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President of Council

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Vice President of Council

VICTORIA ANN SAVAGE, CMC
Clerk of Council

City of Willoughby Hills

Council
CHRISTOPHER L. BIRO
NANCY E. FELLOWS
FRANK A. GERMANO
DAVID M. FIEBIG
RAYMOND C. SOMICH

***Committee:* Council Committee of the Whole**

Date:	May 15, 2009 – Washington, D.C.	Time:	2:30pm
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Committee Members

Present	Kevin Malecek, President of Council, Chairman
Present	David Reichelt, Vice President of Council
Present	David Fiebig, Council At-Large
Present	Christopher Biro, Council At-Large
Present	Raymond Somich, Council District 2
	Nancy Fellows, Council At-Large
	Frank Germano, Council, District 1

Also Present

Mayor Robert Weger
Law Director Thomas Lobe
Highland Heights Mayor Scott Coleman
Mayfield Village Mayor Bruce Rinker
Richmond Heights Economic Development Director Lee Gase
Richmond Heights Former Mayor David Boyle
Benito DeLeon, Federal Aviation Administration
Russ Kline, Federal Aviation Administration

Order of Business

Introduction of Benito DeLeon and Russ Kline from the FAA and of other members present at the meeting – governmental officials from Willoughby Hills, Highland Heights, Richmond Heights and Mayfield Village.

When we last met with FAA officials in Washington, the submission of the Proposed Master Plan for the Cuyahoga County Airport had not been approved by the airport owner, the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners. At that time, we were informed that until such submittal occurred, discussions with the FAA would be somewhat limited. As the proposed plan was officially submitted to the FAA in February, we are now in a new phase of conversation with the FAA officials.

DeLeon - There is a concern with the safety of the existing runway itself – as there are certain criteria for landing and taking off. To improve airports, there is Airport Improvement Program Money – looking at improving the existing runway structure. Cuyahoga County’s proposes to expand not only for “safety”, but also to “extend the runway.” FAA asks if safety is enough for the current runway – the Washington officials have not reviewed the Master Plan, but the Detroit FAA office is currently reviewing it. Detroit reviews the Airport Layout Plan and then we would review it. We try to protect the surfaces, for now and into the future.

Coleman - When reviewing the Master Plan, are they prepared to show why it is necessary?

DeLeon – We like to see communication and consensus between the airport owner and the community - as to the best way to develop a plan and show pros and cons of preferred alternative. They look at a number of things, infrastructure, what may grow, airport facilities, etc.

Gase – Four or five years ago C&S said the primary purpose of their studies was to look at safety and adding safetyways to the runway plan – there were 40 alternatives that only recommended runway extensions and relocations of the road – they don't need to do that.

DeLeon – Don't know if there was a predisposition for runway expansion by the airport owners. They should come up with a plan of how it will look in the future and have discussion with community to address growth.

Somich –You've said that you would like to see where all the parties come together - environment with areas preceding this. Despite what you've apparently heard, there is no consensus or agreement that the Master Plan is good for the community. All parties have not come together. 99% of the constituents in these areas are against runway expansion. The airport owners and county officials have ignored these concerns and are failing to communicate this to the FAA. The sponsors have ignored that.

DeLeon – These discussions happen around the country – maybe not to the extent we see here – the FAA does not control the planning process or what is best for the community. The planning process will continue. If the sponsors want to extend the runway, they must go through an environmental review - FAA looks at purpose and need – is it really needed? It's reasonable for the public to make other suggestions and ask them to look at alternatives. The public is given an opportunity to connect and participate and the FAA looks at this in detail.

Rinker - Asked if the FAA could explain components of environmental review

DeLeon- Environmental measures include socioeconomic, natural environment, air quality, noise, etc. 26 different categories are examined – can provide list to the communities.

Reichelt – We need to be involved in the process – perhaps a matter for the FAA office in Detroit – Surprised that we received a letter from them that said FAA would have a limited role in planning process.

DeLeon – Planning process is different from the environmental process

Reichelt - Socioeconomic impact will be great and we want the FAA to research carefully examine this aspect.

DeLeon – When we get to the environmental process, we will look at that.

Reichelt – Is the FAA still considering the rest of the alternatives?

DeLeon – Only a couple – they will look at this again to see if the evidence they will provide improvements. The FAA can't approve the master plan – it's not our document. The approval came locally.

