

**AIRPORT COMMISSION MEETING
December 2, 2020**

A regular meeting of the City of Jackson Airport Commission was held in the City Council Chambers of City hall at 5:00 P.M. on December 2, 2020 with the following persons present in-person: Airport Commission members, Vice-Chairman Richard Hample, Paul Clymer, Tom Stoner, Kerry Ella and FBO Paul Sanders. Also attending in-person were City Administrator Matt Skaret and Recording Secretary Dave Maschoff. Attending via Zoom were Airport Commission member Jeffrey Gay and Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR. (Airport Commission Chairman Chris Handevitdt was absent.) (A quorum of the Airport Commission was present.)

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Richard Hample called the December 2, 2020 meeting of the Airport Commission to order that was originally scheduled to be held on November 24, 2020.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 17, 2020 SPECIAL AIRPORT COMMISSION MEETING AND SEPTEMBER 29, 2020 REGULAR MONTHLY AIRPORT COMMISSION MEETING

Hample asked if the Airport Commission members read the minutes from the August 17th and September 29th meetings and if there were any additions or corrections.

Hearing no additions or corrections, Hample asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

GAY/ELLA moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the Special Airport Commission meeting held on August 17, 2020 and the regular monthly Airport Commission meeting held on September 29, 2020.

RUNWAY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Engineer Eric Hanson updated the Airport Commission on what's occurred since he last met with them.

Hanson reported the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) accepted Scott Rosenberg from Worthington as a tree expert.

Hanson said he, Rosenberg and City Administrator Skaret met with Knute Meneely and looked at the trees on Meneely's property located north of the airport's new parallel runway. He said they discussed with Meneely about removing trees and replacing them by planting shorter growing trees. Hanson said Meneely listened to the suggestion but he doesn't know if Meneely has made any decision on what he wants to do or not. Hanson said the FAA's preference is to remove the trees.

Hanson said the FAA is requiring an aeronautic study. He said the FAA wants a Departure Surface Study done that will consist of figures and noting all the trees. Hanson noted there's a total of 373 trees. He said not all of them are in the surface area. Hanson said MnDOT requires that the approach surface to the runway be cleared of trees. He said hopefully the Departure Surface Study by the FAA will allow the departure surface trees stay in place.

Nonetheless, Hanson said there will be 45 trees that will need to be topped, trimmed or come down completely. Hanson said there will be a meeting with himself, Skaret and the FAA on December 3rd to talk things over and to see if the FAA wants more information or what they want the next steps to be. He said a memo was sent to the FAA consisting of seven pages of figures. Hanson said hopefully it's the information the FAA is looking for to submit for the Departure Surface Study which pertains to flight procedures.

In the meantime, regarding the Environmental Assessment, Hanson reported the FAA sent out materials to the State Historic Preservation Office and some Tribal Preservation Offices but none of that information has yet been received. He said once that information is received, the draft of the Environmental Assessment is essentially complete. Hanson said then they can move on with the next phases of the project.

Hanson said the trees continue to be the issue and trying to come up with a solution the FAA can agree to.

Hanson said the FAA is requiring the clearing of the trees five years after the runway opens. He said information was compiled regarding the growth rate of those trees and then projected what the height of the trees will be in 2028 assuming the new runway opens in 2023. Hanson said compiling the information was pretty involved to say the least.

Skaret pointed out Hanson had sent out an updated schedule in an email on December 2nd. He said it looks like one of the next things is going to be consultant selection.

Hanson said once the draft Environmental Assessment is on the street, then the Airport Commission can go through the consultant selection process again which the FAA is requiring now before the land acquisition, design, construction and everything pertaining to the new runway. He said the FAA wants the apron done also. Hanson said the FAA wants everything done when this project is finished.

Hanson said the FAA has said they are committed to funding the project so that's a positive. He noted there have been many positive meetings with the FAA just getting through the issue regarding the trees.

Skaret said Meneely has an attorney who was present when he, Hanson and Rosenberg met with Meneely at his property. He said they were able to fill the attorney in on why the airport is doing what they are doing, the historical background, the easement the airport will need to obtain from Meneely and the reason why the trees are an issue.

Stoner asked if the City will have to pay Meneely for an easement.

Skaret said the City will have to pay for an easement and for removing or trimming any trees.

Hanson explained purchasing an easement from Meneely will give the airport the right to remove any obstacles within the easement. He said the cost for the easement is all federally eligible because it's under approach protection. Hanson said if it's full removal of the existing trees and the planting of new trees, shorter growth trees, it will all be federally eligible regarding cost. Hanson said the current cost share will be 90 percent Federal, 5 percent State and 5 percent local.

Ella asked if all the trees will have to be removed or will there be some trees that don't have to be removed.

Hanson explained three rows of Meneely's trees will have to be either trimmed or removed. He said the newer, younger and shorter Colorado Spruce trees further east on his property will stay in place. However, Hanson said those trees are in pretty shabby condition so if there's a full removal of the other trees, those Colorado Spruce trees will also probably be taken out and cleaned up and new trees planted.

Hanson said the timeline is to get the matters regarding the trees through the FAA, conduct the consultant selection and then this spring do the land acquisitions. He said negotiations will also need to be held with Meneely regarding his trees and with Fransen's because some land will need to be purchased from them. He noted the Fransen's also have some property in the airport's clear zone that they would rather not sell but would rather have an easement. Hanson said what has been received in writing is while the FAA would prefer that airports own the property, an easement for the MnDOT clear zone would be acceptable. He said the easement language could include if the property would ever become publicly available, the City would have the first right of refusal to purchase the property. Hanson noted the situation of the property ever coming available for public sale is few and far between.

Stoner asked if the easement on the property would be perpetual, lifetime and unlimited.

