

Macon County Airport Authority
Minutes of the Regular Meeting on March 31st, 2009

The Macon County Airport Authority met on March 31st, 2009, in its office at 1241 Airport Road, Franklin, North Carolina. All members are present. Also present are Bobby Koppers, County Commissioner; Jennifer Fuller, DOA; Eric Rysdon, W.K. Dickson; Joe Collins, Legal Counsel; Teresa McDowell, Clerk; Neil Hoppe and Peggy Milton, airport FBO, Robbie Holland, Macon County Sheriff; Mike Trammel, Macon County Sheriff's Department, and several interested citizens (see attached sign-in sheet). Chair Gregory calls the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

MINUTES: Upon a motion by member Corbin, seconded by Member Jenkins, the minutes of the meeting held February 24th, 2009 were unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM #3: PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION: Legal Counsel Joe Collins suggested that Eric Rysdon, engineer, present his report before the public comment session. He states that the report might provide current information for the citizens, which in turn, might answer some of their questions. Member Corbin makes a motion to hear Item #4 at this time. Member Jenkins seconds the motion and it passes by unanimous consent.

AGENDA ITEM #4: ENGINEERING REPORT: Eric Rysdon reports the following. In connection with the mapping and stripping of the runway extension site, more particularly the impaction site that is located west of the Iotla Branch, Mr. Rysdon reports that they are in the process of obtaining additional funding to strip and map 100% of the affected area, including this particular area. He also reports that negotiations with the Corp. of Engineers water quality department are on-going, with the key to the negotiations being the stripping process of this impacted area. Chair Gregory states that they have been promised the funds to do the remaining part of the five (5) acre tract, and that the FAA has contacted the ECBI and have informed them of this development.

Russ Townsend of the ECBI has responded in a very positive manner regarding the potential funding increase, and the increased data recovery that the additional funding will support. Mr. Rysdon also states that he has a meeting this week regarding mitigation issues and will report back to the Authority at its next scheduled meeting.

AGENDA ITEM #3: PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION: The following citizens ask to speak during the scheduled public comment session. Legal Counsel Joe Collins suggests a three (3) minute time limit per speaker. He is the official time keeper.

Selma Sparks: Ms. Sparks states that this is a situation involving building on a grave site. She also states that the Authority should provide the public with an explanation of how the airport extension will make life better for the average Macon County citizen. She presents two (2) questions to the authority: 1. Can they provide 5-10 year plan on how the runway extension will benefit Macon County, and 2. Of the money generated by having an airport located in this region (the DOA report), how much of the total figure supported by the DOA figures is spent on airport employees' salaries, and where is this money now?

Charles Goodenough: Snowhill Falls Circle- Mr. Goodenough has lived in Franklin for the past few years. He states that he is unsure of exactly how the natives feel, and the Cherokees feel, but he has a pretty good idea and as a Vietnam Vet understands. He states that the cavalry is not coming, and neighbors need to depend on each other. Nobody has ever earned the right to be a citizen, and this is a complex problem. He also states that the only people who will save Macon County will be Maconians:

Dolly Reed: Ms. Reed moved back to Franklin 2 years ago. She asked God to direct her and this is where she felt God wanted her to be. She states that her forefathers and Moses cannot be here, because they are lying in their graves. She asks that her people be allowed to rest in peace. She states that her husband was killed in Vietnam, and that she is honored to be here praying for her ancestors and the ones who have gone on before her.

Norm Roberts: Mr. Roberts states that he has been in the aviation business for 22 years. He has been a Macon County resident since 1980. His background includes positions as a naval aviator, commercial airline pilot and a FAA air traffic controller. He also states that he was on the Macon County Airport Commission in 1981 and 1982, and says it was an honor, joy and privilege to move this airport ahead as a Maconian. He also states that he has tried to be like folks in Macon County. He states that this airport is essential to the economy and the community. He states that the airport with the airport extension is a productive and essential part of our community.

Narelle Kirkland: Ms. Kirkland states that she is grateful for the quality of people in this area, and states that the county citizens are highly motivated. She also states that economic development is important, but that the Iotla Valley is a gem and should be kept untouched. She suggests that the airport be relocated to 441 South, because that is a natural area for this type facility. The beautiful rural area is what people come to Macon County for, and it should be kept that way, with the Iotla Valley bearing a great resemblance to the Cades Cove area.

