

City of Stevens Point Airport Commission

December 14, 2020 - 12:00 PM

**Meeting will be held via a Zoom Meeting URL to connect:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82026885705> Dial in number: (301) 715-8592
Meeting ID: 820 2688 5705**

MINUTES

Discussion and Possible Action on:

1. Roll Call

Present: Paul Adamski, Carl Rasmussen, Mae Nachman, Anna Hianes and Ray Schmidt

Staff Present: Joel Lemke, Jason Draheim, Eric Southworth, Chris Lefebvre, Craig Dzaikowski, Mary Klesmith, and Jaime Zdroik

Others Present: Nancy & Todd Huspeni - resident of E. Maria Dr., Dave Wilz -1909 Mary's Drive-Town of Hull, Kurt Mansavage- resident of E. Maria Dr., Cortney Chaffin - resident 4930 Barbara's Lane, Karin Sieg -resident -125 Virginia Circle, Jill Klesmith- resident E. Maria Dr., Amanda Zag, Greg Aiken -resident -5195 E. Maria Dr., Jody Allred - E. Maria Dr, Angel Gebeau.

2. Approval of November 9, 2020 Minutes

Motion made by Mae Nachman, seconded by Anna Haines to approve the minutes of the November 9th, 2020 meeting of the Airport Commission.

Ayes all. Nays none. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Department Claims

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

Ayes all. Nays none. Motion carried.

4. Airport fence construction - Project update and recommendation - Joel Lemke/Jason Draheim

Joel presented the Airport Fence Construction Project explaining the history of how this came about and provided maps of where the proposed fence would go.

Joel stated that the basis for the project came out of the vulnerability assessment that municipal operations and sensitive operations had to do following 9/11. It was also due to the control of large animals, for example deer and coyotes that could cause damage to aircraft and for noncompliant use of the Airport property.

We knew that valued community assets would be severely impacted by the construction of a fence on the boundary of the Airport property line. Most notable were the Green Circle Trail, the Izaak Walton driveway, cross-country ski trails, and walking/hiking trails. Because of this, staff worked on preserving the use of the lands by these groups, as much as possible.

Much of the land adjacent to the Airport property was acquired for the purpose of developing and operating wells for the Stevens Point Water Department. The Water Department and Airport currently operate as one, the Department of Public Utilities and Transportation. Because of this, a land release solved several of the issues of how the fence project would impact community assets.

Lands were swapped between the Airport and the Stevens Point Water Department allowing land to be used by the public as it had been for many years, more flexibility in the relocation of the Izaak Walton League's driveway and the part of the Green Circle Trail. This also resolved issues with runway protection zones for the Airport not actually falling within airport property.

In addition to the request for land release, we needed to gain permission for utility activities to take place on what would then be Airport property. The "Request for Concurrent use of Land from Land Covenants" was made to get state and federal approval. The "State Release of Land" came in in August of 2016 and the "Federal Release of Land" came in March of 2018. All conditions for the releases were met and the property that was in question officially transferred between the Water Department and the Airport. With the property transfers complete and concurrent use agreement in place, the design of the fence had been completed, leaving us at our current point in time.

In January 2020, letters were sent to adjacent property owners describing the project and providing contact information for comments and concerns. Comments were delivered to the City and OMNI the design consultant. In March/April conversations were held with Kurt Mansavage, an E. Maria resident.

In June 2020, Kurt Mansavage logged comments on the OMNI website. City staff had conversations with him about concerns of the appearance of the fence. August 17, 2020 ended the official comment period which was published in the official paper of the City.

September 16, 2020, the Mayor's office was sent a letter from the Town of Hull asking for input on the fence placement and stated similar concerns as Mr. Mansavage. November 5, 2020 an onsite meeting was held with E. Maria residents, Amanda and Joe Zagrzebski.

November 16, 2020 email correspondence and conversations with Dave Wilz, Town of Hull Supervisor were held addressing resident concerns.

On November 24, 2020 a letter and petition from Kurt Mansavage and Todd Huspeni was sent to Mayor Wiza. The petition asked for the fence to be moved back a few hundred feet where the property line is adjacent to E. Maria Drive.

Joel explained that we understand the residents of E. Maria Drive currently look across the road at a woods and would prefer to not look across the road at a fence. We also understand that the grant assurances that we sign in order to stay eligible for our entitlement dollars talk about responsible use of property. In order to be consistent with those grant assurances we are proposing that we do a 15 ft offset of the fence for space to allow for some screening whether that be intentional or natural.

