

**Rhode Island Airport Corporation
General Aviation (GA) Airports Strategic Business Plan
Town of Smithfield Meeting – North Central State Airport
Smithfield Town Hall, November 21, 2019**

Town of Smithfield (Town) Attendees:

Randy Rossi, Town Manager
Robert Seltzer, Fire Chief
Kevin Cleary, Town Engineer & Environmental Affairs Officer
Jason Parmelee, Finance Director

Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) Attendees:

Christine Vitt – Senior Vice President, Chief Infrastructure Officer
Brent Semple, Esq. – Corporate Attorney
Daniel Porter – Vice President, Planning
Jeffrey Goulart – Vice President, Finance & Business Development
Eric Seabury – Assistant Vice President, Engineering
Jeffrey Wiggin – Assistant Vice President, Landside Maintenance
Kerri Fadden - Assistant Vice President, Operations & Maintenance
David Cloutier – Assistant Vice President, Business Development & Commercial Programs
Don Stubbs – Senior Systems Administrator
Patti Doyle – Public Relations Consultant

Meeting Notes:

- The meeting began with RIAC thanking Town officials for hosting this meeting and for their time and indicating the purpose of the meeting was to introduce the General Aviation Strategic Business Plan (Plan). RIAC further stated that we are asking for the Town's support in developing the Plan as well as their assistance in engaging community and stakeholders.
- All attendees in the room introduced themselves.
- The Town indicated that there are some concerns regarding safety and emergency response. Recently a plane landed short and ended up in the wetland off the end of the runway. Emergency responders had difficulty as access into the area was not cleared.
- RIAC provided an overview of the five key elements of the Plan, including the infrastructure assessment, pavement assessment, airspace analysis, business and financial plan and stakeholder outreach. The status, schedule and cost of each element was reviewed.
- The Town asked if there was any truth to the rumors of North Central becoming the next Quonset like airport, with heavy industry. RIAC indicated that those conversations were likely part of a "what if" discussion associated with industrial development ideas at T.F. Green Airport a few years ago.
- A summary of the Rhode Island Airport System including T.F. Green and five general aviation airports was provided by RIAC. It was indicated that RIAC is self-supporting

with no local tax dollars and that the general aviation airports system operates at a deficit which is subsidized by T.F. Green and Quonset Airports.

- RIAC stated that their role is to provide a safe environment for aviation and to provide facilities that meet the needs of the State and local communities. RIAC is not here to dictate what the airports should be, but rather help implement what is defined as the future of the airport.
- RIAC provided an overview of the ongoing litigation in Westerly regarding obstructions and the effect that litigation is having on the utility of the airport. It was indicated that runways have already been displaced by more than 900 feet and that navigational aids have been impacted. It was noted that there was no near term end likely regarding the lawsuit and that the impacts are now starting to spill over into other airports including Newport State Airport (UUU). RIAC further reiterated that we were asking for the Town's support in joining the litigation.
- The Town inquired whether RIAC could draft a brief that the Town could sign or adopt to assist in supporting the litigation. It was also asked if a Council resolution would help. RIAC responded they are currently assessing what municipalities might be interested and what documents may be beneficial. RIAC will report back with recommendations.
- RIAC shared the results of recent aerial data that shows that there are currently numerous additional obstructions that require mitigation at UUU, and that we are likely going to have to displace the runway.
- RIAC also indicated that federal dollars that were received through a federal grant had to be returned recently due to our inability to remove obstructions at Westerly.
- RIAC mentioned that it didn't appear that the Town of Smithfield has an airport overlay zone and that State legislation was put in place in 1946 on this topic. RIAC relayed that the lack of appropriate zoning has contributed to the obstruction issues we are facing across the State.
- The Town asked if RIAC advertises for business development. RIAC responded that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prescribes what appropriate land use is and RIAC is looking at defining airport land that may be ripe for advertising at North Central Airport. The Town suggested that it may be beneficial to follow up with a meeting in the near future to review this information and discuss local economic possibilities.
- The conversation was then opened up for other topics to discuss including future steps and plan for a future Town Hall meeting.
- The Town reiterated that we need to collectively review policies and procedures with respect to emergency response as well as ensure the Town has the appropriate equipment to respond.
- The skydivers are an issue for some nearby residents. The complaints indicate that the activity is loud and intrusive especially on the weekends. RIAC indicated they are aware of the complaints and that communication has occurred with the residents. It was further added that RIAC can't discriminate against aviation use on airport property when federal dollars are accepted.
- Next steps were discussed and the Town indicated that it might make sense to first meet on the business side with the Economic Development Commission.

- With airspace obstruction data due for North Central Airport in January, it was suggested that the end of January 2020 might make sense for the Town Hall/Public Meeting.
- RIAC offered to return to present to Town Council or any other group that may be beneficial.
- The meeting adjourned with commitment to follow up with scheduling future meetings for discussion.