Dan Cole: Mr. Cole recently moved here from Texas. While in Texas he wrote a letter regarding the toll roads because of a situation in Texas and uses that as an example of "if you build they will come" theory. He states if they are developing in this area, it could result in putting another interstate in, because one thing leads to another.

Jim Pader: Jim Pader states that his concerns are in response to the runway extension. He asks the people in the room to raise their hands if they need an extension to safely land their airplane. No-one raises their hand.

Olga Pader: Ms. Pader states that this is an official protest of the runway extension. She presents a Petition for Public Hearing to the Macon County Airport Authority which has been signed by 166 citizens. She turns this document over to the Clerk. Her concerns involve safety for the ground citizens and she has concerns about the new school that is being built on near by property. She says that since they all live in the airport area, if something happens, they are the ones who will feel it. She also states that Iotla Valley should be saved.

Bobby Koppers: Mr. Koppers is a Macon County Commissioner. He states he grew up in this area, moved away to pursue a military career and chose to come back upon retirement. He states that the concept that your government is plotting evil against the county is wrong and dangerous. He states that the monthly Airport Authority meetings have always been open to the public, unless it is a closed session for legal purposes. He also states that county commissioners' meetings are open to the public. He contends that the community can eat itself up from the inside, if they persist in thinking the county government and the AA are meeting and developing ideas in the dark. He states that the County Commissioners and the Airport Authority have always advertised meetings. He states "folks, in this community, if this suspicion continues to grow, we will be in trouble". He says that they should approach this situation using facts, not suspicions.

Lamar Marshall: Mr. Marshall states that he will be instituting a 60 day notice to sue, at which point he will get an injunction to stop the extension.

Brent Martin: Mr. Martin states that he grew up in North Georgia. He has watched the home territory being devoured, and we should get away from this growth. He also states that a lot of people live in this valley because of

growth elsewhere. He also states that 1. Highlands people live here; 2. Respect the Cherokees; and 3. Bill McClarney is trying to save species in this area. He also states that there should be a consultation with the Fish and Wildlife organization.

John Ernshaw: Mr. Ernshaw states that he is a Veteran of the Korean War. He states that first they take a finger, then hand, etc., until they take everything. He states that he has concerns regarding drugs being brought into this area, and he has concerns about Hwy. 28 having to be redone to support increased traffic.

Gary Dills: Mr. Dill's states that he wants to make two or three points. He reiterates that the runway extension is key to economic development. He also states that infrastructure and transportation will grow, but how will they grow can be controlled. He states that growth and economic development are seen as incompatible by some, but they can be compatible. He is a native of Macon County but left 30 years ago because there were no jobs. He said there was a dirt airfield, no rail, and no decent road transportation. He states that highways and airfields are not a silver bullet, but are a good start.

Dwight Vinson: Mr. Vinson is lifelong resident of Macon County. He is a business owner. Mr. Vinson states that the runway extension is a positive project for Macon County. He has a daughter in high school, and after college, he wants her to be able to return to this area and find a decent job. He states that he has a vested interest in all of Macon County with work, family, and friends. He feels that since the airport is in existence at its present location, it only makes sense to expand the capabilities and he also states that the runway extension plan appears to be well thought out and progressive.

In response Chairman Gregory states: The Airport Authority has been very sensitive in their thoughts and intentions in connection with the ECBI. The AA has been working with the EBCI for the last five years and have tried to honor their requests, with agreement on everything, with the exception of the data recovery percentage. He states that at the request of the ECBI the runway design was changed, which was a considerable extra expense to the AA. He states that the runway plans include a 1.5 grade raise, with which the ECBI was pleased. This design change minimized any human remain disturbance.

Chairman Gregory also states that there have been no private meetings, unless legally acceptable, and all meetings other than the legally called meetings have been public. Chairman Gregory made copies of the MOA that was agreed to amongst agencies available to the media as soon as it was fully signed. He says all meetings were advertised as required and that it is not the fault of the AA that people did not show for the meetings. Chairman Gregory says he has been in public service in Macon County for 40 years, and they are striving to do things that will improve the economy of Macon County, as well as improve safety concerns at the Macon County Airport.

With the conclusion of the public session and there being no further business to be discussed, Member Jenkins makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:59 p.m. Member Corbin seconds the motion and it passes by unanimous consent.

Respectfully Submitted:

Pete Haithcock, Secretary

