

1/17/07 Airport Master Plan Working Group Meeting Report

The second of only 5 scheduled meetings of this group! The agenda was to have the Consultants present the forecast activity for the airport over the next 20 years. Also, to appoint a Chairperson.

Chairman – Fred LaSor was elected. (Nominated by Terry LaLonde!)

Vice-Chairman – Michael Neilson (from the Business Council)

Alternate members - they will rotate in and out of an official seat as members are absent.

Attending – Fry, Gangwish, Wandel, Marsalis, Neilson, Davis, Pchelkin, LaSor, LaLonde, Van Pelt, Barnard, Braswell.

Public – about 10 in attendance.

“Reliever Airport” – Van Pelt said KMEV is NOT officially so-designated by NPIAS (Feds), but it has many of the attributes. Braswell said KMEV is NOT so-designated by the State of Nevada.

“Open Meeting Laws” – Assistant DA Morris gave a short speech about this, just the usual advice. There is an entire package explaining this on the state’s web site filed with the Attorney general, who polices the law. (No quorum can meet in private – even by email! Three days notice required for meetings, agenda must be published, public comment must be accepted, etc.)

Consultant presentation – it should be posted on the airport web site soon. Paper copies were not given to the public, but members got one. They said one big issue is that there is no wind data available to justify runway 21. They presented a list of environmental concerns – but didn’t include night flights or frequency of flights. They listed the following environmental concerns: noise, air, water, soils, floods, etc.

Basically, they used historical data and state demographic predictions to forecast airport growth. Lots of data, but it basically said growth will be about 1-3% per year. BTW – they forecast aircraft movements will grow to 100,000 by 2011 at Minden. This is very significant because it is often considered the threshold to warrant a tower! Working Group Members corrected a few details in the report. Debate of substance was Terry LaLonde disputing their figures! He said they are way too low. He cited an organization called “Nextor” that does aviation operations research. www.nextor.org LaLonde said they say Carson City airport will grow by 300% due to VLJ (Very Light Jet) movements by 2025! He had no data for KMEV but suggested the consultants are under-forecasting due to VLJ’s. They agreed to research that issue.

In public Jim Herd said:

Projecting the future from past history is only useful if there are no paradigm shifts or “dislocations” about to happen – and there are several of those on the horizon. VLJs are one possibility, but LSAs (Light Sport Aircraft) are much more likely and much sooner. We have several of them at KMEV already and they are cheap and easy to fly – perfect for a bunch of retiring baby-boomers that are retiring to Douglas County. And what if soaring gets a serious boost from County efforts? Then their predictions of a flat future for soaring would be very wrong. If KMEV becomes a Regional Jet Center, yet again their predictions would be grossly in

error. Everyone should consider all this because one or more of these “dislocations” will surely happen. We should be driving which ones! Each of the potential paradigm shifts would require a very different Master Plan. I said we should not take major action to serve any of these possibilities until we are pretty sure they are real and we want them to happen.

Linda Mae Draper said:

AOPA recommends developing the Airport Master Plan BEFORE the County Master Plan.

Editorial Comment:

This issue of forecasting the future is absolutely the top issue for the Airport Master Plan!

The history data and forecast presented for soaring seemed to indicate it has been basically flat since 2000 and will remain so. But soaring has declined in a big way since 2000 – so we have to question the data source and its validity.

There remains a huge disconnect between aircraft movements (history and forecast) and the recent growth in infrastructure. The consultants are NOT forecasting any significant new use for this infrastructure – so is it not needed or are their forecasts wrong?

Next meeting was tentatively set for March 28. After that will be the first “public meeting”.

BTW – there will be 3 public meetings during the process during 2007. At these meetings the Working Group can be in the audience but will not be the focus. It will be the consultants presenting the same material (with any revisions) as presented previously to the Working Group.