseline for evaluating new locations to ensure all operations remain outside current, and any future, prohibitive airspace.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion concerning ground access corridors (Widening of 40, Harriet's Bluff Rd, Colerain Rd), disaster evacuation routes, rail access and other recommendations for the current airport. Mr. Sandifer showed some of the Exhibits and pointed out the floodplains, wetlands and some areas that were being considered.

Mayor Clark suggested that a good item to put on the next sales tax referendum would be the local costs of developing the new airport. Other items that were discussed include potential proximity to water and sewer, access and re-development of the old airport. Some suggestions of re-development were Business Park, Recreation, the possibility of the Navy using the land.

The Committee also discussed overall funding of the project. Mayor Hase asked when would St. Marys know that they will receive \$12 million to complete the entire project. Mr. Sandifer explained that Representative Kingston had been successful in ensuring some language was inserted in the U.S. House appropriations bill, which directs FAA to give priority consideration for the use of discretionary funding on the project. However, the bill has not been enacted by Congress, nor signed by the President. After completion of this Study, formal master planning and environmental clearance of the site would be the next step, and that would occur next year, to begin in approximately May or June, which is when we anticipate FAA will be releasing federal funds for 2005. The large amount of money needed for the project, which is the land acquisition, design and construction phase, would not be needed for at least 1 to 2 more years while the remaining planning and environmental work was completed.

The updated project schedule was discussed, and the following dates were agreed to among the Committee for the next two meetings. November 17 for the second meeting

and January 5 for the third and final meeting. RS&H will supply the committee members with working papers of the Study a week before the meeting.

Mr. Sandifer thanked everyone for meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Meeting Notes by Owen