



**TACOMA NARROWS AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**July 14, 2020**

A meeting of the Pierce County Tacoma Narrows Airport Advisory Commission (TNAAC) was held on Tuesday, July 14, 2020 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in a virtual TEAMS meeting format.

**I. Call to Order & Welcome**

Chair Kurt Grimmer called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

<b>TNAAC VOTING MEMBERS</b>	
<b>Present:</b>	Kurt Grimmer, Chair Tim Toerber, Vice Chair Larry Fickel Bob Felker – joined after roll call Brad Pattison – joined after roll call
<b>Excused:</b>	Brian Durham, Wiley Moore, Edward Lewis, Garth Jackson
<b>TNAAC NON-VOTING MEMBERS</b>	
<b>Present:</b>	Rod Propst, Pierce County Airport Manager; Katrina Knutson for Mayor Kuhn
<b>Excused:</b>	Derek Young, Council District 7; Kit Kuhn, Gig Harbor Mayor
<b>PIERCE COUNTY STAFF</b>	
<b>Present:</b>	Rod Propst, Airport Manager/Asst. Administrator Cindy Willis, Office Assistant
<b>VISITORS</b>	
<b>Present:</b>	Approximately 17 members of the public joined the TEAMS meeting.

- **Reports**
  - **O&M Report – Rod Propst**  
 Peninsula School District high schools had graduation parades at the airport. A few County employees volunteered, and Tacoma Narrows Aviation allowed them to cross in front of their hangars; everyone was pleased with the event. Justin has been mowing grass for the past two weeks; we’ll send the big mower back to Thun Field next week. We’re working with the road division to crack-seal the taxiway; the runway will be repainted to comply with FAA regulations. We’re working to get extra hires for the airports; the Parks employees served us well and we were sorry to see them go.
  - **Wings & Wheels – Doug Fratoni** was not in attendance. Rod said they signed an amendment to the contract for dates in September; it may be a challenge for the event to occur if we’re not in Phase 4.

- Tower Report – David Langford, tower manager, was not in attendance. Rod said Dave gave him input. He said the operations count is up a little; there’s been a lot of increase in jet traffic from NetJets and charters. He reminded pilots to read back instructions. The RSAT meeting will be Sept. 16—if not in person, we’ll do it virtually. There are no tower tours until further notice.
- Commission Reports - none
- Council Report – CM Dave Morell said he is glad to listen in this evening; he’s impressed with what’s being done at both airports; kudos to the team.
- **Old Business**
  - RAZ Update/Columbia Helicopter Memorial – Tim Toerber said work on the RAZ has also been delayed by COVID; we wanted Rosedale Gardens to install astroturf; they’re working through a backlog and it will probably be October before they can install it. We have aviation-themed signage to show where the airport is and provide educational materials to inspire kids about career pathways. The Great Peninsula Conservancy is acquiring Soundbuilt Homes property adjacent to the airport to ensure land use compatibility and to extend PenMet Parks’ system. Kurt said it’ll be a nice addition to open space and parkland in the Gig Harbor area and will eventually connect with the Cushman Trail.

Brad Pattison and Bob Felker joined the meeting.

## II. Approval of Prior Meeting Summaries

- Meeting Summary – January 14, 2020

Motion (Fickel/Pattison) passed unanimously to approve the meeting summary as written.

## • Back to Old Business

- Landscaping Project – Rod said the RAZ is getting lots of use. He reviewed the landscaping project; it calls for spending \$47,000 on landscaping for the parking lot area. We need more money for our airfields before we spend that on landscaping. We have an offer to haul away debris and Justin can get grass seed to improve the look of the airport frontage. Our parallel taxiway needs crack-sealing and the runway needs painting. Bob Felker agreed.

## III. New Business

- Hangar Inspections – Rod said once we’re in Phase 3, we’ll start inspections; it’s a process; we’re not going to make everyone compliant immediately, but we will look at the primary function of each hangar which is to be aircraft storage. He will be the one to determine if a hangar is compliant. He gave examples of what will and won’t pass muster. We’ll go through each hangar using the FAA guide.

