

**TACOMA NARROWS AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**October 13, 2020**

A meeting of the Pierce County Tacoma Narrows Airport Advisory Commission (TNAAC) was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom.

- **Call to Order & Welcome**  
Chair Kurt Grimmer called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

TNAAC VOTING MEMBERS	
<b>Present:</b>	Kurt Grimmer, Chair Tim Toerber, Vice Chair Larry Fickel Wiley Moore Garth Jackson Edward Lewis Bob Felker – joined after roll call Brad Pattison – joined after roll call
<b>Excused:</b>	Brian Durham
TNAAC NON-VOTING MEMBERS	
<b>Present:</b>	Rod Propst, Pierce County Airport Manager; Tracie Markley, Gig Harbor Councilmember
<b>Excused:</b>	Derek Young, Council District 7
PIERCE COUNTY STAFF	
<b>Present:</b>	Rod Propst, Airport Manager/Asst. Administrator Cindy Willis, Office Assistant
VISITORS	
<b>Present:</b>	Approximately 25 members of the public joined the Zoom meeting.

- **Approval of Prior Meeting Summaries**
  - Meeting Summary – July 14, 2020  
Motion (Fickel/Toerber) passed unanimously to approve the meeting summary as written.
- **New Business**
  - **Economic Development/Supporting Local Businesses** – Betty Capestany, Director of Pierce County Economic Development, said we’re doing things totally different now due to COVID. We’ve received over \$30 million in CARES Act funding for businesses; forgivable loans are available; make sure you apply. The Gig Harbor community has received around 16% of the business loan funds. Businesses on the airport may

participate. There are also adaptation grants for becoming COVID compliant; the County pays 50%. In another program, we've received 1,000 applications for rent and mortgage relief. However, if your lease is with the County, we can't give you money if Pierce County is the landlord. We've added a new program called Restaurant Rally. The hospitality industry is one of the hardest hit by COVID. For 10 days in November, Pierce County residents can get 30% off their meals at participating restaurants; the County will reimburse you. There are a lot of other County programs from the Health Dept. and Emergency Management. Even during COVID, we're seeing increased business activity in Pierce County as people are rethinking their locations. A lot of people are looking at the airport. The hotelier has the airport project on hold because of funding and being conservative and because of the cost of needed infrastructure (water capacity).

Kurt Grimmer said the County is completing a Landside Study at TIW with an economic component. Will it require private/public partnerships? Betty said that Rob Allen has been participating in the study. She encouraged the TNAAC to work with Rob to bring in people to leverage investments. Sometimes non-airport uses create synergy.

Kurt said PenMet Parks is buying acreage on 26<sup>th</sup> across from the airport; it also has a project at the driving range off SR-16 to create a large indoor community recreation center. We want to connect Cushman Trail through these properties and the airport and the additional acreage we're buying for passive recreation.

Betty said she's heard that this legislative session may look at a capital infusion to create jobs; what are the potential pieces? We want proposals to leverage different uses.

Tracie Markley asked about the dates for the restaurant program. Betty said it's Nov 8-19. We're working to get restaurants signed up. Tracie wanted to know how they get involved; Betty will provide her a link to upload the information.

Tim Toerber thanked Betty for joining us; how do we make the airport shine as an economic engine for the entire County? He reinforced what Kurt mentioned about the 116-acre acquisition to expand Narrows Park with compatible uses adjacent to the airport and potentially a hotel. How can the County market this land? There are opportunities to shape this land into a parklike setting for lodging; we need to market to a wider audience to overcome the infrastructure challenges. Betty said she envisioned something like 21 Seas—a hotel with an art gallery and fine dining themed around the airport. Tim said the community could benefit from a hotel/convention center; perhaps there would be additional value if TIW were engaging in electric aviation with clean, quiet electric aircraft offering quick flights to NW communities compared to what would otherwise be a long drive. Betty said the industry goes through 10-year build cycles, but was hit dramatically by COVID with layoffs. They may be reassessing, but we can still pitch to them. Electrification is a big piece that could benefit the whole community. Tim wondered which regions within a 200-mile range of Tacoma are good regions to partner with. WSDOT will be selecting six beta sites with the potential for economic sharing between regions.

