

**MEETING MINUTES**  
OCTOBER 21, 2024

**PORT OF ASTORIA**  
**AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
KAST TERMINAL BUILDING  
1110 SE FLIGHTLINE DRIVE  
WARRENTON, OR 97146

**Call to Order**

John Raichl called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

**Roll Call**

All Present: John Raichl, Steve Dillard, Mark Smith, Daniel Efinger, Jim Campbell, Andrew Whitten, Chris Gibbs, Dianna Delgado.

**Report On Finished Road Construction Behind the Coast Guard Building**

- John Raichl inquired about the progress of road construction behind the Coast Guard (USCG) building and asked about the physical barrier between the USCG building and the Airport, as well as whether the public would have access once the road is finished. Chris Gibbs explained that staff is awaiting a culvert delayed in Portland, and the road construction will be completed once it is installed. The road between the USCG building and the Airport is currently blocked at both ends to prevent passthrough traffic, and alternative measures are being explored to ensure restricted access.
- Mark Smith inquired whether a physical fence line separates the Port and USCG. Daniel Efinger explained that while security cameras are used for monitoring, there is no continuous fence line in place.
- Raichl raised concerns about parking issues behind the Recology building. Gibbs noted that staff is still awaiting contractor bids but is accommodating as much as possible while recognizing this as an ongoing issue.

**Develop Protocol for Vegetation Cleaning at the Airport**

- Jim Campbell emphasized the need for a protocol to address vegetation maintenance at the Airport, citing overgrowth as a recurring problem that staff has struggled to manage. While no formal complaints have been received, he anticipates potential issues soon.
- Raichl highlighted the importance of maintaining and documenting ditch conditions, as inspections are required every five years to retain ditch management rights. He reminded the group of a previous warning received for failing to document such work, stressing the need to avoid future violations. Gibbs reported that while maintenance has been performed using the new tractor, it has not been recorded, and he assured the group that staff is actively working on vegetation control, though progress is gradual.
- Raichl noted that removing all trees near the runway could increase wind exposure.
- Campbell recalled a prior issue where water intrusion beneath the runway, caused by a failing tide gate, compromised its stability.

- Campbell requested a plan to address overgrowth near the third runway and to repurpose soil and materials left from the Recology pad extension project to level low points at the Airport. Gibbs confirmed that the materials can be used, although not all of it will be utilized.
- Raichl mentioned that lowering and relocating the fence off 2-6 allowed the Airport to reduce minimums for the Port and USCG. The USCG fire crew lowered the fence by three feet, which remains effective against elk. Smith asked whether this change would shift the displaced threshold back toward the water. Raichl was uncertain but agreed that the issue should be addressed in a briefing.
- Campbell suggested that the Airport Advisory Committee (AAC) formally recommend a vegetation control protocol to the Commission and staff for implementation.

### **Discuss the Need for A Full-Time Airport Manager**

- Campbell expressed concerns about the Airport Manager's role, noting that responsibilities such as improving revenue, managing grants, and pursuing funding are not being fully addressed. Raichl suggested that hiring a dedicated grant writer might be a more effective solution, especially given the significant improvements made at the Airport over the past two years in terms of staff performance, tenant relations, and overall presentation.
- Campbell argued that the Airport's limited budget hinders necessary improvements and that a full-time manager focused on revenue generation and grant opportunities is essential. He noted that the current oversight, divided among other responsibilities, results in limited on-site presence.
- Steve Dillard proposed hiring a dedicated grant writer instead of a full-time manager, as the Airport appears to be operating smoothly without major issues.
- Raichl reiterated satisfaction with current Airport operations and did not see an immediate need for changes. Mark Smith agreed, noting that grants are beneficial and can be reapplied for in the future. Smith also proposed exploring a part-time business development position instead of a full-time manager and asked whether the Port is behind on addressing these issues. Campbell countered by emphasizing that unused Airport property could be improved to generate revenue and suggested that this should be a higher priority. He added that the matter would be brought to the Commission for consideration.
- Raichl acknowledged the potential benefits of an Airport Manager but maintained that it is not a current priority.

### **Review the Approved Airport Master Plan**

- Raichl noted that the Airport Master Plan must be updated every 10 years per FAA requirements and asked whether the current plan had been adopted. He expressed concerns about master plans not always being followed, recognizing them as guides rather than step-by-step instructions. He recalled a prior proposal for a road directly connecting the Airport to Fred Meyer, which was abandoned due to wetland permitting issues and will likely not be revisited. As the current Master Plan has not yet been finalized or approved by the FAA, discussion on this item was tabled.
- Raichl suggested that the next meeting include a presentation on the Airport Master Plan, updates on Airport activities, and an overview of grants the Port plans to pursue. He also recalled a reluctance by the AAC to approve replacing old lighting with an LED system several years ago, which was encouraged by a former staff member. While the upgrade was intended to save the Port \$25,000, the purchased lighting is now more expensive to replace. He emphasized that the AAC does not intend to block improvements but should be informed of significant changes.

### **Ensure Ongoing Information Flow Between Staff and the Airport**

- Campbell expressed frustration that the AAC has minimal input in decision-making and often learns of actions only when they are presented or completed. Raichl suggested improving communication by providing reports at quarterly AAC meetings. He noted that the issue seems to be internal, stemming from a lack of communication between staff and the AAC.
- Raichl asked Dianna Delgado to review AAC membership, stating that there are likely two members—one from the USCG and one from Camp Rilea—who are automatically part of the AAC but need to be reappointed. He emphasized the importance of holding meetings when the Airport Manager is available to provide necessary reports.

### **Discuss the Scoular Odor Issue**

- Delgado updated the group on the status of Scoular's odor issue, explaining that a notice was issued to Scoular requiring updates on remediation efforts. While Scoular has implemented solutions, the odor persists. Efinger added that USCG leadership has addressed the issue with Scoular multiple times.\
- Raichl expressed concern that going 18 months without a meeting negatively affects the committee's cohesion and effectiveness. He proposed quarterly meetings, with the option to adjust frequency as needed. The group agreed. Additionally, Raichl suggested that agendas include more detailed information for review before meetings and emphasized the importance of having Matt McGrath present at meetings.
- Raichl asked Delgado to clarify term lengths, member overlap, and the required number of AAC members. He noted that any missing positions should be filled with the assistance of current attendees. Campbell suggested organizing an Airport tour for committee members to gain a better understanding of operations and potential discussion items.

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- Airport Advisory Committee – January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 4:00 PM

John Raichl adjourned the meeting at 4:55 pm.