Hanson said the easement is lifetime. He said it's perpetual and the ownership of the property stays with whoever owns that homestead but the airport will have access to maintain a clear approach to the runway.

Skaret pointed out the advantage of having an easement rather than outright buying the property is that Meneely can still use the land and he doesn't have to relocate his driveway or any of that.

Hanson concurred with Skaret. He noted if the City would purchase that corner of property from Meneely and the airport would own it, then Meneely's driveway could not cross the airport owned property. Hanson said purchasing the property would cause a lot more headaches. He said although the easement is not going to save much, if any money, it will be a much cleaner issue to deal with than having to have Meneely relocate his driveway or having him upset about the location of the driveway. Hanson said the FAA is on board with having an easement where the airport has the right to mitigate any sort of obstruction to keep the approach clear.

Skaret pointed out another advantage of removing the trees on Meneely's property and starting over. He noted the trees are currently such a mess right now that it's going to be cost prohibitive to do any kind of trimming program to get things into compliance. Skaret said the FAA and State only pay for the trimming once and the trimming would be an ongoing issue down the road. He said the City would have to be constantly trimming and maintaining the current trees. Skaret said after the first time of trimming the trees, the future trimming would be at the City's expense.

Ella asked if Meneely indicated he would be in favor of removing the trees.

Skaret said Meneely didn't say explicitly one way or another. Skaret said tree expert Scott Rosenberg was present when himself and Hanson met with Meneely and his attorney. Skaret said Rosenberg explained the condition of the trees. He said there are Spruce and Ash trees in Meneely's grove that are parallel with the highway. Skaret said a lot of those trees are dead or dying and there's a lot of underbrush. He said the other green trees that are just inside the grove have a lot of needlecast disease and those trees are dying.

Stoner suggested just asking Meneely about removing the trees that will be in the easement.

Hanson said removing the trees was discussed with Meneely. He noted the easement kind of runs diagonally across Meneely's property. Hanson said Meneely commented that he didn't think it would look good if all the trees were removed. Hanson said he and Meneely talked about several scenarios regarding removing the trees.

Hanson suggested taking out all the trees parallel to Highway 71 all the way up to 810th Street and then take out all the Spruce trees. Hanson said he told Meneely if that is what he chooses, that's what will be removed and he can replant whatever kind of trees he wants as long as the new trees don't grow above 30 feet. Hanson said he told Meneely that the City will pay for the easement, tree removal and replanting of new trees and it wouldn't cost him anything. Hanson said Scott Rosenberg concurred with that proposal.

Hanson said Meneely commented he likes the trees because it blocks the wind from the house and also blocks the noise from Highway 71. Hanson noted if the current trees are removed, there's going to be a period of time for the new trees to get established and give Meneely his windbreak back.

Skaret said Meneely has commented that he doesn't care what the trees look like. He said as Hanson mentioned, Meneely likes the wind protection and it doesn't matter was the current trees look like.

Hanson pointed out if Meneely would prefer selective trimming of the current trees, any new growth will be rapid and very weak making the new growth more susceptible to wind or ice and making a mess. He also noted the current undergrowth and brush will also make selective trimming of the trees more difficult. Hanson said full removal at 100 percent is the right thing to do. Hanson said if Meneely has come to that conclusion, he hasn't expressed that to the City yet.

Ella asked Hanson if they'll be able to get Meneely to agree to removing all the trees in the easement area?

Hanson said he doesn't know.

Stoner said the whole project depends on that.

Hanson said removing the trees and replanting new trees would benefit the aesthetics of the entire property. He said beyond the current windbreak, the rest of the property is really nice and well maintained. Hanson said removing the trees and brush in the easement area would also improve the value of the property. He noted the north side windbreak would stay in place, just the west side windbreak would be removed.

Ella said to try and work out some deal with Meneely and make it work.

In other action, Hanson said he and Skaret will have a phone call with the FAA on December 3rd.

Hample asked Airport Commission members if they had any other questions for Hanson.

Hearing no further questions, Hample and Airport Commission members thanked Hanson for his update.

AGCO AIRPORT LAND LEASE

Skaret said there is an airport land lease renewal to be considered for AGCO. He said the lease is for the 10.3 acres the airport currently leases to AGCO. Skaret said the current two-year lease is expiring at the end of December, 2020. He explained it's the property that AGCO uses for exhibitions and demonstrations on the west side of the airport.

Skaret said in the current two-year lease, AGCO made an annual payment of \$1,854. He asked if the Airport Commission members had any thoughts regarding the terms of the renewal.

Hample asked Skaret if AGCO wanted to renew the lease for the same amount of time and same amount of money?

Skaret said the leases in the past have been for two-year periods. He said he didn't talk to AGCO about money. Skaret said he wanted to get input from the Airport Commission members before he talked to AGCO.

Sanders noted the land really can't be used for anything other than what AGCO has been using it for or for farming because the land is right off the end of the grass runway. He said use of the property is beneficial for AGCO.

Discussion ensued regarding the amount for the lease. Skaret noted the annual lease of \$1,854 paid by AGCO amounts to about \$180 an acre.

The consensus of the Airport Commission members was to leave the annual lease amount for the new lease at \$1,854.

STONER/CLYMER moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council that a two-year lease be renewed with AGCO for the 10.3 acres of airport property at an annual lease payment of \$1,854.

LIGHTS AROUND THE HANGARS

Sanders noted there are lights on the T-Hangers that are burnt out. He said he also put in a formal request to the City last month to replace the overhead lights on the ramp area. Sanders said the lights have not yet been replaced.

Skaret explained the City has been short-staffed and staff members have been home due to Covid. He said he would remind the Electric Department about it.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, ELLA/STONER moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Airport Commission meeting at 5:31 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Recording Secretary