Councilmember Dave Morell said he's always excited to talk about economic development around airports. The Council is moving forward with the Next Gen consultant proposal. Betty has been searching for grants and proposals; she's submitted one for an autonomous vehicle route for eastern Pierce County. We're

looking for any transportation funding for grants/revenues for installing charging stations at the airports. COVID set us back, but we're excited to move forward. Randy and Rod are accomplishing good things at the airports and we're looking forward to a good end of the year.

Jay PerryCook with PerryCook Flight Services asked what's happening with the property to the NE of the airport where they've dozed a new road in there. Kurt said it's owned by Sound Homes, but they decided not to build homes there and the property is up for sale. PenMet Parks has applied for grants to purchase the property adjacent to Narrows Park; it would be for passive recreation. The road is for logging, thinning, and selling the lumber.

- **Noise Complaints** – Rod Propst said in August and September, we experienced the perfect storm for airport noise: great weather, people are home due to COVID, and there's lots of flying and the flight schools were back. We have a hotline to call and another noise complaint form online where people can leave details. Our goal is to track data and present it to the advisory commissions. We have no control over airplanes once airborne, but we can ask the pilot community to fly friendly and be better neighbors. We're doing a landside study and the PSRC is conducting another study and is considering TIW as a regional airport. Pierce County has not committed or responded to the studies, but the community has great angst about hearing and seeing airplanes over their homes.

Wiley Moore asked Rod if he's trying to get looped into the permitting process regarding future development near the airport. Rod said when you buy property, you sign a document saying you know you're in an airport overflight zone. Wiley said in Puyallup, the fire dept. erected a building near the runway and encroached; airport people weren't represented in the building permitting arena. He urged Rod to provide representation when properties are being developed near airports. Rod said he believes the department director has fixed that issue and is reaching out on projects. Rod has commented back to PALS on the Kensington proposal. Rod said the fire dept. building didn't raise the minimums—it was other things south of the airport.

Garth Jackson asked if there is a map that planners use for our airport. Rod said the community plan has an overflight map for those issues. There are maps the planners can use and that buyers can check to see whether their potential house is in an overflight zone. Garth said the community plan is being revised; this is an opportunity to get the airport's interests included in the development plan. Rod said his challenge is to find time to participate in those activities. Garth said there's a meeting on November 4 to discuss revisions to that plan.

Brad Pattison said 30 years ago when the City of Tacoma had a fulltime manager, he was aggressive to look at new permits and make sure they had easements in those permits to protect the airport. It takes time, but it's important that the airport doesn't become a victim of the success around us.

CM Morell said he'd had a conversation with Toby Rickman about the process of rezoning and adding density to centers and corridors, including Thun Field. There's a downzone proposal for the Tarragon property at north end of the runway and around Sunrise Village; he told Toby he wants to comment on that rezone next week.

Greg Newhouse said the 2017 Airport Rules and Regulations note the noise-sensitive communities around the airport. Who is responsible to work with pilots to see if they actually do become good neighbors? Rod said it's an age-old question; the federal government has controlled the national airspace since 1920. As soon as they're airborne, you can't enforce what pilots will do. You can appeal to their better nature to fly friendly. The tower at TIW is not in the business of enforcing FARs—they're interested in safety. Greg said there's already a good neighbor policy in place; where do you give them the opportunity to sign up for such a program? Greg said he doesn't see any action by the airport or commission to talk with pilots and to commit to being good neighbors. Rod said AOPA created the fly friendly program; nobody signs up or commits; it's an education by the airport to the pilot community, flight instructors, and FBOs. There's no lever to enforce—simply education and requesting cooperation.

Brad Pattison said engineers have tried for 20 years to improve the noise signature of aircraft. He asked if the signs are still up at the run-up areas or were they removed. Rod said he's not seen any such signs. Brad said they suggested no turns until reaching the water. We used to have a TIW pilots and tenants association.

Dave Langford, tower manager, said the AIM (Aeronautic Information Manual) for departing aircraft is that they can't turn until they're within 300' of pattern altitude. We rely on pilots complying; we do talk to them about that, but we can't enforce it. It's not a directive, but it's a procedure they should be doing and not turning early. It's incumbent on pilots to adhere to AIM.

- **Reports**

- **O&M Report** – Rod Propst shared a PowerPoint. We've completed runway painting; hold bars have been repainted; the crack sealing is about 40% complete; the Pierce County road crew is doing the work. We've started some landscape improvements, and we're working on the Snow Control Plan, Airports Operations Plan, and Landside Study.