Brad Pattison asked for more detail about a hangar being primarily aviation use or can it have some non-aviation. Rod said a hangar is primarily for storage of aircraft. Brad said the FAA rules have liberalized allowing some non-aviation use if it didn’t impede aviation use and the hangar has primarily aviation purpose. Brad asked about businesses operating in hangars; they’re supposed to be approved by the County and

meet health standards. Rod said this question has plagued airport managers. Pierce County Code and our Airport Rules & Regulations say those people must have an operating agreement with the County. No such agreement exists so he's creating a form. There are several mobile mechanics that need to comply. Brad doesn't want to make it difficult because their services are vital, but it would be nice if the playing ground were level; FBOs shouldn't be penalized for following all the rules when others don't. Rod said the County needs to be protected with insurance and it's hard to find insurance for mobile mechanics because they have no place of business. Brad hopes we can find a path for those services to be compliant.

- Commercial Operating Agreements – Rod said we were just talking about this issue of mobile mechanics and other businesses operating on the airport. He will bring a draft document to the next meeting.
- Safe Driving on the Airport – Rod provided a handout and shared it on Teams. A general aviation ramp is not a street where cars should go 20-30 mph. Recently, he saw a motorhome and a glider going down the ramp. Brad Pattison confessed that he was the one with his motorhome and glider; he did stop at PAVCO to let an airplane pass. Rod said the problem is north-south traffic—use 26<sup>th</sup>. Access your hangar or tie-down from the closest gate; stop this unsafe practice just because it's more convenient. It's an unbelievably unsafe situation. Brad Pattison said he can't use the south gate—the grade is too steep. Rod said there are always exceptions; just remember it's not a public access road. Tim Toerber said there are scars in the asphalt at the south gate due to the incline; maybe the grade could be adjusted or give allowances for vehicles that can't make it. Rod said he wants to stop the 35 mph speeds without looking for cross-traffic and airplanes; it's got to stop. Rod said he will amend the Airport Rules & Regulations with this language and take it to the Council for approval. He wanted to show the TNAAC and public a draft before it's part of the rules.

Larry Bielstein was concerned about exiting the north gate and the curve to the left on 26<sup>th</sup>; cars come speeding around that curve. A couple days ago, a BMW came around the curve and was going faster than 35 mph. Can the County put up signs that driveways are on the right and reduce the speed limit? Someone will get hit. Bob Felker said a young man died in an auto accident there; Larry said he was coming the opposite direction and going faster than the speed limit. Rod will ask the County Traffic Engineer to enhance the safety of the north gate/curve area.

Mike Pickett, PAVCO, said vehicles are always coming through his ramp area. His fuel hose was run over by a vehicle, and they don't give way to planes. No airport in the country would allow that. Somebody's going to get hurt. People travel all the way on the ramp instead of using the road—it's dangerous and they don't care. Rod said this language will give him the ability to track them down and restrict their access to the airport; it's unsafe and needs to be fixed. Mike is right; people come screaming through and there's going to be an accident.

Kurt asked for Rod to send updates to the TNAAC. Rod will also send these amendments to our County attorney for review. This would be sin of omission if we don't do something.

Brad Pattison supports what Rod is doing; maybe we need standards for any vehicle moving on the ramp—maybe two-way radio for clearance or a rotating beacon. The ramp is considered a non-movement area, so the tower has no authority. Rod said the tower chief would not appreciate being a vehicle monitor. It's a matter of education and enforcing rules on the ramp.

