



**AIRPORT COMMISSION**

**ACTION SUMMARY MINUTES OF SPECIAL ADJOURNED MEETING**

**February 28, 2023 – 1:00 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Dada called the Airport Commission Special Meeting to order at 1:00 P.M., and he invited Commissioner Payne to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was held in-person and via videoconference.

**2. POSTING OF THE AGENDA:** Posted on February 23, 2023.

**3. ROLL CALL:**

**Commissioners Present:**

Gerald Adams (Palm Springs)	Tony Michaelis (Cathedral City)
Patricia Breslin (Palm Springs)	Scott G. Miller (Palm Springs)
Paul Budilo (Indian Wells)	John Payne (Palm Springs)
Todd Burke (Palm Springs)	Jan Pye (Desert Hot Springs)
Kevin Corcoran (Palm Springs) – Vice Chair	Jhan Schmitz (Indio)
Aftab Dada (Palm Springs) – Chair	Paul Slama (Riverside County)
David Feltman (Palm Springs)	Kevin Wiseman (Palm Desert)
Ken Hedrick (Palm Springs)	

**Commissioners Absent:** Kathleen Hughes (La Quinta), Gabriel Martin (Coachella), and M. Guillermo Suero (Palm Springs)

**Staff Present:**

Harry Barrett, Jr., Airport Executive Director  
Jeremy Keating, Assistant Airport  
Daniel Meier, Deputy Director of Aviation, Marketing and Air Service  
Victoria Carpenter, Airport Administration Manager  
Christina Brown, Executive Administrative Assistant

**Others Present:**

Ryan Hayes, Mead & Hunt  
Matt Nisbet, Mead & Hunt  
Katie Franco, Aviatrix Communications  
Kim McNeil, Aviatrix Communications  
Neil McLean, Gensler

**4. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:**

**ACTION:** Accept the Agenda as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Hedrick and unanimously approved noting the absence of Commissioners Hughes, Martin, and Suero.**

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. Salavador Amezquita said that he was representing Local Carpenters 951 which represents Riverside County, and he expressed their interest in the expansion of the Airport.

Gary Wexler said that he was pleased to hear that the Airport was interested in preserving and restoring the Airport to the original Don Wexler design, and he said that the value of the Wexler terminal from 1966 increases with age. Mr. Wexler said that preserving the Don Wexler design would include the class one protected west façade and the Airport's interior and landscaping that has set guidelines that are required by the current national registry designation. Mr. Wexler said that he believed that the historic Airport terminal was the most important City-owned asset, and he recommended to the Master Plan subcommittee and Mead & Hunt that the Master Plan sights be set high and that a world-class building and a world-class architecture firm would be the way to honor the integrity of the City's rich architectural history. He noted that the community is filled with expertise regarding buildings and landscape design of this kind, and he asked that anyone interested in receiving the contact information for the people that could help provide guidance for this process could contact Executive Administrative Assistant Brown to receive his personal contact information.

Tom Doyle said that he couldn't find the words design, architecture or visual experience used as criteria in any planning goals or decision making in the Master Plan. He said that it was essential that these words are included as goals and objectives in the Master Plan. Mr. Doyle said that he expects high quality results not cookie cutter budget solutions, and he said that the Master Plan should state clearly that the restoration of the Wexler terminal is non-negotiable and that modern additions maintain a high level of architectural integrity. He noted that there is a large creative class of residents with illustrious careers and expertise in the fields of design and architecture, and Mr. Doyle said that including these residents in the process would assure that the Airport would continue to be the unique experience that visitors and residents expect with a world-class piece of architecture and design that represents the personality of Palm Springs.

Jade Nelson, Palm Springs resident, voiced his concern in regard to the changes that had been made to the Airport's design and landscaping, specifically the terrazzo flooring that is covered by carpet. He said that the Airport no longer had a wonderful easy breezy feeling to it, and he suggested that this was a golden opportunity to bring

the Airport back to that wonderful feeling. Mr. Nelson noted that there have been other airports that have done wonderful things with their terrazzo flooring which included having competitions with various artists to create patterns within the terrazzo, and he said that he believed that there was an opportunity to do the same thing as well or to restore the terrazzo to the original terrazzo look.

Julian Sanchez with Enterprise Rent-A-Car property development said that they were excited about the new Master Plan and how it would impact the Airport.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:**

### **6.A Master Plan Process**

Airport Executive Director Barrett explained that there were challenges with the terminal, parking, the airfield, and general aviation, and he said that the plan was to fix those challenges with the Master Plan.