Rod said he realized that there are supposed to be white stripes on the edge of the runway, but they were badly faded; we've repainted and it's 100% better. The hold bars were a big deal because they were so faded that several pilots have taxied beyond the double yellow line which could cause a runway incursion. The traffic guys came with their striper and repainted all the hold bars, including those for the ILS area, so they stand out. The road crew is crack sealing the parallel taxiway which had blackberry vines growing out of the cracks. The crew of 11 will be back tomorrow to eliminate vegetation in the cracks and put in the seal material. We should be good for a couple years.

On the landscape project, we've paid the road crews to clear vegetation growth along 26<sup>th</sup> and east of the RAZ and south of Tacoma Narrows Aviation; we will wait until the septic system is completed to have the road crews finish with topsoil and grass seed.

The Snow Control Plan establishes priorities for removal of snow and maintenance for the equipment. We have purchased a plow for Justin's truck at TIW; Lissa has one at PLU, along with another big plow.

The Business Plan is complete and is now called the Airport Operations Plan. It has been reviewed by department leadership.

Larry Fickel asked about the Snow Control Plan and need for braking action. Rod said when the field is attended, we have equipment to monitor that. At PLU, we're looking to get another friction meter. The tower will be informed of readings.

Tim asked about sharing resources for friction testing; Rod said nobody's asked, but the problem becomes everybody would want it when it snows. They're not that expensive.

Garth Jackson said the figure for braking is supposed to be updated every 15 minutes; you can't share between airports because we all get snow at the same time. Rod said with only three people at two airports, the Snow Control Plan has qualifiers that state reporting will be regular when the airport is attended. We clearly can't provide service like SeaTac 24/7. We'll do the best we can with what we've got.

Rod said the PSRC study has skewed what we're trying to accomplish with the landside study which is to put meat on the bones of the 2015 Master Plan; we're refining it. TIW is still going to be a C2 airport and it won't have a longer runway. The ALP will change, and critical aircraft will go from Cessna to Challenger; we're seeing more Challenger aircraft now than pre-COVID. The FBOs can accommodate them. A lot of community residents wanted to comment, so we extended the comment period which ended yesterday. We will bring back results to the commission.

Brad Pattison said he used to be a proponent for a longer runway to improve safety for jets and get more business; he's changed his mind seeing what's happening at Boeing Field. We'd get more corporate aircraft coming in taking huge footprints, so there's another side to lengthening the runway that doesn't serve the community—and we're not lengthening it anyway. Noise-wise, people think jets make more noise, but they don't; they're pretty quiet.

Garth Jackson asked about the Snow Plan; the tower relies on reports of the last plane that landed. Will that information be available to the next pilot? Rod said absolutely; the more information the tower and airport operator have, the better decisions we can make. Pilots are willing to share.

Wiley said he previously lobbied strongly to get an airport manager; this presentation proves why we needed one; he saluted Rod and said to keep going to make this a good place. Let us know if you need help.

- **Tower Report** – David Langford, tower manager, said we're required to receive or ask for reports each hour; there are specific requirements for various situations. We file them and every airport in the area has access to the information. Traffic has significantly increased and will only get busier. GA airports are weather dependent; tomorrow will be busy because the wind will be much less than today. During the week of smoke, we had 35-40 operations; after that, they bumped to 480/day. Operations will increase more as people get back to normal. As of Sept. 24, we went live with a drone map with altitude restrictions. Drone fliers can file a flight plan in the system.

Brad Pattison said it's stressful for controllers when they're so busy; we can hear it in your voices. Students can be challenging and not following instructions. When he learned to fly, pilots didn't read back VFR instructions unless needing clarity. It seems like that's changed, but it congests the radio when everybody reads back long instructions. A simple "Roger N#" to confirm that you heard/understand what was said

is enough. Dave said we like to hear that the pilot knows what is being asked. Use your full call sign with each transmission. He talks to flight schools to distribute that information. You can't use double-clicking anymore; the FAA stopped that 10 years ago. Airtime is precious, but we also must have confidence in a pilot's understanding. Use your identifier with the last three call letters.

Larry Fickel asked about those who don't speak English as a first language. Dave said he worked in Troutdale where 90% of the traffic was pilots using English as a second language. Controllers learned to pick out certain words/phrases; you want to be sure they understand. It's incumbent upon instructors to teach students what to say.

