

Middlebury Airport Communications Task Group
Minutes - August 31, 2022
Meeting at the Middlebury State Airport Snow Removal Equipment Building

Purpose: Enhancing communications between the Agency of Transportation, Town of Middlebury, Middlebury Airport Neighborhood Association, and users of the Middlebury State Airport to generate regular, centralized communications to highlight news, events, issues, opportunities and to reduce miscommunications between all parties.

Task Group Members:

Anne Christie (MANA)
Nick Artim (Town)
Dan Delabruere (VTRANS)
Michele Boomhower (VTRANS)

Agenda Items/Discussion

1. Review and Update of Action Items from July 18th Meeting
Action Items
 - a. Enhancements to the Airport webpage on the Town of Middlebury Site (Michele to follow up with Town staff on a few modification to their web content for the airport – all current documents are on the VTRANS Aviation webpage for Middlebury located [here](#)) – **Completed**
 - b. Communication with Act 250 District Coordinator re: webpage linkage to Act 250 database for airport permits and contact information for questions (Michele – will coordinate with Town staff regarding posting the link to the Act 250 database for the airport permits and provide the contact information for the Act 250 District Coordinator at the site as well. She will also make sure a similar link is placed on the VTRANS webpage for Middlebury. **Completed**
 - c. Review tree cutting contract to determine if trees are available as salvage (Dan) – Dan is still working on this with VTRANS contracting staff to determine if the terms of the contract include wood salvage. **Update (9/28)** – The contract with the logger who will be performing the work stipulates that the trees will be chipped. An inquiry to the contractor resulted in additional information confirming that there would be an increased cost and time frame, as well as potential onsite environmental impacts to cut as log length for local recovery.
 - d. It was decided that final comments for the current draft Master Plan will need to be submitted by ~~August 31st~~ September 15th to allow staff and the consulting team to incorporate comments into the Plan draft which will be presented to the TAC later in September. **UPDATE**
 - i. Michele will clarify with project manager and consultants that the deadline will be ~~August 31st~~ September 15th
 - ii. Michele will have the project team place a notice on the Town of Middlebury website and on the VTrans website that comments on the current version of the draft plan will need to be submitted by ~~August 31st~~ September 15th

2. Middlebury Airport Open House – Tuesday, ~~September 13th~~ at 3:00 p.m.
 - a. There will be a facilitated tour, not all areas will be open for viewing; similar open house events are being planned for other state airports for the summer of 2023.
 - b. **UPDATE** (It was determined by VTRANS staff on 9/6 that the Open House needed to be moved to 9/20 due to a 3-day FAA inspection at the Rutland Airport which would tie up key staff)
3. Master Hangar Act 250 Permitting Process ([Permit Application # 9A0158-12](#))
 - a. The public hearing was held on Friday, August 19th

Contact Information for Josh for all Act 250 related questions:

Josh Donabedian, District Coordinator
 District 6 & 9 Environmental Commissions
 Vermont Natural Resources Board
 111 West Street | Essex Junction, VT 05452
joshua.donabedian@vermont.gov

- b. Anne noted that Louise and David Prescott should be listed on the Certificate of Service instead of the Lewis family, Burnham Drive – VTRANS will review this with the District Commission. **UPDATE** – 9/15 AOT staff confirmed that both D. Prescott and Lewis are on the COS; will follow up with District Commissioner to see if Lewis should be removed.
 - c. Anne had an inquiry regarding the process for those with party status – Michele noted that these should be directed to the District Commission.
 - d. Anne asked about the Criterion of Aesthetics – Michele noted that the current submission under review by the District Commission does not include a request for findings under Aesthetics, that would be a Criteria which would likely come before the Commission when an actual development request to build a hangar comes before the District Commission.
 - e. Anne asked about the hanger location choice. Dan clarified that the south end is constrained from a resource impacts standpoint. The south end has wetlands and ledge. The proposed northern location has better access to the runway.
4. Other Private Act 250 Permits Issued/Pending at Middlebury Airport
 - a. [9A0158-13](#) – Donald Arnold - Construction of a new 60’ by 60’ hangar at the Middlebury Airport on a site leased by the applicant located directly to the south of the existing terminal/maintenance hangar. Permit application under review.
5. Master Plan Process Updates
 - a. Comment period on the current plan documents moved to Thursday, September 15th
 - b. ~~September~~ TAC meeting (date pending) **Update** TAC meeting will be held on
 - c. ~~October~~ Public Meeting on the Final Draft Plan (date pending) **Update** Public Meeting will be held on December 14th.
 - d. 30-day public comment period following presentation of Final Draft Plan (date pending)
 - e. November through early 2023 - FAA review and sign off

- f. Public notice of any plan modification following FAA approval
 - g. Early 2023 - Secretary of Transportation sign off
- Anne had a question about the response format of the Q&A for the comments. Michele outlined that typically the consultants will provide a framing of not incorporated with an explanation of why or incorporated here (page #) in the plan.
6. On Field Planned Activities for the coming month(s)
 - a. Continued advance coordination for the Winter/Fall Tree Trimming - VTRANS will be completing the activities authorized through Act 250 Permit 9A-0158-11. This will involve selective cutting in the winter of 22/23 of trees not included in the area wide cut undertaken earlier in 2022.