Mr. Hayes with Mead & Hunt said that a Master Plan has four components: 1) It is a decision-making tool to guide orderly development of future airport facilities that includes management and operating policies, layout of airport facilities, and it identifies space for future airport development; 2) It is an FAA tool for planning and programming purposes that includes an Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and an Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP); 3) It provides input related to CEQA and NEPA; and 4) It provides input to the City/County Land Use Planning and Regional Transportation Planning. Mr. Hayes explained that a Master Plan is not a business or marketing plan, and it is not a noise study, he said that there would be a financial implementation analysis to determine how the Airport would align funding sources with the capital project needs, and he said that a Master Plan is a physical development plan for PSP that reserves space for potentially needed facilities.

Mr. Hayes said that the Master Plan process was important for addressing passenger growth, passenger level of service, and industry changes and planning considerations. Mr. Hayes reviewed the forecasted scenarios for passenger growth, and the key planning considerations which included: a) Public and stakeholder outreach; b) Air service analysis/forecasts; c) Data collection/AGIS; d) Terminal space programming and alternatives; and e) Financial implementation analysis. Mr. Barrett explained that the role of the Master Plan working group would be to review and comment on working papers, and to serve as a sounding board for recommendations. He said that Chairman Dada, Vice Chairman Corcoran, Commissioners Hedrick and Miller, Airport staff, and City staff would be serving on the working group.

Mr. Hayes presented the concept map from the 2015 Airport Master Plan, and he noted that the growth had been underestimated which led to the determination that no additional gates would be necessary. He said to help the Airport Commission start thinking conceptually, he would be reviewing concept plans from other

airports to help the Commission understand the level of detail that goes into the Master Plan process. He explained that design would not be a part of the Master Plan process because the purpose of the Master Plan process is to come up with a concept for the terminal. Mr. Hayes said that Mead & Hunt would take the planning to a concept level which would provide enough detail to determine the cost estimates that would be needed to determine how to finance the project, and they would define the project. He said that the design of the project would go through an architecture firm, and airfield projects would be designed by an engineering firm.

Mr. Hayes reviewed the concept plans for Northwest Arkansas National Airport, Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport, and Reno Tahoe Airport to provide an example of the level of detail that is included in the concept plans. Commissioner Feltman suggested that Mr. Hayes review the concept plan for Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport. Commissioner Payne inquired about seasonality. Mr. Hayes said that seasonality would be evaluated in the air service market study. Commissioner Miller asked what would be changed to make sure that the Airport doesn't have the same issues in terms of growth that is way out of the parameters of the previous Master Plan. Mr. Hayes said that they would be utilizing the passenger demand analysis to understand what is realistic, what is causing the additional service by the airlines, and what is the potential for that to continue. He said that they would use their forecast to develop planning activity levels to tie improvements to enplanements as opposed to tying them into years. Commissioner Feltman noted that reducing resources during the non-peak season can lessen the customer experience.

Commissioner Payne asked if identifying properties for acquisition would be a part of the Master Plan process. Mr. Hayes said that identifying properties for acquisition would be considered in the Master Plan process. Commissioner Miller encouraged Mead & Hunt to address Heliports in the Master Plan. Mr. Hayes said that they would be considering electronic vertical takeoff aircraft in the Master Plan. Mr. Hayes reviewed the opportunities and constraints in the terminal area. Commissioner Feltman referred to the car rental facility (CONRAC), he noted that the CONRAC would be changing the fundamental customer arrival and departure experience at the Airport, and he urged Mead & Hunt to look at different scenarios before moving forward with the design of the CONRAC.

Mr. Hayes reviewed the four steps of the Master Plan process which included pre-planning, investigation, solutions, and implementation. He also reviewed the 30-month schedule which he said was aggressive because they were going to try to do most of the planning work in the first 12 months. Mr. Hayes said that realistically, it would be 12 to 18 months for the full Master Plan concept to be developed, he said that the CEQA analysis would have to take place at 18 months, and he said that the Airport staff has asked Mead & Hunt to initially focus on the terminal area. Mr. Hayes explained that the CEQA analysis would have to be completed before the City Council could approve the Master Plan.

## **6.B Master Plan Outreach**

Ms. Franco with Aviatrix Communications reviewed the Master Plan outreach process. She said that there would be multiple public open houses which would allow the public to provide input on the terminal concepts, to review the draft report and refined terminal concept, and to review the CEQA analysis. She said the public would be able to submit their comments through an online comment form, through paper forms that would be distributed at the public meetings, and during the public comment period at the Airport Commission meetings. Ms. Franco said that the public would be able to interact directly with the project staff at the open house meetings, and she said that the project website would be going live on the following week and that the website would include access to two-way communication, working documents, meeting materials, project timeline, and event calendar. She said that the website would be ADA compliant and it would be available in multiple languages.