- **Commission Reports** – Warren Hendrickson, member of Friends of Tacoma Narrows Airport, said FOTNA is an organization that needs a successor plan. It was organized in 2010 to find a way to connect the airport and community. Roger Gruener was our original president. This airport friends' group is recognized by the state. Our biggest contributions have been the creation of the Rotary Aviation Zone (RAZ) and holding an annual Fly-in/Drive-in Movie Night, partnering with the Gig Harbor Film Festival. It brought people out to the airport. The Juranich brothers deserve lots of credit; it was a family night. Today, the board of FOTNA is down to four people who desire to go on to other things and want to pass the baton. There's money in the bank and we'd like to find a group willing to pick up and get a new board running. Anybody interested should contact him at the Bremerton Airport; he's easily reachable.

Brad Pattison thanked the FOTNA members over the years. About 25 years ago, we had a Tacoma Narrows Pilots and Tenants Association which still has money in its bank account. We involved the surrounding community and included educational events and had great speakers. It could be resurrected. We need a forum for pilots to share what's helpful and flying friendly. Maybe we could resurrect it with FOTNA.

- **Council Report** – CM Dave Morell said he's glad to hear about good things happening at TIW; he will continue to keep you informed. He said he got a flurry of emails regarding the landside planning study; no one wants huge planes flying over their house and landing at the airport. The Council understands we're not expanding the runway length to accommodate jets. We've got 90 days to go through CARES Act money. We had a successful derelict airplane auction at PLU and sold a couple Cessna aircraft and are starting to remove the derelict, non-paying planes.

- **Old Business**

- **Hangar Inspections** – Rod Propst said in August, he and Lissa inspected hangars at Thun Field; out of 100 or so hangars, he found one not being primarily used for aircraft storage; it contained a functional washer/dryer, lots of toys, a place to live, and a hot tub, along with a plane; that hangar association will get a letter. Justin and he have inspected 80+ hangars at TIW; they've met a lot of people and saw some great airplanes; there's one hangar that's not compliant and the condo association will get a letter. The benefit of inspections is that he meets the users. The next round of inspections for those who've been avoiding it won't be so cordial.

Larry Fickel asked what's being done with the County hangars on the north end with door problems and leaking roofs. Rod said a door company has come out and repaired some, but those hangars were not well built. There's been no movement with the roofs.

He spent \$150,000 to reroof hangars at PLU; we need more door work at TIW. Other hangars have rainwater damage in the walls.

- **Commercial Operating Agreements** – Rod Propst sent this draft document to the TNAAC. The Pierce County Code references this document, but it didn't exist, so he created one using a Right of Entry form as a template. It covers insurance and approval for aeronautical activity. Anyone making money on the airport who's not in a County lease will have to sign one of these documents. He's not seeking TNAAC approval—the document is already in Code. We need to capture these operators and have them provide insurance naming Pierce County as additional insured, and then determine what they'll pay the County for the privilege of making money on our airport. Cindy will set up a Zoom meeting to invite commercial operators. The insurance is not negotiable; we'll talk about whether to charge a percentage of gross or a flat monthly fee. If they don't want to sign, they may leave and go elsewhere.

Bob Felker said the courthouse is congested; the agreement should have a provision that disputes be settled through arbitration; Rod will ask the DPA that very question.

Wiley Moore believes that those operators are paying state tax on their operations; does that include local taxes? Rod said they're not paying for consideration of a federally obligated airport that must comply with grant insurances. We won't balance the budget on these people. AIP grants require that the airport will be as financially independent as possible; they must name the County as additional insured. Wiley urged Rod to make it easy to run an aeronautical business and not overtax or overcharge them. Rod asked if you have your plane repaired by one of these operators and they don't have insurance and you have an accident because of something they've done, how will you be compensated for the loss of your aircraft? How will the County be covered? This is about commercial operators competing at the same level for insurance as master lessees. Wiley said don't make it so hard that we lose operators. Rod said he's going to provide the draft document and get them to buy in.

- **Safe Driving on the Airport/Rules & Regulations** – Rod Propst shared this document at the last meeting; it's about vehicles using the airport ramp as a freeway. Rod asked for the TNAAC, per the Code under duties, to review and recommend or not the addition to the Airport Rules & Regulations. This is an accident waiting to happen; it would be a sin of commission to do nothing.

