



AIRPORT COMMISSION

ACTION SUMMARY MINUTES OF SPECIAL ADJOURNED MEETING

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 – 5:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dada called the Airport Commission Special Meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. and invited the Airport Executive Director, Mr. Ulises Aguirre, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was held via videoconference.

2. POSTING OF THE AGENDA: Posted on August 19, 2021.

3. ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present:

Gerald Adams (Palm Springs)	Rolf Hoehn (Palm Desert)
Patricia Breslin (Palm Springs)	Kathleen Hugues (La Quinta)
Paul Budilo (Indian Wells)	Gabriel Martin (Coachella)
Todd Burke (Palm Springs)	Scott G. Miller (Palm Springs)
Kevin J. Corcoran - Vice Chair (Palm Springs)	Jill Philbrook (Cathedral City)
Aftab Dada - Chair (Palm Springs)	Jan Pye (Desert Hot Springs)
David Feltman (Palm Springs)	Jhan Schmitz (Indio)
Peter Freymuth (Riverside County)	Thomas Weil (Rancho Mirage)
Ken Hedrick (Palm Springs)	

Commissioners Absent: M. Guillermo Suero (Palm Springs)

Staff Present:

Justin Clifton, City Manager
Ulises Aguirre, Airport Executive Director
Nadia Seery, Airport Executive Administrative Assistant

Public Attendance: Twelve participants.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:

ACTION: Accept the Agenda as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Freymuth, seconded by Commissioner Feltman, and unanimously approved noting the absence of Commissioner Suero.**

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Former Airport Commissioner Riesen expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Commission for six years. He welcomed his replacement, Commissioner Weil, and wished him the best. Mr. Riesen thanked his former colleagues and airport staff for the assistance provided over the years.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Airport Executive Director Aguirre reported that the Ticket Wing Renovation Project was completed on August 12, 2021. Southwest Airlines started processing passengers in the South Lobby last week and airlines have moved into their new offices. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on August 23rd, attended by the Mayor and Councilmembers, in recognition of this \$36M project. Chairman Dada represented the Airport Commission at this successful event.

Two passenger boarding bridges have been completed, two more are in play.

The July passenger statistics are 32% higher than July of 2019 marking July 2021 as the busiest July ever at this airport, and two months in a row that this milestone was reached.

Victoria Carpenter and Daniel Meier organized an airport job fair which was held today with success at the Convention Center. Fourteen stakeholders were present, including taxi cab companies, and FBOs Atlantic and Signature. Many tenants identified new employees, some filled all their positions while others have excellent leads for the upcoming season.

Flair Airlines announced they will operate from Palm Springs to Edmonton in addition to Vancouver, beginning in December.

7. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

7.B. 225 S. El Cielo (Boxing Club / Cooling Center)

City Manager Clifton offered to answer questions and facilitate the discussion regarding the Boxing Club and provided the following updates:

The City is days away from Martha's Village and Kitchen opening up operations at the Boxing Club. The original plan was to relocate the Well in the Desert from Calle Encilia to the Boxing Club but City Council deemed it necessary to work with another provider for a variety of reasons. Martha's Village and Kitchen operates a suite of Navigation Centers out of Indio and conversations were had on how to move services here and improve on them. This organization has a larger team, seeks and receives grant resources and has had broader programs.

When discussing the scope of work, minimizing secondary impact was a focal point. Martha's Village and Kitchen is known for leveraging services successfully to encourage better behavior and has a track record for improving people's lives. Mr. Clifton will discuss a new financial arrangement with Martha's at the September 9 City Council meeting that contemplates the City dedicating more funds to this endeavor than they had with Well in the Desert, to provide both social services and a dedicated security staff to lead to a better outcome.

After discussions and negotiations, the City Manager is prepared to sign the scope of work and City Council will make the final funding appropriation for this new partnership.

Mr. Clifton added how the City has stepped up by having more frequent meetings with Martha's. They also had discussions with the Police Chief. The location of the police station abutting the center will allow them to perform more security checks. The City intends to report to Martha's through regular meetings what the airport team, the Police, and City Hall staff see on the ground. Everyone is focused on improving the situation that was witnessed with the Well.

Commissioner Freymuth asked how the airport will be compensated since this is airport property.

Mr. Clifton indicated that he is working on this with the City's legal team. He doesn't contemplate a purchase nor a traditional lease because it is a partnership of the City providing programming at this location. This is seen as a temporary location, and they are working with the County to obtain vacant land to have a Navigation Center built. When this materializes, programs would be moved from the Boxing Club to a more permanent type of solution. He added they would most likely make a lease payment from the City to the Airport.

Commissioner Freymuth asked if the City and legal department are clear on the FAA guidelines.

