

**Rhode Island Airport Corporation
General Aviation (GA) Airports Strategic Business Plan
Town of New Shoreham Meeting – Block Island State Airport
New Shoreham Town Hall, November 15, 2019**

Town of New Shoreham (Town) Attendees:

Ed Roberge, Town Manager
Sven Risom, Councilor
Martha Ball, Councilor
Jennifer Brady, Land Use Administrator
Henry DuPont, Block Island State Airport Stakeholders Group

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
Andy Transue – Airfield Technician II General Aviation Airport
David Cloutier – Assistant Vice President, Business Development & Commercial Programs
Patti Doyle – Public Relations Consultant

Meeting Notes:

- The meeting began with RIAC thanking Town officials for their time and for hosting the meeting. RIAC indicated 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.
- 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 indicated that they have been hearing about planning activities for years with no improvements following. As such, there is concern with having a plan with no results. There have been capital projects in the plans and then the projects and/or funding are removed without communication. RIAC indicated that the capital plan will be drafted during the first quarter of 2020 based on data obtained from the ongoing assessments. RIAC will share the draft once compiled and if there is a capital item that needs addressing prior to then, we can review and discuss.
- 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.

- The Town suggested that additional revenue opportunities be evaluated such as fuel sales and storage units, including boats. There is also a need for additional parking for towed vehicles. It was noted that some adjacent land has endangered species and there are obstacles for some land use. Fuel associated with vehicle storage or sales may cause potential environmental concerns with groundwater aquifer. A separate meeting may be helpful for further discussion.
- 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's role isn't to dictate what the airports should be, but rather help implement what is defined as the future of the airport.
- The Town indicated that extending the fixed based operator contract was important and Block Island Airport should not have been left off of the original contract. RIAC clarified that it was not left off, it was just not bid on. RIAC indicated that negotiations with Flight Level for an additional year are ongoing.
- The Town is also looking for guidance and best practices to help with establishing a helicopter landing zone to assist with medical needs and emergencies. This is an off airport site and RIAC committed to assisting where we could to guide the process.
- RIAC provided an overview of the ongoing litigation in Westerly regarding obstructions and the effect that litigation is having on the utility of that 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.
- 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.
- The Town indicated they would likely support and join litigation efforts. The airport is a life line and opposition would not be expected from the community. Flying versus ferrying has increased in poor conditions and therefore the navigational aids are important and need to be maintained.
- 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 mentioned that it didn't appear that the Town of New Shoreham has an airport overlay zone and that State law was passed back in 1946 requiring. RIAC relayed that the lack of appropriate zoning has contributed to the obstruction issues we are facing across the State. The Town indicated they would look into what the requirements are.
- The conversation was then opened up for other topics to discuss including future steps and planning for a Town Hall public meeting. It was discussed that a public meeting on Block Island should potentially occur prior to the public meeting in Westerly. RIAC indicated the timing of the meeting is flexible and that there would likely be more than one meeting.

- The Town would like to research the overlay zoning requirements and understand their responsibilities in this regard.
- RIAC offered to return to present to Town Council or any other group that may be beneficial to continue educating on the current state of our airports.
- The meeting adjourned with commitment to follow up with scheduling future meetings for discussion. It was discussed a meeting in December with the Town, following with a public meeting in January may make sense.