Brad asked for details; Rod said unless you have a good reason to be on the ramp, you should use 26<sup>th</sup> to travel from one end of the airport to the other. We're trying to stop countless vehicles that daily drive through PAVCO's airplane tie-down and refueling area 30-50 times a day. He's stunned it's been allowed; the only way to stop it is to change the Airport Rules & Regulations. Brad asked Rod for a copy of the proposal. Rod said the proposal should have been part of this packet; it was sent out at the last meeting. Wiley would like to see before he votes on it; he hasn't seen it. Brad is supportive of the concept, as is Wiley, but he wants to see it. Rod said we can push this off another three months to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Rod's not opposed to waiting, but said it's dangerous to go on too long. Now is the best time to act.

Garth Jackson said for those who didn't see it, this isn't the final action; it's only a recommendation to Council who must approve it.

Bob Felker said let's move forward.

CM Morell said this is a step forward in the process; this may not be final version; there's plenty of time for comment.

Motion (Toerber/Moore) passed (7-1) to recommend approval of these driving procedures as proposed. Brad favors the concept, but he wants to see the proposal. We don't need to rush into this. It involves avionics and maintenance people who move from one end of the airport to the other; using the gates is a much slower process. There are ways to make it safer. Please send out the proposal to the TNAAC soon.

- **Visitors and Petitions**

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

- Warren Hendrickson addressed ground vehicle operations; it was sent out by Rod on July 9 and doesn't necessarily go to all users on the airport. What defines who is authorized to drive a vehicle on the airport? He recommended that the TNAAC reach out to other tenant organizations (condo association, businesses, and others) to provide input before action taken is taken; issues can be directed to the Council. Rod said the two master leaseholders are in favor.

Warren is the vice chair of the Commercial Aviation Coordination Commission. TIW is being looked at by the PSRC; the CACC study looks at technical issues, not siting. The Pierce County Council wrote letter to the commission taking a stance; it did not support JBLM as a commercial field, but there was no mention of TIW or Pierce County's position. That would be helpful to the commission.

On the item of easements, Warren has a copy of aviation easements to share as a template going forward.

Warren said we should look at what Snohomish County did to involve airports in the planning process. Anything occurring in the overlay zone requires that the airport be involved. Bremerton's code includes the overlay zone and proposals must be compatible. He'd strongly encourage incorporating existing documents into code.

As for noise abatement, the Airport Rules & Regs (pp 15-16) show noise sensitive areas. They should be reviewed for accuracy; point people to the website.

- Tracie Markley, Gig Harbor Councilmember, is following what's going on with the airport. She's encouraged that there is no plan for runway expansion. There's a lot of confusion in studies being done locally. Gig Harbor is opposed to runway expansion and larger aircraft. CM Derek Young indicated to her that the Pierce County Council would try to come up with a statement that this airport is not good for airport expansion which would impact the city and area. What can she take back to her Council/Mayor to ease their fears? Does a letter of opposition need to go to the CACC? What should we do? Rod said the key for us is we're doing a landside study mandated by the FAA. This is a refinement to the Master Plan which was fully vetted; you have nothing to worry about unless you don't like master plan. CM Markley said the mayor mentioned that the community went crazy and social media says we don't want more noise and a longer runway. Warren offered to do a 45-60-minute presentation with the Gig Harbor

Council, so they understand the process. The CACC study was mandated by legislative action; They're to find 6 sites by Jan. 2021, then narrowed to 2 by Sept. with a final site by 2022. The legislation was passed before COVID, so that timeline may change. Our next virtual public meeting is October 21 from 8-12 on the WSDOT Aviation website; the public is welcome.

- Jay PerryCook had questions about the commercial operating agreement; does it affect any non-lease holders? Rod said the commercial operating agreement is for aeronautical activities (A&P mechanics, avionics shops, etc.). It's focused on insurance and consideration for making money on the airport. Jay has two County leases. Rod said if your business is under lease with the County, you wouldn't need this. Jay asked if the ramp use encompasses just motor vehicles. Rod said it's for motor vehicles, but he's seen people riding bike down the ramp or walking and is concerned about safety. Jay said he uses a bike, but is not opposed to going out to 26<sup>th</sup>.
- The chair announced that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 12. He thanked CM Morell, Warren Hendrickson, and CM Markley for attending.
- **Adjournment**  
The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.