Commissioner, Ray Schmidt, asked how far back from the property line we are required to have the fence? Can we move closer to the runway? Joel stated we do have stricter limitations in certain areas, object free zone areas, they wouldn't want it closer (to the runways) in those areas.

Commissioner, Anna Haines, questioned how the 15ft was decided upon? Joel explained we just did not want it to be excessive so that we would be going through much more established woods where there would be more maintenance that would have to be done on both sides of the fence. Jason Draheim also explained there is also the interest in equability with the other surrounding landowners and in other areas where there is sensitive approach equipment where we can't get much closer. The 15ft works in all those areas.

Commission President, Paul Adamski asked Joel to show the difference as to what the petition is requesting verses staff recommendations. Joel explained the residents are requesting we move the fence line more north, farther away from the road. If we go more into the wooded area it would be more costly.

Commissioner, Carl Rasmussen questioned whether the area of concern is just on E. Maria Drive or is it along Highway 66 as well? Joel stated it is also a concern along Highway 66. The residences that face Highway 66, their rear property line is also our property line. Carl asked if they are suggesting 100 ft back their as well? Joel stated we

have not heard anything from those residents. We cannot be more flexible because of the taxi way in that area.

Jason stated in the land release/land swap, the Airport lost the ability to increase the runway protection zone in the 3-0 threshold which was a major concession by the Airport in order for the land to continue to be used recreationally.

Ray Schmidt questioned if we moved the fence further north would there still be a concern with large animals entering? Joel stated no, it is a continuous fence. Ray stated he would like to see the area that can have vegetation further north of E. Maria, 30ft.

Paul Adamski wanted to stress that is not a public hearing. We wanted residents to be able to voice their concerns. Time will be limited to 5 minutes per person.

Nancy Huspeni, resident of E. Maria Drive, speaking on behalf of Town of Hull and Stevens Point residents that walk and bike along E. Maria Drive. Our concern is with the placing of the fence along E. Maria Drive. We do not feel that 15ft allows enough space for appropriately sized vegetation to mask the size and scope of the fence. We know that there will need to be a buffer between fence and vegetation and power lines and vegetation. So that does not leave much room for the sizable vegetation required to minimize the fences visual impact. We are only concerned with E. Maria Drive because it is across the street from the properties and we are not able to landscape it ourselves. If we landscaped our own properties to mask the fence it doesn't help all of the people whom walk/bike along E. Maria Drive. She is representing 120+ whom signed the petition, the couple hundred feet that was originally requested was intentionally vague in an effort to open the conversation and to show our willingness to discuss and compromise. We hope you take this request into consideration today and we thank you for your time and consideration.

Jill Klesmith, resident of E. Maria Drive and represented in the petition, in previous discussions you talked about the established woods and maintaining a perimeter so that you had it as usable land. There have not been any plans so far that she has heard of for that wooded area. Are there plans for that wooded area that need to be considered? If not, why do we have to keep that area as usable land for the Airport if there are not any plans for it in the future. Joel explained there are not any immediate plans. There are object free zones as well. There could be grass strip runways or hangars in the future. We do not want to have to incur any costs in the future to move the fence back if we move it too far north now. Jill was then concerned with protecting the view and moving back the fence only 15ft if in the future some the of woods would be cleared for these potential projects. Joel stated the woods has been actively managed and not cut for a while but there will have to be forest management done in the future. He does not believe it will ever be clear cut.

Amanda Zagrzebski, resident of 4429 E. Maria Drive, she referenced the Airport's 5-year plan that talked about possible projects such as Super Club Drive; a new hangar

for super light planes, and a snow removal building of which she would be concerned as to where the hangar would be built, in relationship to her property. Joel stated neither the City nor the Airport operation would pay for a hangar that would have to be paid for and built by a private owner. Again, there is no immediate plans and grass runway strip is not in so it would not trigger anybody to be interested in building a hangar there. Jason also reiterated that there are no near-term plans for that area since Super Club Drive is an access road along our already existing hangar area that was just updated.

Karin Sieg, resident of 125 Virginia Circle and on the petition, she stated this land is also highly used by City of Stevens Point residents as well and she is aware of the City making concessions for certain trees in sidewalks for example. We are looking for a buffer of some significance and feels that moving back the fence only 15ft is not enough to do that.

