

# AIRPORT PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Regular Meeting

Monday – February 6, 2023

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District #1: Brad Ketcher      Business: Jeff Northgraves      Environmental: Linda Garat  
District #2: Roger Peabody      Owls Head: Adam Philbrook      Commercial Pilot: Aladar Nesser  
District #3: Dick Witherspoon      Flying Club: TJ Copeland      STH: Jan Gaudio  
Airport Business: Bill Packard

**Members present:** Bill Packard, Dick Witherspoon, Jeff Northgraves, Linda Garat, Roger Peabody, Adam Philbrook, TJ Copeland, and Aladar Nesser.

**Non-members present:** Jeremy Shaw (Manager), Ed Glaser (County Commissioner)

**CALLED TO ORDER:** Chair Bill Packard called the meeting to order @ 5:07PM.

**RECOGNIZED GUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:** Ken Wexler, Amie Gray (Stantec), Mike Keating (OHAC), and David Dineen (Gale Assoc.). Adam Philbrook asked about the progress of the Terminal Hangar, and what type of lease we intend on having with the occupant. The Airport Manager and committee member Jeff Northgraves explained the process. Ken Wexler voiced his concern again about the lease and excise tax associated with the Terminal Hangar.

**ACT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2023 MEETING:** Jeff Northgraves made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Linda Garat seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Chair Packard called for a vote on Jeff's motion, and the motion passed 8-0-0.

**NOTIFICATION OF APAC RESIGNATION FROM THE DISTRICT #1 REPRESENTATIVE:** The Airport Manager notified the committee of the letter received from District #1 Representative Brad Ketcher. Mr. Ketcher resigned his seat effective immediately, and provided a letter to the County announcing his intentions. Mr. Packard recommended that the committee make the District #1 seat a full, 3-year seat. Jeff Northgraves recommended that the Committee make the District #1 seat a 4-year term for this round, and then have it revert back to a 3-year term after that. Jeff made a motion to make the District #1 seat a 4-year term for this selection period only. TJ Copeland seconded the motion. Adam Philbrook spoke in opposition of the motion stating that Jeff's and the District #1 seat would expire at the same time, and Jeff would be able to change seats. Jeff explained that he would still have another 3-year term at the conclusion of this term, and that would be applicable. Chair Packard called for a vote. The vote was 7-1-0 with Adam Philbrook abstaining from the vote.

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE CALL FOR NOMINATIONS AND APAC SELECTION**

**TIMETABLE REGARDING THE OPEN APAC SEATS:** Chair Packard presented the selection timetable and the draft press release to the committee for consideration. Chair Packard announced that he would not be seeking reappointment, and that Jan Gaudio (South Thomaston Seat) and Roger Peabody (District #2 Seat) were interested in remaining on the Committee. The chair also asked for a motion to approve the time table and press release. The manager stated that he would have to modify both documents to reflect the change to a 4-year term for the District #1 seat. TJ Copeland made the motion to approve the time table and press release as amended, Jeff Northgraves seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. Chair Packard called for a vote. The vote was 7-1-0 with Roger Peabody abstaining.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Environmental Subcommittee: (No report)
- Operations Subcommittee: (No report)
- Public Relations Subcommittee: (No Report)

**DISCUSSION RELATED TO THE STATUS OF THE SOLAR PROJECT:** The airport manager gave an update of the solar project. The manager notified the committee that where Revision was unable to meet the Buy-American Provision of the CARES Act Funding, that as the second highest-ranked proposer, Pine Tree Solar will be awarded the contract if the Commissioners agree. Amie Gray from Stantec gave the Committee an update about the history of the project, and where we are headed. The Manager reiterated why the project timeline was so urgent was because of the expiration of the CARES Act funding in early 2024. Adam Philbrook asked about the opportunity to put solar panels on the top of hangar roofs, and the manager explained that with federal funding, the County couldn't invest in improvements to privately owned hangars. Member Philbrook also asked if it was a better idea than moving down 40+ acres of trees to install solar. The manager explained that the Solar project is located in a pre-existing field that the Airport maintains.

**PRESENTATION FROM PINE TREE SOLAR, DISCUSSION/ACT TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION REGARDING THE SOLAR PROJECT:** Michael Griggs, Owner of Pine Tree Solar gave a presentation to the APAC. He gave an overview of his company's history, and explained why they are able to meet the Buy-American requirement and Revision wasn't. He stated that his Company can meet the Buy-American requirement at approximately 68%. Mr. Griggs also explained the difference between Tier 1, 2 and 3 Solar Panels. He stated that the company they are getting the panels for will be certified as Tier 1 panels this summer. The manager relayed the questions that the committee had raised in the past, such as, what sized projects have they constructed, what the largest project currently in operation they have constructed, and how we fit into the construction schedule. Mr. Griggs answered all of the questions to the committee's satisfaction. Linda Garat asked what the timeframe for construction was. He stated that it was typically 4 months after the contract is signed. Mr. Griggs also stated that they do work for NexAmp Energy and that they're building 65 solar fields for them over the next 4 years. Amie Gray asked Pine Tree Solar if they wanted to discuss cost, and Mr. Griggs explained that because when they first submitted their proposal there was fear in the industry regarding tariffs, but now that the tariffs are not being assessed, even with the costs of American-made panels, they are able to hold their original bid price. Commissioner Glaser asked if there was going to be a presentation to the commission, or if they would just be relying on the recommendation of the APAC. Pine Tree committed to presenting to the Knox County Commission as well. Chair Packard asked if there were any other questions regarding the Solar project, and Jeff Northgraves stated that all of his questions had been answered. There were no additional questions for Pine Tree. Jeff Northgraves made a motion to recommend Pine Tree Solar to the Knox County Commissioners to take the place of Revision Energy for the solar project. Aladar Nesser seconded the motion. Chair Packard called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed 7-1-0 with Roger Peabody abstaining.

**AIRPORT MANAGER UPDATES:** The Airport Manager gave a brief update on the ongoing projects.

- That the Commissioner's awarded the Obstruction Removal Project to Hawkes Tree Service for \$417,000.
- The Terminal Hangar is under-budget and Nickerson & O'Day was preparing the set the fire suppression water tanks.
- Hangar Taxilane Phase 2 is underway and we're trying to get to 30% before we enter a winter shut-down period.
- Hangar Taxilane Electrical is in a winter shutdown period.
- Benner Lane has been acquired by the County, and the sale of the Hangars is pending the publishing of the Request for Proposals.
- Paving projects on the horizon; Benner Lane, Long-term Parking, and the Flying Club are slated to be paved.
- Town of Owls Head Select Board voted down an extension of the Airport Moratorium

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** Jeff Northgraves made a motion to adjourn at 6:21, and TJ Copeland seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. -

**NEXT MEETING:** March 13, 2023, at 5pm.