Mr. Clifton replied that they are aware of FAA regulations including those affiliated with grant sources, but it is a city service provided from a city facility, contracted with a partner to provide services, which changes things slightly, and they are still evaluating all of this to make things correctly.

Commissioner Feltman asked what the operating hours would be at the Center.

Mr. Clifton said it would approximately be 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., essentially day time.

Commissioner Breslin inquired about a residents reach-out and mentioned there are some complaints. She asked if there is a plan to publicize successes or to let the neighborhood know about the partnership.

Mr. Clifton replied there would be press releases, and they are planning on two outreach meetings along with media posts. The Boxing Club is also in the Mayor's District and the Mayor can provide updates during the monthly town halls.

Mr. Clifton commented that security will be on site one and a half hours prior to opening and after closing. Loitering will not be permitted on adjacent sites, there will be monitoring cameras, and to the extent something is not working well, they want to be able to respond rapidly.

Commissioner Adams asked if there is a specific end contract date.

Mr. Clifton replied no, because the intent is to follow the City's appropriations budget and fiscal year with funds provided for a year, but termination clauses are always included in these contracts. The idea is to continue with this until a more robust solution is built.

Commissioner Miller asked what the Commission role was in this, since it is airport property.

Mr. Clifton explained how he understood the frustrations that may exist as the Airport Commission was not asked to advise on this matter, but how Council sometimes needs to act without Commission or City Manager advice. He explained that the impacts on tourism or the airport were not lost on Council but they felt the change was necessary, and to some extent the change in location and provider went hand in hand. How, generally speaking, the role of this Commission is to advise the Council, how it wouldn't be right to tell the Council it has made a mistake, but instead how the Commission should continue to share thoughts and observations about impacts at the airport.

Commissioner Miller indicated that Commissioners took their oath to heart to advise City Council and how some of the Commissioners felt uncomfortable not having given that advice.

City Manager expressed appreciation for the level of commitment by the Commission and stated that it is rare that this should move so fast, but occasionally Council feels it is necessary, but they welcome and encourage that continued focus that a Commission brings to a facility like the airport.

Commissioner Freymuth introduced the following motion:

Conversion of Airport property, also known as Palm Springs Boxing Club, into a homeless shelter is not in the best interest of the Airport. However, given the fact that City Council, after a long search, determined that this location at the current time is the only viable option, Airport Commission concurs with the City's selection of the site. Commission also recommends that additional security personnel be hired to

safeguard cars and property in the airport parking lot, especially during nighttime hours.

Motion Seconded by Commissioner Hoehn.

Commissioner Corcoran thanked the City Manager and stated that the motion reflects the feeling of the Commission. He acknowledged the presence of hired security one and a half hour before and after, but asked what the contingency plans are, if things go wrong at night as witnessed when the Well was not open, to ensure that the airport will still be well protected when the center is closed and security isn't present.

Mr. Clifton replied that there will be leveraging of services, and negative impacts occur in the proximity of the facility as witnessed in Baristo Park. If one is suspended, there is little value for them to remain in the proximity of the facility. City is looking at revising administrative policies and potentially legislative policies through the Council to mirror policies put together by the City of Los Angeles, with "sit - lie" policies to be extended to all parks and grassy areas on the perimeter of the airport. While people can't be banned from camping until there are more adequate shelters, and we cannot cross legal lines, we can expand areas where people can't be lying down. So through the police department we can tell people they have to leave. Whenever illegal activity occurs, the City will respond with resources.

Commissioner Corcoran asked if the Police Department is willing to enforce these laws, have they been directed, and have they agreed to maintain the area around the airport. And are there grey areas to enforcing what had been described.

Mr. Clifton indicated that if a person is in a public place not causing a disturbance and not just laying down and sleeping, we may not have cause to ask them to leave. There is a limit. But the police are willing, they are being directed. Some of the rules from LA were discussed with the police department involved. The plan is to have more frequent communications, close gaps between day and night shifts. Partnership, increased communications and new tools are meant to work together. The goal is to act quickly.

Commissioner Breslin commented that she is at a comfort level now with all the steps being taken, but would like to see this being reviewed through the Commission on a regular basis, and show the Commission support as this goes forward, or not.

City Manager Clifton said he is willing to continue sharing his perspective and the information he is receiving and solicit the same from the Commission.

Commissioner Feltman suggested two amendments to the motion made by Commissioner Freymuth:

Change the word "shelter" to "navigation center," and add: "Request the Airport staff to gather incidents data and report to the Commission on a monthly basis all activities

that involve the police and activities that don't involve the police that relate to this, that occur away from the Boxing Club, and which mainly happen within the confines of the Airport, the parking lot, and the grass area.”

Commissioner Freymuth had no objections to the amendments.

Commissioner Breslin expressed she was satisfied with the motion which was made.

Commissioner Miller asked of the Chairman that this topic be added to the Airport Commission agenda on a monthly basis, and if there is nothing to report that it be skipped for that month, but to keep track so all Commissioners feel they are being kept informed.

