



**THUN FIELD ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
 Meeting Summary

October 20, 2020

A meeting of the Pierce County Thun Field Advisory Commission (TFAC) was held on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**I. Call to Order & Welcome**

Chair Andrew Karlsson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

TFAC VOTING MEMBERS	
Present:	Andrew Karlsson, Chair John Hurlbut Mike Thompson J. Keith Kemper
Excused:	
TFAC NON-VOTING MEMBERS	
Present:	Nichole Weber, SHAC; Dave Morell, Councilmember; Rod Propst, Airport Manager
Excused:	
PIERCE COUNTY STAFF	
Present:	Rod Propst, Lissa Smith, Cindy Willis
VISITORS	
Present:	Approximately 17 members of the public participated.

**II. Approval of Meeting Summary**

Motion (Karlsson/Hurlbut) to approve the July 21, 2020 meeting summary was passed unanimously.

**III. Reports**

- O&M Report – Rod Propst shared a PowerPoint screen. We completed crack-sealing the runway, taxiway, and ramp. Lissa did a great job getting that done with the County crew; we need to repaint soon. Last week, Lissa and Rod were present for the DOE inspection of the fuel tanks. They looked at the sumps, fill, pumps, and still need some insurance paperwork and training records. Otherwise, the tanks are serviceable. DOE did not analyze the fuel.

On October 7, we auctioned off two derelict 150s in our tie-downs; one hadn't flown in 10 years. They were purchased by A&P mechanics. Last Thursday, one of those aircraft took off and crashed into a parking lot north of the airport. Rod spoke to the Seattle Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) and it appears that no "Ferry Permit" was issued for this flight. The NTSD report takes 12-14 months to be completed. On Saturday, a student pilot had an off-airport flight termination (crash) of a Piper Cherokee in a nearby church parking lot; it's being investigated. It's observed there were no post-crash fires in either incident. We need to emphasize that pilots and instructors follow procedures and FAA protocols and make sure their aircraft are airworthy; it's the individual responsibility of each pilot and operator to be safe. Rod will reach out to both flight schools to have that discussion.

The Commercial Operating Agreement that Rod is proposing mirrors the County's right of entry document; operators without a County lease must sign the agreement. Rod will set up a virtual meeting and discuss the document. The insurance requirements are like FBOs'; not all insurance is the same depending on the type of aircraft. This creates a level playing field; I'll report back in January about the agreement reached. Operators will need to pay a fee—either a percentage of gross receipts or a flat fee; this is not to make money; it's to be in compliance with our grant assurances and to ensure that Pierce County is named as additionally insured by commercial operators.

Our Snow Control Plan addresses maintenance requirements and priority of clearing for each airport. We purchased a snowplow for the truck at TIW; Lissa also has plows at PLU. We will make sure all vehicles are working. It's a great starting point.

The Business Plan was finished; leadership changed its name to the draft Operations Airport Plan and presented it to Council Member Morrel. We will let you know what's become of it.

Parts of the Thun Field Master Plan is are at the FAA office for review. Once reviewed and approved, we'll get the preferred alternative (likely a 4000' long/75' wide runway). We received an FAA call/email about three penetrations for runway 35. The trees north of the airfield can't be seen well; we will wait to hear what they recommend. We already have some minimum requirements for that runway—more to come.

Rod said WSDOT Aviation provided an economic impact calculator. By using the FY 2019 data for Thun Field, the model indicates that there are 145 employees at our businesses with indirect impacts of 254 jobs. This regional domestic output tells policymakers that the airport is creating economic activity/value; that's good to know and share with supporters and others.

- Commission Reports – none.
- Council Update – CM Dave Morell thanked everyone who joined the meeting. We're getting toward the end of our Centers/Corridors rezone of the South Hill area. One impact is a rezone at the north end of the runway including a downzoning of Sunrise Village. Instead of a building a Home Depot, they're requesting to rezone five parcels to EC (Employment Center). October 27 is the hearing date. This is the biggest rezone in Pierce County for 20 years; it will set the tone for densities for the next 50 years in the unincorporated areas. He saw the Airport Business Plan and appreciates the work from Rod and Lissa to tidy up Thun Field and get it functional and visibly pleasing to arriving pilots, FBOs, and resident pilots who can be proud of the airport. COVID has been a challenge for all. The Council is moving forward with innovative economic development programs. We're looking to interview

people for TFAC membership; the biggest challenge is to find airport user volunteers. If you know anyone interested, let us know and we'll send applications.

Andrew Karlsson asked about Home Depot; CM Morell said the area next to the runway was going to be a Home Depot about seven years ago; they decided to downzone from retail; it will probably be warehouses.

