

**City of Stevens Point
Airport Commission
December 13, 2021 - 12:16 PM
Stevens Point Public Utilities
300 Bliss Avenue, Stevens Point, WI**

OR

Zoom Teleconferencing

Meeting URL to connect: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82026885705>

Dial in number: (301) 715-8592

Meeting ID: 820 26885705

MINUTES

Discussion and Possible Action on:

1. Roll Call.

PRESENT: Paul Adamski, Carl Rasmussen, Anna Haines, Mae Nachman and Ray Schmidt

STAFF PRESENT: Joel Lemke, Jason Draheim, Chris Lefebvre, Mary Klesmith, Eric Southworth, Craig Czaikowski and Jaime Zdroik

ALSO PRESENT Stevens Point Residents (in-person/or Zoom): Todd Huspeni - 4725 E Maria Drive, Tobias Barske-310 Virginia Circle, Jill Klesmith-4721 E. Maria Drive, Kurt Mansavage-4733 E. Maria Drive, Russ & Jody Allred-3131 Revere Road, Don Peters, Jim Radford-404 Virginia Drive, Karin Sieg, Colton Mansavage, Cortney Chaffin, Chris Radford, Mary Kneebone, Angie Ward, Ryan Kernosky, Joe Zagrzebski

2. Approval of Minutes

Ray said in Item 3, Approval of Department Claims in the November 8th minutes, the motion was made by Mae Nachman.

Motion made by Carl Rasmussen to approve the minutes with corrections, seconded by Ray Schmidt to approve the November 8, 2021 meeting minutes of the Airport Commission.

Ayes all. Nays none. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Department Claims

Motion made by Anna Haines, seconded by Carl Rasmussen to approve the department claims for the month of November 2021 as audited and read.

Ayes all. Nays none. Motion carried.

4. Progress at Airport Fence Project - Joel Lemke

Joel asked Jason to provide an update on the status of the contract. Jason stated they have entered into Phase 1 of the project. Tree clearing commenced on November 29th along Wellfield Road in a NE direction counter clockwise around the Airport. The clearing is about 65-70% complete. They are now on the NW property line. The mulch and grinding crews have begun to follow the clearing crew. Phase 1 is scheduled to wrap up after the 1st of the year in preparation of construction season. Depending on weather, Phase 2 will begin the end of March beginning of April.

Joel heard back from the engineers and the property line and the right-of-way are one in the same. Clearing will be completed by the end of the week.

Paul has been reading all of the emails and thought there would be value in looking at a map on the screen and then it could be pointed out what the residents are wanting us to accomplish other than what was already agreed to.

Kurt Mansavage explained the Mayor and Carl Rasmussen actually met at the site to look at the markings to get a visual of what the residents were talking about. Kurt said Joel had put a mark on the road and told them to measure from that spot 63 feet to the north and that would indicate where the fence would be. Dave Wills from the Town of Hull also came down and measured as well and the measurements were very close. At that time, they understood that marking to represent 30 feet off the property line, not 45 feet. Once the Commission approved an additional 15 feet bringing the total to 45 feet, Dave Wills and some of the residents came back out and measured off an additional 15 feet. After looking at that, the residents then felt the additional 15 feet that was approved would give enough buffer of trees to hide the fence. Kurt said the original marking was represented to them to be 30 feet off of the property line. This is why the residents are coming back to the Commission to ask for additional pushback.

Paul Adamski asked if the marking was 45 feet off of the property line as agreed upon? Kurt then stated they thought the original marking was for the 30 feet that was originally agreed upon. Joel said he placed the marking on the edge of the pavement to have a point of reference to show how far back the fence should be. The mark represents 45 feet off of the property line. Around that time, there were several measurements taken out there and that could be where the confusion is. Joel said he marked 45 feet because at the time, even though he had not asked the Commission yet, 45 feet was what was being discussed. Paul asked if the marking does represent 45 feet from the property line to the fence line? Kurt said it does. Paul then asked if it is at the 45 feet that was agreed upon then what are they asking for?

Todd Huspeni stated they were prepared as petitioners to oppose the variance of a 10 foot high fence with 3 feet of barbed wire at the Plan Commission Meeting and City Council meeting and they did not because they thought the original marking was representing 30 feet and they felt the additional 15 feet would provide enough coverage. Paul said if the measurements are at 45 feet from the property line as agreed upon then what are they asking for? Kurt said their goal is to get a small strip

of 15 more feet of trees to provide a natural buffer of the fence. Jill Klesmith said they are requesting that because they thought the original mark was 30 feet and thought they'd have another 15 feet added on not realizing the mark already represented the agreed upon 45 feet.

