

Cleveland Municipal Airport Authority Discuss Vacating Notices and Wetland Mitigation

by Ashley Murphy

The Cleveland Municipal Airport Authority held their regular monthly meeting on Friday, May 15, 2009 at 9 AM in the Cleveland Municipal Building. The first order of business was to hear updates from Mark Paslick and Tony Mancini of PDC Consultants about the new Cleveland Municipal Airport.

First on the list were Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs), or written understandings between parties of a particular agreement. So far there are over 26 agencies that are coordinating with the archaeological phases and the mitigation process and all of the environmental agencies have signed the MOAs. Included is a list of monitoring and tests of the construction site that must be done for up to 5 years after construction is complete.

Tony Mancini reported that the Storm Water Permit has been submitted to the state as well as the local office in Chattanooga and that a construction permit has been applied for as well. Surveying for the property line and fill work is now complete. A decision has been made as to where the water line will be placed. It will be located at the north end of the airport and will cut across airport property, about 500 to 600 feet from the projected runway and will run toward the railroad tracks. There has been enough space left at the end of the current projected runway to accommodate a possible extension of the runway, if wanted later, without the waterline being disturbed.

Cleveland Utilities had previously asked Mancini for a 20 foot easement on the entire length of the waterline on airport property.

They also requested fencing the property for security reasons and requested to have easy access to the water line.

Paslick then took the podium again to discuss vacating notices. Several residents, landowners and those leasing property from landowners for agricultural purposes, were issued notices to vacate within 60 days.

One resident, who rents part of the Ledford property that was sold to the airport, wants to plant a crop of corn. If the weather, and the airport authority, permit him to plant then he could have the land cleared by August.

Another resident has a life estate on her property and PDC Consultants has promised that her life estate will be honored if she wishes to stay. Paslick noted that she will most likely make her decision

after mass grading has started, because this will show the beginnings of the construction process. If she doesn't wish to stay, the house can be moved, in which Paslick said they could possibly help her with moving costs. If she does wish to stay, the airport would lose two corporate hangars, due to her home being where they were planned for construction. However, they can be relocated in future plans to gain those two hangars back.

Lynn DeVault made a trip to Nashville and asked Paslick to also give an update on the fund requests that she submitted to the Aeronautics Commission. There were two separate amounts, one for \$4.7 million and another for \$3.35 million. The \$4.7 million will have a 90 percent state match and the City of Cleveland will contribute

the remaining 10 percent. The \$3.35 million will have a 95 percent match with the City of Cleveland contributing the remaining 5 percent. The majority of the money received is to be spent on Phase I of the project, which includes mitigating wetlands.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency wetlands are "areas where water covers the soil or is present, either at or near the surface of the soil all year, or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season."

When any of these wetlands are destroyed, they must be compensated for by restoration or enhancement of an existing wetland, or another must be created in its place. This is a process known as wetland mitigation. Restoration of a wetland would include restoring and re-establishing a

location where a wetland had previously existed and enhancing a wetland would consist of altering a current wetland to expand its environmental functions. A created wetland is a man made wetland in an area where a wetland did not previously exist.

The original plans were to mitigate the wetlands outside of Bradley County in Marion County, but new plans reveal that there are two new possible locations, both within Bradley County. This would be in the better interests of the county, and the taxpayers of the county, if these mitigated wetlands stay on properties located in Bradley County.

The Cleveland Municipal Airport Authority will hold their next meeting on June 19, 2009 at 9 AM in the Cleveland Municipal Building.

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