#### **IV. Old Business**

- Hangar Inspections – Rod said he and Lissa did nearly 100 hangar inspections during the hottest weeks of August. We found one condo hangar that needed work and sent a letter to the association. One County hangar needed to clean out non-aeronautical things. The first round is easy; the rest of the tenants for hangars we haven't seen are probably not looking forward to inspections. We'll set up a schedule to review them before year's end. We appreciate your cooperation.
- Hangar Roofs – Rod said Wright Roofing did one row of hangars and fixed drains in some others; it was done on time and per the agreement; we'll see how well they did when the rains start. Lissa handled the roofing coordination along with the crack-sealing.
- Hangar Door Replacement Project – Rod said hangar doors are a challenge. Helix Engineering wrote us a scope of work, but the cost came to \$3-5 million to put on 50 doors when our loan is for only \$750,000; we are re-evaluating the door type to use. We must obligate the money by June 2021. Our goal is to get doors to replace the failing ones.

#### **V. New Business**

- Noise Complaints – Rod said this summer created the perfect storm for noise complaints: people were home due to COVID, the weather was nice, people were outside, and flight schools were going crazy to catch up. Between the two airports, his cell phone has been ringing constantly. We created a noise complaint hotline and form for either airport; he will check geographically to see where we get complaints and from how many households, and report that information to the commissions. Then we'll address the pilot community to fly friendly. The hotline is 253-798-8806 or there's a link to an online form on the websites.
- Airport Rules & Regulations - Safe Driving on the Airport – Rod said we previously discussed changing the Airport Rules & Regulations regarding vehicles on the ramp, but decided that in the January meeting, we'll do a more comprehensive review and bundle all the changes for Council approval. Rod is looking at gate closures for better security at both airports and limiting vehicle operations on the ramp.

#### **VI. Visitors and Petitions**

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

1. Rod Wetherbee asked about the two aircraft incidents; are we doing anything for public relations? There's lots of public concern about the safety of flying with two crashes in the same week. The flight instructor didn't work for our flight schools on the airport; how does Pierce County handle that? Rod P. said it's difficult to reach instructors not located at our airports. Incident communications from the County are being discussed; he's not sure if any decision has been made. Both accidents were off Thun Field, although both are related to the airport. Rod W. said maybe they don't have the facts, but news travels quickly; it harms local businesses and gives us a black eye. Rod W. said he appreciates having the airport cleaned up of weeds and crack-sealed; good job to the team!

2. John Hurlbut had a question about how to get a hold of the condo associations at Thun Field. People call him about buying hangars. Lissa will provide the information.
3. Andrew Karlsson said he's relieved that no there were no serious injuries or fatalities. The biggest issue is with misinformation; he heard that someone blamed Boeing.
4. Mike Thompson phoned in, but said he's been unable to participate and would rather meet in person; Rod said we can't until the County authorizes it. There are over 20 people on this Zoom meeting. CM Morell said we can't meet in person because the governor won't allow it; none of our committees can meet in the County until we move into another phase; the maximum number of people able to meet in person is five.
5. Rod Wetherbee expressed frustration over not being able to ask questions with hands raised in Zoom. You should let everyone know at beginning of the meeting how you're going to proceed and use the chat feature so we can enter questions.
6. Kyle Schmidtke, Zoom meeting moderator, said attendees must raise hands to be unmuted.
7. Mike Thompson said he was sent information for calling in, but nothing was said about how to participate in the meeting; that's not right. Rod said we will print better information on the next meeting invitation and set up meetings so attendees can participate without having to raise hands. We're new at this, but hopefully we'll get better at it.
8. Mike Thompson wondered which grant assurance commercial operating agreements must meet; Rod said the one that says airports will be as self-sufficient as possible; Rod will provide the number. County lessees pay for the ability to make money on our airports, so commercial operators must also. Mike said if 254 people are employed in the area due to the airport, is that economic value being considered for commercial fees? Rod said the WSDOT Aviation economic impact calculator doesn't tie to that; Mike said it should.

## VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

<b>TO CONTACT THE THUN FIELD ADVISORY COMMISSION:</b>	
<b>regarding any items on this agenda or any other issues:</b>	
<b>Call:</b>	(253) 798-2478 (Airport Administration)
<b>Fax:</b>	(253) 798-4695
<b>Mail:</b>	Thun Field Advisory Commission 9850 – 64 <sup>th</sup> Street W. University Place, WA 98467
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:pctfac@co.pierce.wa.us">pctfac@co.pierce.wa.us</a>
<b>Submit comments online:</b>	<a href="http://www.piercecountywa.org/thunfield">www.piercecountywa.org/thunfield</a> (click on “contact us”)