

Meeting Notes

Date of Meeting: September 29, 2004

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

Subject: Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

In Attendance Deborah Hase – Mayor, St. Marys
Bobby Marr – St. Marys
Bill Shanahan – St. Marys
Paul Smith – Planning Director, CGRDC
Jeff Stanford – St. Marys Aviation
Lee Spell – Kingsland, Deputy Manager
Matt LeCerf – Kingsland, Zoning, GIS Director
Len Scullion – CH2M Hill, Vice President
Bill Sandifer, RS&H
Russ Owen – RS&H

The following is a summary of the meeting that took place with the members of the Technical Advisory Committee for the Airport Feasibility & Site Selection Study for the City of St. Marys. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the technical aspects of the project, the procedure, schedule and process of how Reynolds, Smith and Hills is conducting this study.

The meeting began with a brief introduction of consultant team members. The role of this committee is to lend technical support/expertise for completion of the Study and selection of the best site for a replacement airport. This committee will also help the RS&H team develop screening criteria to be used in the site selection process. The overall completion of the project, from site selection to opening of the new facility, is approximately 3 to 5 years. It was discussed that the website for the City now has a link on the homepage, to take you to a project site which will contain various information available to the public concerning the project such as meeting minutes, presentations, graphics boards, pictures, agenda's, and other various project documents.

Mr. Sandifer gave a brief history of the airport and its origins. The original ownership of the airport was discussed. Mr. Sandifer believed that the airport was originally owned by the federal government, developed for military purpose during World War II, then transferred to the City. Mr. Stanford believes that the airport was always owned by the city and only leased to the federal government. Mr. Stanford supplied RS&H with the documentation of the leases to the federal government by the city. The ownership was discussed further, specifically as it relates to the use of the proceeds from the sale of the property in the event a replacement airport is built and the existing facility closed.

The Committee discussed the airspace constraints on the existing airport and the need to ensure that no future airspace constraints would be present at the site of the replacement airport. The goal of the feasibility report will be to identify and document existing conditions, future facility requirements, future population centers, market areas, and the financial feasibility of the facility. It was pointed out many times that the site for this airport needs to be thinking in future terms (25 years down the road), with adequate roadway access, potential rail access, available adjacent land for commercial and industrial purposes, and available land for airfield infrastructure expansion as aviation in the community grows. The Community is growing rapidly, and outpacing the average growth experienced by the State.

Financially, an overriding goal of FAA is to ensure, to the extent possible, that each airport is self-sustaining. For small general aviation airports this is extremely difficult without some support from local government. Therefore, sufficient land must be available for revenue generation. The Committee discussed the overall funding for the project and the required participation (and levels) by FAA, GODT and the local sponsor.

Mr. Sandifer explained the Georgia Aviation System Plan (GASP) and the current role of the airport as well as the future role of the airport. The Committee discussed the options for governance of the new airport.

Mr. Sandifer handed out information pertaining to the future of the national air transportation system and asked the committee members to read through the report for an interesting perspective on where aviation is headed in the next 20 years. Mr. Sandifer then gave a broad overview of the screening process for the initial sites (which needs to be narrowed to 3 for further analysis). These exhibits included a depiction of floodplains, wetlands, historical/archaeological sites, and the airspace constraints around the Naval Base, and there was a general discussion of potential feasible sites.

The Committee discussed the necessary land for the new airport. Mr. Sandier pointed out that in the current Georgia Aviation System Plan, 300 acres has been identified for acquisition. Mr. Sandifer explained that this was probably based on a single runway configuration and that this will be validated with development of wind rose information using Brunswick and Jacksonville as the closest reporting stations. Mr. Sandifer also pointed out that no matter where the site is located, it is very unlikely that no environmental impacts will be encountered.

Mr. Smith wanted to know what type of plan does the city have to redevelop the airport? Mayor Hase and Mr. Smith concluded that they need to have a meeting about future use of the airport.

Mr. Sandifer discussed the market area as being General Aviation, Business Jets, and a Level II facility will be most likely to accommodate these aircraft. Furthermore, future development and growth of the airport will definitely be market driven. Most users will be either corporate pilots, general aviation pilots or the NAVY. Mr. Scullion once again stated, that the committee needs to think about what the airport will look like in 2025.

A discussion was started as to what types of screening criteria will be considered the most important for selecting a new site. These criteria can be both subjective and objective. The first screening criteria was land (available). Mayor Hase stated that the

primary reason that the City is willing to study the relocation of the airport is to show the Navy that the City is seeking to the best of its ability to accommodate them regarding this matter, in the interest of national security. The secondary reason is for an economic boom. In regards to other criteria, rail access was discussed, as well as a potential Sea Plane Base (which was ruled out by the Committee). Mr. Scullion believes that the airport must be compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and believes that the airport must be military compatible, meaning fully compatible with the Kings Bay military mission and not constitute an encroachment or security risk. Revisions to the Camden County Comprehensive Plan will be starting in the next year, with a completion date of 2007. The Committee discussed the importance of the airport's proximity to existing transportation infrastructure. It was noted that the Rail line, which formerly ran north/south through the County, now terminates just north of Kingsland.

Development of Regional Impact (DRI's) rules were discussed and Mr. Smith said that land-use planning is critical in regards to DRI approval.

There was a discussion of how the financial funds work. It was explained that the FAA will provide 95% of costs, GDOT will provide 2.5% of costs and there will be a 2.5% local share that will need to be provided. Finally, it was noted that Cost will be the most important criteria that the City Council will consider.

The updated project schedule was discussed, and the following dates were supplied 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 a week before the meeting.

Mr. Sandifer thanked everyone for meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Meeting Notes by Owen