Ms. Franco said that there would be a community blog that would keep the community informed about the project progress offering high-level takeaways as well as access to the working papers and draft documents. The media and the press would be used to amplify the work and to make sure that their audiences understand the progress that is being made, and the Airport's social media channels would be used to keep the Airport's Master Plan at the top of the mind of the community and to invite the community to the public meetings. Ms. Franco said that as questions are received from the public, the questions and answers would be added to the website's FAQ. Vice Chairman Corcoran asked Deputy Director of Aviation, Marketing and Air Service Meier if he would be working with Aviatrix Communications on the public outreach. Mr. Meier confirmed that he would be working with Aviatrix Communications on the public outreach.

Commissioner Miller inquired about how the City Council would be updated through the 30-month process. Airport Executive Director Barrett said that he would be providing regular updates to the City Manager, and the City Manager would be providing the updates to the City Council. Commissioner Miller asked if staff would be looking into privately owned properties that could possibly be used for future facilities. Mr. Barrett said that all options would be on the table.

Vice Chairman Corcoran said that although he believes that the Federal Inspection Station (FIS) is important for the Airport, he would like to confirm the feasibility of the FIS, and to understand the implications. Commissioner Burke voiced his support for more international and non-stop flights. Commissioner Adams said that he believed that parking is important for the Airport and that the customer experience needs to be a priority. Commissioner Breslin agreed that the customer experience is important for the Airport, and she said that it is also important to determine how the customer experience would be sustained after the project has been completed.

Commissioner Feltman said that he believed that inbound and outbound customer intercepts could be valuable for the Airport. Commissioner Hedrick said that he believed that it was important to make the Airport sustainable and to look into alternative energy sources, he said that passenger circulation is important for the Airport, and he suggested that the governance of the Airport also be considered. Commissioner Miller said that he was interested in seeing how the Airport could be made future proof in terms of making sure that the Airport has the right technologies and mix of things, and he said that he was looking for the Airport to have an intelligent plan that takes the Airport's limitations into consideration.

Commissioner Wiseman said that he supported the FIS, and he said that he would like to see TSA moved to another location so that the Wexler design could be restored. Commissioner Payne said that he would like for the car rental experience to be more streamlined, and he said that he believed that it was important to focus on the landside challenges and customer experience. Commissioner Pye agreed that the customer experience is important for the Airport and for the cities that the passengers are visiting, and she voiced her support for the FIS. Commissioner Budilo noted that the City of Indian Wells is dependent on travel and that he agreed that the customer experience is important for the Airport, he suggested that the growth of the Coachella Valley needed to be considered in the Master Plan, and he said that he believed that it is important for the nine cities to continue being included in the governance of the Airport.

Commissioner Schmitz said that he believed that improving the technology at the Airport is important. Commissioner Michaelis said that he concurred with the prior Commissioner comments. Commissioner Slama said that he also concurred with the prior Commissioner comments, and he said that it was important for the Airport to include the tribal nation in the process. Vice Chairman Corcoran said that it was important for the Airport to determine how the Wexler design could be incorporated into the expansion, he said that if the CONRAC has to be located offsite, it is important to make the customer experience as convenient as possible, and he said that keeping the CONRAC in a central location should be a priority. Vice Chairman Corcoran inquired about the FAA grant for \$5.7 million that the Airport was awarded for the baggage claim expansion, and he asked if the project could be started now or did it have to wait for the Master Plan to be approved. He also said that it was important for the concession projects to be taken into consideration, and he asked if there was a possibility that the airport in Thermal could become a competing airport.

Chairman Dada said that from a hospitality perspective, he believes that the FIS should be a priority for the Airport, and he said that internal and external shade structures should be a priority to improve the customer experience. Commissioner Feltman inquired about finding a way to bridge the wide divide between LAX and PSP.


7. **COMMISSIONERS REQUESTS AND REPORTS**

None.

8. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION:** Adjourn the meeting. **Moved by Chairman Dada, seconded by Vice Chairman Corcoran and unanimously approved noting the absence of Commissioners Hughes, Martin, and Suero.**

The Airport Commission adjourned at 2:36 P.M. to a Regular Meeting on March 15, 2023, at 5:30 P.M.



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Christina Brown  
Executive Administrative Assistant

APPROVED BY AIRPORT COMMISSION: 06/21/23