Anna Haines stated that the fence is set back from the Airport property line by 45 feet and that is what was agreed upon and now the residents are asking for it to be 60 feet from the property line? Anna stated the project is pretty far along and asked Joel to speak to about the project time line. Joel reiterated what was discussed in the beginning of the meeting, that the tree clearing for the entire perimeter of the Airport will be completed by the end of the week. Joel explained we are the sponsors of this project but the contractor is actually working for the State of Wisconsin, not us. The State bid the project, awarded the project and manages the project. Joel said long term, it is Airport property to manage no matter where the fence is placed currently. It could change in the future. Joel feels 45 feet of room is beyond adequate to have a long term, impactful buffer between the fence and the residents. We don't have nearly that in other areas where the fence is in there backyards so he is not in favor and he is not going to suggest or ask for the Commission's support to go any further. Paul said theoretically, the fence could be on property line. Staff originally suggested 15 feet. In the December meeting it was then set at 30 feet and then in January's meeting it was agreed to be 45 feet off the property line. Paul said at this point we have made 3 concessions as to how far off the property line the fence would be placed. Paul agrees with Joel and won't consider an additional 15 feet.

Todd Huspeni said just a few more feet would keep some more mature oaks and help maintain the view. Todd said there is only one tree marked to keep out there.

Ray explained that his original intent for suggesting more space between the right of way and the fence was to preserve trees and if there is a way to do that without moving the fence further by not clearing as much he would suggest going that route. Trees that don't need to be taken down should not be. Ray said he doesn't believe the contractor will object to having to take down fewer trees. He does agree that we have been reasonable all the way through the process. Joel asked Jason what trees were marked out there. Jason said clearing 15 feet towards the right of way does preserve the largest row/section of northern pin oak and we can guide the clearing contractor to veer outside the limits and not damage those trees. Jason said there's at least a half a dozen trees that were marked. Joel clarified that the trees not marked were outside the clearing limits and did not need to be marked. Anna asked if the 15 feet used for clearing is past the 45 foot setback? Yes it is after the 45-foot setback.

Carl Rasmussen stated there was also a concern expressed with the FAA expectations of the scope of the Airport property and moving this line back further could trigger a review by the FAA. Carl also said to preserve/protect the most amount of trees would be to put the fence on the property line and obviously that isn't a solution either for the residents but if we move it back an additional 15 feet we would lose even more trees. He feels the existing 45 feet did not trigger a review by the FAA

and would provide the ability to screen in the future. There are plenty of trees that will grow faster than others. It will be screened plus the fence is black. Black fences disappear.

Zach Radford stated that this isn't about protecting trees but about maintaining the beauty of the neighborhood. They don't want it to feel like a penitentiary.

Paul reminded everyone that it is the federal government that decided what type of fence is put up and it is about Homeland Security. We are one of the last Airports of our size to have a fence installed.

Todd appreciates Carl bringing up the plantings in the future to help screen. Todd said they asked for a plan for this. Joel said we are still working through the process with the bureau about incorporating this expense into the project. Joel said you have a commitment from me to work through this with the bureau. It does not pay to have a plan until the fence is up so you can actually see where it is needed. Jill Klesmith said the residents would like their own forester to meet out there to decide what trees should be marked. Joel said we can mark the trees outside of the cutting limits so it will be clear as to what trees would remain but the project will continue regardless.

Jim Radford stated he has lived there 32 years and when the Airport was built there was a pledge to be a good neighbor. He feels the FAA would be impressed with the citizens of Stevens Point for taking this matter so seriously to have these debates. He feels the residents have made concessions as well over the years; having to deal with loud noises, flickering lights, paratroopers landing near his house and also a plane crash. He said they are only asking for another 15 feet to be added.

Paul asked Joel if staff would go out and mark the trees. Joel said him and Jason will mark the trees and will let the onsite manager know about what needs to be done and then the manager could inform tree clearing contractor. The residents would like an informed forester to go with Joel and Jason and help decide what trees could/should be kept that doesn't interfere with the fence.

5. Written/Verbal Report - Jason Draheim

Jason said the month of November was a pretty standard month. Jason said they appreciate the utilities helping them out with snow clearing.

6. Adjournment.

Ray stated if this was a local contract, he would have made a motion to work on the additional setback but at this point all we can do is be advisory and Joel has offered our staff to do that with the contractor.

Motion made by Ray Schmidt to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes all. Nays none. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:21PM