Details can be found at this link:

<https://anrweb.vt.gov/ANR/Act250/Details.aspx?Num=9A0158-11>

- b. VTrans' consultant had determined that the fuel tank will need to be replaced. It was tested and found to have particulates, which could have come from the tank or could have come from the delivery truck. VTrans' has begun the process of design of a replacement fuel farm and will have temporary fuel truck on field for airport users until the new fuel farm is operational.

Update on how the fuel system issues were identified – Dan indicated that through the regular monthly fuel testing, particulates were found in the fuel, we erred on the side of caution and discontinued fuel sales. The remaining fuel was pumped out to a truck to be taken away for disposal, once the tank was dry, the vendor went inside the tank to do a visual inspection and found that the interior coating of the tank separating from the tank wall, releasing the tiny particulates that were contaminating the fuel. The tank was of an age that we would not want to invest in refurbishing the tank's interior but determined that replacing the fuel system would be the best approach. Precautions with aviation fuel contamination are greater with than with car/truck fuel due to the severe consequences of fuel system failure during flight. Our current replacement practice is to move to above ground tanks when replacement is needed. A new system will be designed and installed. The Morrisville/Stowe Airport system was ordered in December of 2021, and we still do not have all of the parts to complete that job. It is unlikely that there will be a new fuel system in Middlebury for at least a year. The cost is anticipated to be about \$1M. In the interim a fuel truck will be provided at the airport for airport users. In the interim a fuel truck will be stationed at the airport and operated by staff during specific hours.

7. Communications Round-up
 - a. Can a second person attend this meeting? 'Yes', to observe the process, not as an active participant.
 - b. Berm - Nick had sent information about a run up area design which was shared by someone from Cape Air. Nick noted that Eugene has brought up the topic of a berm previously. Michele indicated that VTrans has no plans to evaluate the

installation of a berm in the location noted. A berm would require cutting of trees and a wetlands permit.

8. Other Items – Questions from Anne

a. Hangar Inspections

- i. Are the existing hangars being fully utilized, ie. Is there a need for the addition of new hangars – Dan noted that all of the available hangars are leased and that through the annual inspection of hangars, unapproved uses are being addressed. Due to COVID, the inspections were suspended for 2020 and 2021. Dan noted that hangars are privately owned and under lease and we cannot control or dictate the use so long as it is compliant with the lease conditions
- ii. When is the annual inspection scheduled for – September 27th.
- iii. What did VTrans conclude – Yet to be determined.
- iv. Dan noted that across the state system, there is not a lot of non-compliance which the Agency is addressing through the current round of hangar inspections; it is believed that the lack of inspections in 2020 & 2021 may have contributed to this situation. Dan brought the issue of use of hanger space to the Vermont Aviation Advisory Council to encourage their leadership to help in messaging this matter with the Aviation community.
- v. Michele asked about the status of what appear to be abandoned aircraft on the airport property; Dan noted that the Agency sought and was granted legislative authority to dispose of abandoned aircraft, with proper notice. As part of this year’s inspections, aircraft which may not be operational, and/or, are being used directly for salvage, will be evaluated.

b. Noise

- i. Discussed the FAA requirements regarding the inability of the state to regulate noise, type of aviation use, time of day of use. **UPDATE** – Complaint form on VTrans website updated to list the FAA contact information for aircraft noise complaints. Michele sent the updated form to the Middlebury Town Offices on 9/15 for updating on the Town website.

c. Inquiries of the Agency

- i. Anne acknowledged that there is a lot of email traffic from MANA members, Nick noted that at the request of the Selectboard Chair, this Task Group was formed to facilitate communications, and specifically to serve as a funnel for flow of questions/information between the Town/State/MANA, which MANA information flowing through their representative to the Task Group, which is currently Anne.

9. Action Items – **Highlighted in yellow above.**

10. Next Schedule meetings of the Middlebury Airport Communications Task Group

- e. Wednesday, September 28th at 3:00, virtually
- f. October – 10/19; 2:00, virtually