Chairman Dada concurred.

ACTION: Communicate to City Council that conversion of Airport property, also known as Palm Springs Boxing Club, into a Navigation Center is not in the best interest of the Airport. However, given the fact that City Council, after a long search, determined that this location at the current time is the only viable option, Airport Commission concurs with the City's selection of the site. Commission also recommends that additional security personnel be hired to safeguard cars and property in the airport parking lot, especially during nighttime hours. Request the Airport staff to gather incidents data and report to the Commission on a monthly basis all activities that involve the police and activities that don't involve the police that relate to this, that occur away from the Boxing Club, and which mainly happen within the confines of the Airport, the parking lot, and the grass area. **Moved by Commissioner Freymuth, seconded by Commissioner Hoehn.**

AYES: Breslin, Budilo, Burke, Corcoran, Dada, Feltman, Freymuth, Hedrick, Hoehn, Hughes, Martin, Miller, Philbrook, Pye, Schmitz, Weil.

NOES:

ABSTAIN: Adams

ABSENT: Suero.

7.A. Session 1 – Consideration of Submitting Priorities / Areas of Focus for the City Council Visioning Session

A staff report was provided in advance to the Commission to introduce this item and Airport Executive Director Aguirre asked City Manager Clifton to give an overview of the Council's expectations.

Mr. Clifton explained that City Council has traditionally held a yearly visioning session to identify the priorities for the upcoming year. How Council likes to hear from entities like Commissions that have a more hyper focus on certain facilities. For this purpose, staff has created a template for this Commission and other Commissions to identify a

handful of priority topic areas and possibly processes improvements. He added there is far more input for City Council than throughput. How capacity is limited to accomplish things across such a broad spectrum, let alone in each individual area. Therefore the template is purposely limited to highlight one or two, three things, which are important and timely from the perspective of this Commission. Council will examine the priorities submitted by Commissions, districts, various stakeholders and through community surveys, and will have the difficult task of reconciling these priorities, and still some things will not get done in one year.

Mr. Clifton added that airport operations are already guided by a long-range plan, and most of the big things that are on the table for the next twelve months are already identified. Still, Council is interested in learning of a handful of things that are important in the coming year. Mr. Clifton then gave examples of processes that could be looked at, such as commission roles, having liaisons to Council, or a more frequent access to Council. This summarizes how this component fits in a more complete strategic retreat for Council.

Chairman Dada recommended that Commissioners prepare their priorities to be discussed at the next meeting, and the top couple of choices will be transmitted to the City Manager.

Commissioner Miller suggested, in order to facilitate the process, that Chairman Dada and Vice Chairman Corcoran think of four or five topics that they will present at the next meeting instead of going through numerous suggestions.

Commissioner Freymuth proposed an ad-hoc committee to receive the suggestions from all Commissioners then proceed with Commissioner Miller's suggestion to filter down ideas.

Airport Executive Director Aguirre proposed to survey the Commission next week for input of all members' priorities and focuses, compile a list, evaluate how different or similar the priorities are, and work with Chairman Dada and Vice Chairman Corcoran to dwindle it down, and provide the more focused set of priorities before the next meeting to be discussed on September 22nd.

City Manager Clifton indicated that the Council Visioning Retreat will take place on November 19 and 20th, so the Airport Commission can still discuss this in October. He clarified that Council is looking for priorities that are fairly large-scale in nature, either capital projects or services, and that take substantial time. This doesn't preclude normal Council or Commission work which takes a meeting to achieve from continuing.

Chairman Dada asked whether this would be for the upcoming fiscal year, or for the long-term vision of the airport.

Mr. Clifton replied that it's a little bit of both as some things can't get done in twelve months. For instance, reconciling airport car rental operations is not done quickly or easily, Council would want to know how the priority ranked and whether there is time on the Council's agenda to do that now and they won't take on another responsibility because this one will be time consuming. Or it can be something new or previously discussed without gaining a lot of traction, like direct international flights. The Commission needs to identify what is most timely, what is the most important to do the soonest, and it may take more than one year to finish.

8. COMMISSIONERS REQUESTS AND REPORTS: None

9. REPORT OF CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS:

- 9.A. Past City Council Actions
- 9.B. Future City Council Actions

10. RECEIVE AND FILE:

- 10.A Airline Activity Report July 2021
- 10.B Airlines Schedules September 2021

11. ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: Adjourn the meeting. **Moved by Commissioner Burke, seconded by Commissioner Hedrick and unanimously approved noting the absence of Commissioner Suero.**

The Airport Commission adjourned at 6:25 P.M. to a Regular Meeting on September 22, 2021, at 5:30 P.M. via videoconference.

Nadia P. Seery
Executive Administrative Assistant