Reichelt – We want to have environmental forums with plenty of public input – Concerned about the 65 DNL measurement– it's a weighted average over a twenty-four hour period. We feel that this method does not work.

Fiebig - Remarked that there is no corresponding community plan or involvement – commissioners tabled the initial consideration of the plan when a busload of residents showed up. Then, after a delay, they called a meeting with little notice and voted to pass the plan. Alternative #8, which calls for no runway expansion, but safety improvements, seems to be a better alternative.

DeLeon- If you have a proposal that makes sense, present it at the environmental stage – it will get reviewed. The FAA hopes that community can come together in the process.

Fiebig – Is there proven economic benefit to expanding a runway 900 feet?

DeLeon – Jobs are important – stimulus and Airport Improvement Fund (AIP) – look at need for supporting projects – if there is a critical need.

Gase - Does not believe the need for a longer runway has been justified – shorter runways may be the norm in the future– cited Flight Options recent order of 100 Brazilian jets for shorter runways.

DeLeon – Good point, you do not build a longer runway for a particular aircraft.

Gase – If the County were spending their own money on this project, they would never do it. They'll do it only if their using the FAA's money.

Lobe – The impression we want to leave you with today is that we represent four cities that clearly do not support the runway expansion idea. Flight and airport usage statistics are wrong and flawed. They say this is all for safety, but that truly seems to be the last priority here.

DeLeon – Safety is quite important – must have adequate safety areas. For extension, there must be a need.

Lobe - Outlined our Public Records Request for Cuyahoga County records. Many months later, they gave us only some of the documents only after we were prepared to sue when we did not receive them.

Coleman – The County made a ridiculous offer to sell the airport for \$100 million on the day before the commissioners meeting with nothing to support the price –no documentation. He then presented a letter from the County that implies the county could change their plans if we could guarantee income levels for the airport.

Rinker – There is no justification politically – they have stymied counterpart government.

DeLeon – FAA will want to see the justification, the numbers

Boyle – What if the numbers are not correct? Many of the numbers they presented with are not actual.

Weger – What about the FAA's funding consideration of the plan?

DeLeon – The funding for the plan would go through appropriators in Congress – not through the FAA.

Weger – The \$100 million dollar offer the County gave us on a voicemail does not represent the actual value of the airport but we cannot get actual numbers for a basis. What is the environmental time frame?

DeLeon - Does not start right away. The airport institutes it – in a year or two. If process goes right – it would be funded under AIP.

DeLeon – We have a process to make sure it is right – this would be funded under AIP.

Weger – We need to be involved in the environmental process. Should we be in contact with the Detroit office? Who is the contact person?

DeLeon – We will put notices in paper about process, public hearings – open – FAA will attend hearings and hear public comment.

Lobe – Because it has been so difficult in getting records and keeping abreast of the status of the process, can there be an ongoing FOIA request for documents in Detroit/FAA offices?

DeLeon – FOIA process documents are protected in some parts, particularly in the planning phases – pre-decision documents are protected from FOIA requests.

Weger – Is there an appeals process after the environmental process is complete?

DeLeon – There is a process – take it to court – challenge the FAA decision – The courts have usually sided with the FAA in the past.

Biro – Happy to hear that when the environmental comes into play – there will be a forum to discuss concerns. There is overwhelming opposition to this from us and our neighboring communities.

DeLeon- FAA would sign off on it – will consider - is this a viable plan?

Biro - When looking at the environmental issues, do you consider landlocked airports, wetlands, natural destruction – look at other options?

DeLeon – We do look at other options that make sense during the process.

Somich – We want transparency and we want participation in the process. We haven't received it as yet from Cuyahoga County officials – we've been manipulated. I hope this is recognized by the FAA.

Fiebig – Do you consider the other nearby airports in your review?

DeLeon – There is oversight of the master plan process– we look at other options – look at environmental in 3 air miles to 6 or 7 air miles. There are other agencies that do regional planning.

Reichelt – I wish that were true, but it's not. There is no regional planning being done on the local, state, or federal level and the firm that did the proposed Master Plan for this airport did not address this either.

Gase – Showed map of current airport so FAA officials could see what it looked like, potential expansion area.

Thanked FAA officials for attendance and participation.

Adjournment at 3:40pm

Public Portion

Convened at 3:39pm. No one spoke.

Time Meeting Adjourned:	3:40pm	Committee Chairman:	Kevin D. Malecek
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