Informational meeting

November 17, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by volunteer spokesperson Gail Hill (President Alan Wright is not in attendance). There were 23 people at this meeting: among them Phyllis Upright, Craig Cowles, Paul and Ann Beecroft, Norm Farb, Gary Van Horn, and Lynn MacDonald. Alan Wright arrived later.

Gail explained the background of the current situation, basically explaining to everyone present how the current agreement was negotiated – the main point of her presentation is that the IAHA treasurer didn't have to perform unreasonable extra tasks on behalf of the ODA. Alan took over the presentation, making two basic points - the new fee (without which the airpark residents no longer have access to the airport), and the change of the by-laws made necessary by this new fee structure (making it so that no one subsidizes a deadbeat who does not pay the fee).

A question was raised about how it is that someone who flies in doesn't have to pay the fee whereas residents do, and does this represent discrimination. Before Alan answered that question, he wanted to make certain that everyone understood the necessity to change the IAHA by-laws. This was explained further. A question was raised at this time about the North Annex and whether they also had to conform to this agreement. Alan said yes they did, but they were in the process of trying to figure out what to do.

At this time, Skip stood up and explained that this sort of agreement is the same sort of agreement that is in place in other airports. Gary Van Horn further explained specifically what the by-laws change is for.

After ascertaining that the proposed by-laws change was thoroughly understood by all attending, Alan went on to explain the rates that ODA is proposing has followed the same line that the rates have followed for the last several decades. A question was raised as to why the residents of the airpark were being asked to pay a "commercial" fee for access. Alan explained that there was no differentiation between "commercial" and "residential" fees as far as the ODA is concerned. The next question had to do with the ODA's right to raise the fee schedule in the middle of the contract term. Alan explained that this airpark is part of a much larger pool of airport users State-wide that would object to a mid-contract fee increase. The ODA will not treat this airpark differently, positively or negatively, as that would get them into trouble with the FAA ("preferential treatment" is not allowed for one group of users).

A point was also brought up that the North Annex already had an agreement with the ODA, stating that the fee would be $15.00 per month, and that if the fee schedule were to be increased arbitrarily then this agreement could be used for leverage. The Stearman Street agreement, which holds until 2012, also states this as being $15.00.

Another point was brought up about the new draft for the ODA agreement, which was actually outside the scope of this particular meeting but Alan handled it anyway since the issue came up. The biggest point being the new insurance requirement, which is unworkable (this point has been covered in previous meetings). Alan said that there was also a catch-all in this proposed agreement that holds the IAHA responsible for anyone violating the traffic pattern.

There was a clarification at this point about the nature and duration of the fees: the ODA charges access fees from June to June, and all of the fees are in advance. There was some "buzz" at this point about the fees themselves, as they are not taxes in the classic sense, could be deductible. That question, as Alan pointed out, needed professional input to be answered properly.

A question was raised about whether the agreement would be signed before the old agreement runs out (in June of 2004). Alan said that would depend on how quickly the ODA gets back to him with dialog about the changes necessary in the current draft. In his assessment the ODA isn't at war with us, but the $15.00 rate is pretty well set in stone and it would be a waste of effort to get them to reduce it. Gail reminded all present that the ODA originally wanted a per-plane fee, and that it has been negotiated to be a per-developed-lot fee rather than a per-plane fee – we should all be thankful for that.

The subject of airport divestment came up, that is the State privatizing various small airports. Alan said that one of his main points of negotiations with the ODA has been the maintenance of the small airport network. Gail stepped in and spoke about the State Aviation Board and its advisory boards that consider small airports to be a waste of resources. Alan added that the advantage of ODA's being a bureaucracy is that bureaucracies hate to give up things (they lose power and the reason for their jobs). The advisory boards are where a lot of these decisions are made. These meetings that the State Aviation Board holds are open to the public, and Alan said that he attends them and would encourage others attending here to do so as well.

One final question was raised about any other points in the by-laws that needed changing. Alan said there were a few other things that he'd like to put up for a vote, but he felt this particular point was so critical that it should be presented by itself so as not to cloud the issue. He didn't want anyone saying that they would have voted in favor but this other issue was thrown in. All seemed happy with this assessment, and there was a round of applause at this point thanking Alan for putting so much good hard work into this issue.

Carole mentioned for the good of all concerned that the Gabels were holding their traditional pre-Thanksgiving dinner and that anyone who wanted to eat should bring a desert and an appetite.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Robert English, secretary.