

The Seven hundred seventy -sixth meeting of the Worcester Regional Airport Commission was held on Monday February 23, 2009at 6:30 PM in the Conference Room of the Worcester Regional Airport Terminal Building.

Chairman Zwirblia welcomed everyone.

**The regular meeting convened @ 6:31 PM**

Members present were: Chairman, Joe Zwirblia, Commissioners Jim Delehaunty , Eric Nierenberg, and Tom Reynolds.

Also present were: Mr. Andrew Davis, Airport Director, and (via telephone) Mr. Philip Niddrie, Airport Liaison.

Vice Chairman Pat Santa Maria was absent

Chairman Zwirblia opened the meeting at 6:31 PM.

**1. Approval of minutes of the January 12, 2009 meeting -**

Commissioner Delehaunty moved, seconded by Commissioner Neirenberg to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2009 meeting. **Passed unanimously**

**2. Report of the Commission Chairman – No Report**

**3. Old Business- None**

**6. New Business-**

**Master Plan:** The Commission has been asked to officially approve the Master Plan which was forwarded to the City Manager and, through him, to the City Council. The Council discussed it last week at their meeting. Mr. Niddrie explained that there needs to be a formal approval of the Master Plan so that if / when the city / Massport were to issue an RFP for the land disposition or there was any action required by either of them, there would be an official recording of the commission vote to approve the Master Plan. It was made clear that any further action on the Master Plan must come through the Commission. It was also clear that any amendments to the Master Plan need to be approved by the Commission as well. On a motion by Commissioner Delehaunty and seconded by Commissioner Neirenberg that the Master Plan (dated March, 2008) be approved. **Passed 4 Yeas and 0 Nays,**

**Solar Panel Discussion:** Chairman Zwirblia introduced the discussion by outlining that there has been some discussion with an organization known as Ansar Energy to locate a 33 Megawatt Solar Farm on Airport Property. Mr. Niddrie outlined that, although there has been some discussion with Ansar Energy in the form of some meetings with the principals of the firm and city and Massport Economic Development staff, any discussion was very preliminary and had a long way to go including a formal RFP for this type of development open to the general public. Mr. Davis mentioned that this facility was not intended to utilize land that would be better suited to aviation-related development. Commissioners Neirenberg and Reynolds and Delehaunty expressed concern regarding the need to know more about the financial background of the developer. Chairman Zwirblia expressed interest in anyone who may do a project up here maybe should look at doing something smaller in the Terminal in conjunction with any land project .It was decided to keep this on the Agenda as “Old Business”.

**FY '09 Budget:** Mr. Niddrie outlined the latest information regarding the budget. Mr. Davis explained the importance of staffing to maintain security and safety. At the present time information on the FY '10 budget impact is very preliminary.

Since the first of January we have been asked to cut 10% of the City funded portion of the budget and that has occurred without impacting operations.

**Request by Mirage Express to obtain a Beer and Wine License:** Chairman Zwirblia introduced the topic and indicated there may not be a vote necessary this evening as noted on the agenda. It was decided to discuss the issue, have the Commission ask some questions and the staff would get back to

the Commission at the next meeting. It was explained that the licensed area would be “post security” and be primarily for passengers getting on the plane. Additionally, the staff would be requesting a letter from the Commission (as the Landlord) to present to the License Commission as required by the state.

- Commissioner Reynolds requested we contact Direct Air and as their thoughts on the issue and Mirage Express provide the commission more detail as to what they are planning.
- Chairman Zwirblia asked we produce a copy of this application to the License Commission.
- Commissioner Delehaunty felt we should look at the lease with Mirage Express at the end of their term regarding the rent paid to the airport and whether we should reduce the 70% load factor to trigger rent.

Staff is to get the answers to the above questions and put the item on the next agenda as “Old Business”.

**State Transportation Bond Bill:** Mr. Niddrie and Mr. Davis outlined that the new legislation, in reality, contains nothing that has not been discussed previously regarding the possible transfer / takeover / purchase of the Worcester Regional Airport by Massport. However, is now in a piece of legislation filed by the Governor rather than simply negotiations between Worcester and Massport. We expect the House and Senate to debate the issue and passage is expected in the spring to early summer. However the final piece of legislation could be different than the bill filed by the Governor. It was decided to have this remain on the agenda as “Old Business”.

The formal session ended at this point. No votes were taken. Mr. Davis outlined his first 2 months and how that related to his original intentions when he was applying for the position of Airport Director with Massport. He credited former Director, Eric Waldron for his support. He indicate he reviewed the city’s web site and attachments (Master Plan, IMG Study etc.) before he came and found the information very valuable. He is spending a lot of time meeting people / organizations / media in the area as well as the regional FAA, MAC staffs/ WAPA, Tenants/ etc. His goal is to build General Aviation, Commercial service, charter, and cargo. He was clear that a lot of cargo goes in the belly of a commercial aircraft and that is an additional way for commercial carriers to improve profits. He also has an interest in more public events at the airport.

## **7. Adjournment 8:15 PM**

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Philip J. Niddrie  
Clerk of the Commission