- PowerPoint Presentation of the Landside Study – Rod shared his slides. There's another meeting of this committee on Thursday. This is just a Master Plan for the landside of the airport. We've asked participants to advise us; we have more turbo jets than before. We're considering three areas: the north, southeast, and west sides—there is no infrastructure on the west side. We'll submit a new ALP to the FAA by year's end. The FAA has told us that it won't sign the ALP with a grass strip, and we have no money to bring a turf runway up to compliance.
- Presentation on Electric Aviation in Washington State - Tim Toerber presented a PowerPoint and shared things he's learning at SeaTac Airport. Urban Air Mobility (UAM) is a new emerging industry; we need to adapt and innovate and shift business models to remain viable. Envision our airport 5-15 years from now; with an increased awareness of UAM and electrification of existing aircraft, how could this fit within what we do at TIW? It's a national priority to invest in learning about UAM or Advanced Air Mobility (AAM). A North Carolina hospital delivers blood across its campus with drones. Helicopter ride service in NYC is not just a luxury transport, but it delivers organs for transplant and has driven down the cost. Uber Eats is pilot program using drones for McDonald's delivery to a courier vehicle that finishes the last mile delivery. Tim read some headlines from the news about companies investing in this industry. Aircraft could take off and land vertically. FedEx currently caravans between SeaTac and local cities; they fly for only 45 minutes, then load packages. That's ideal for electric aircraft which can charge when they're on the ground. The Port of Seattle is reducing its carbon footprint. FedEx pays \$50,000 in landing fees; those could be waived for electric aircraft. The Port of Seattle has a project scheduled next summer to install conduit underground for charging stations; substations have 75% capacity to accommodate electric charging. However, this doesn't work well with only one airport—we need a regional look. WSDOT Aviation is looking at and studying electric aircraft. As we build a business case, pre-COVID we ran 1500-1600/day with most flights within a hundred miles. That's almost 6000 seats/day within 110 nautical miles. Aircraft could reduce 50-60% of their operating costs. Airport benefits include reducing noise and emissions. TIW to SeaTac takes 7 minutes wheels up to wheels down. We've looked at how to utilize our aging infrastructure at SeaTac (8 acres of parking garage). There will be less need for parking. A new landing pad to bring in passengers is one idea; there are not enough runway slots for the demand, so that would provide relief. Cascadia Electric Aviation flies between Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland with 30 minutes' travel time between cities. An electric aircraft is quiet, and we'll eventually take the pilot out of the aircraft. There will be some noise, and social acceptance is driven by how aircraft are perceived. The federal regulatory process takes time. Battery technology and carbon cost analysis must be a win/win. How can we broaden our vision for activity at TIW?

Larry Fickel said he was blown away by the technology and where it's going. Great presentation; thanks for the enlightenment.

Jay PerryCook said he's a 135 operator around Puget Sound; his experience is that most costs are from insurance; who will insure this? Tim said there are several financiers because with new manufacturing, they will be significantly safer than aircraft today. Insurance would be no more and perhaps less than traditional aircraft. Operations costs are labor and fuel; if you can reduce that for power, that's a significant decrease from Jet A. Tim said if you can train without fuel costs, filling the pilot shortage would provide relief. Jay asked about airspace considerations. Tim said as new technology becomes prevalent in the cockpit, air traffic control becomes more passive using digital communication. Other users can see where a vehicle is during flight. Cooperative traffic management comes through community-based rules for noise sensitive areas. The community will have a voice when establishing airspace requirements.

Curt Scott asked which are the most critical obstructions to development. Tim said the most critical is the federal regulatory process. The FAA has been supportive of this; NASA is teaming with private industry. He's surprised at how well it's coming together. Next is social acceptance. This area has lots of aircraft movement unlike other parts of the country. How willing are people going to be to hop into an electric aircraft and fly to Paine Field with 19 knot winds?

CM Dave Morell said Pierce County is launching its own study of aviation at our airports in the next couple months and will spend the next year diving deep. We're excited about the future of aviation and more electric aircraft with pilot training. There are accelerated certification processes occurring.

- **Visitors and Petitions**

(Public comments are limited to 3 minutes per person on non-agenda items.)

1. Jay PerryCook said since there will be no grass landing, has anyone thought about creating a designated camping area for traveling pilots. Rod said it's a tough sell with the FAA, but it does happen. Tim asked what areas he'd propose. Jay is not familiar with where that could happen—maybe on the north end by the broken-down airplanes. We'd just need a couple spots. Warren Hendrickson said Orcas Island has camping. Bremerton did it temporarily for a fly-in and we consider it from time to time. There's not much demand for it.
2. Curt Scott asked what official entity in Pierce County is working on DART (Downed Aircraft Recovery Team). He'd like to get that going. Warren Hendrickson said Kitsap County has been looking at it, but there's been no traction in Pierce County for a lead on DART. That's the next logical place. Curt would like to volunteer time on it and wants aviation emergency readiness for Pierce County. Rod said to call him at TIW; he'll figure out who is the right contact.
3. Keith Lemmon echoed the sentiment about how refreshing it is to see activity with TNAAC considering the COVID restrictions. He thanked the community for his increase in business as an aviation medical examiner. Alaska and Horizon pilots have come in for exams; his business will bring airline and commercial pilots to TIW. Thanks for your patronage.

Kurt thanked everyone for their participation and Tim, Rod, and Cindy for their efforts in setting up the meeting.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.