Kurt Mansavage, resident of E. Maria Drive, he thanked everyone for taking time to let us have some input on this. The concern is feeling like living near a prison because the fence is intimidating. 15ft would not mask it. Green space is a commodity and if it is there, we need to cherish it and if there are no plans for the wooded land then we would like the City to consider moving the fence back further.

Amanda Zagrzebski asked how much time has been spent in looking at different fencing alternatives? She has looked into what other municipalities are using and a lot are going with black colored fences. Black seems to be much better esthetically. Have you looked at the possibility of electric fences? Who can make the decision about fence color? Joel stated over the years there has been evaluation of fence styles. There will be different fence near the buildings then what is along the remainder of the property line. Color can be reviewed. We could get bids for different colors.

Dave Wilz, 1909 Mary's Drive - Town of Hull, he appreciated Joel's write up and complimented the citizens and the community for how they are handling it. He is advocating for his citizens and the Town of Hull is willing to sit down with Joel and the City and help facilitate this project.

Todd Huspeni, resident of E. Maria Drive, he understands the additional costs that could be involved with moving the fence further into the Airport property. He thinks the solution is within a compromise. He explained that across from Amanda and Joe Zagrzebski's property there is some existing vegetation that goes in about 90ft and thinks that would be a good place to start the fence and go straight down the property line to Wellfield Road from there.

Jill Klesmith, resident of E. Maria Drive, she is concerned with the fence and how it is meant to be a physical and psychological deterrent.

Cortney Chaffin, 4930 Barbara's Lane, the front of her property doesn't face the wooded area in question but her entire back yard does. She did sign the petition but

wanted to voice her opinion officially. She also would like the fence moved back to protect the view. She has a young child and feels the prison-like large fence with barbed wire on top creates a different impression for their children to live by verses just a beautifully wooded area. She thanked them for listening to their requests and taking them into consideration.

Gregg Aiken, 5195 E. Maria Drive, stated the area is highly used by hikers, bikers, and for dog walking etc. His preference would be to go around the entire wooded area and the community would be better served.

Kurt Mansavage also stated if more people knew about this project there would be more people concerned and a lot more interest on this topic.

Joel stated the use of the wooded area has been brought up and he walks it himself. The use of that area changed in 2018 and technically the use of that property for recreational purposes makes us noncompliant. There has not been a huge effort to crack down on this because we knew the fence project was coming and would take care of that. We are held accountable for the use of that property.

Ray Schmidt questioned if the wooded area would be clear cut? Joel said it will not be clear cut, just forest management in the future and cut only for the fence area.

Paul Adamski asked how many feet would be on each side of the fence? It is not detailed on the plan yet but about 15ft on each side of fence.

Carl Rasmussen stated the fence will age and will have to be maintained so we can't have vegetation growing through it.

Paul Adamski asked if the trees between the street and the fence would not be cut down?

Joel stated that is the Town of Hull right-a-way so hopefully the Town of Hull will work within that as well in regards to landscaping.

Anna said she understands where the property owners are coming from but it is our responsibility to make sure we are doing things legally for the Airport in terms of FAA and the long term fiscal responsibility. She can see moving it to 30ft back with a 15ft buffer of landscaping and hopefully the Town of Hull would work in the right-a-away with landscaping as well.

Mae feels the same as Anna and would like to walk that area to see the area they are talking about. She does understand where the property owners are coming from.

Paul said there are 3 options right now; we can accept the staff recommendations of 15ft, or Commissioner recommendation of 30ft or table it and have the Commissioners walk that area first before making a decision.

Joel said if there is general support between the difference of 15ft to 30 ft, staff would be on board with that.

Anna said due to be equitable, she doesn't feel it necessary to change it on the properties that are on Highway 66, only on E. Maria Drive.

Paul asked if the residents would agree to this compromise of moving the fence back 30ft verses the 15ft?

Joel stated we are probably fine at the 30ft from property line except for by the object free zone and 30ft everywhere else. If there are any issues with this from a regulatory perspective then we could bring this item back.

Motion made by Anna Haines, seconded by Carl Rasmussen to move the fence back 30ft and in the color black if possible.

Ayes all. Nays none. Motion carried.

5. Written/Verbal Report - Jason Draheim

Jason stated it was a great month and they are prepared for winter.

6. Adjournment

Motion made by Ray Schmidt to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes all. Nays none. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:26pm