

Wilmington Airport Task Force
Initial Meeting, 11/6/2019
New Castle County Government Center, 87 Reads Way, New Castle
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Alan Levin
Rick Deadwyler
Col. Mike Moyer
Councilman Kenny Woods
Councilman George Smiley
Lt. Col. Tim Hoyle
Michael Hales
Dr. Debbie Bullock
Chris Buccini

By Phone:

Paul McConnell
Dr. Lora Johnson

Staff:

Nick Brannick
Tamarra Morris

County Executive Meyer thanked the Task Force members for serving on the task force and reiterated the goals of the group:

- According to the terms of the 30-year lease signed in 1995 and which expires in 2025, New Castle County must determine by June 2020 whether to notify DRBA of any intent to terminate the agreement or decide to make no changes, in which case the parties enter into another 30-year lease.
- This Task Force must consider what opportunities exist for the airport, keeping in mind two goals:
 - What is best for the taxpayers who own the facility?
 - What opportunities exist for economic development in the area?

Nick Brannick from the New Castle County Office of Law discussed FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requirements for this Task Force, including:

- Email communication among a quorum of task force members is deemed a 'meeting' and thus is subject to FOIA
- Meeting minutes will be kept and published
- Personal notes kept by members of the Task Force are not subject to FOIA
- The Task Force members shall preserve sent and received email messages regarding the work of the Task Force

Reviewing the consultant proposals:

- Four (4) consultants responded to a request from the county to provide proposals

- One of those respondents was disqualified as they were above the specified financial threshold
- The Task Force members individually reviewed three proposals and discussed their merits
- The expectation is that the selected consultant will review all documents
- The Task Force is the body that will make a recommendation to the County Executive; the consultant will prepare an analysis for discussion

Consultant selection:

- Of the three proposals under consideration, Airport Business Solutions (ABS) was ranked highest, based on the proposal's relevancy and consultant's experience with similar topics.
- There was discussion about whether there could be a conflict of interest if there is a chance of future commercial aviation at the Wilmington Airport, since ABS has provided services to Philadelphia International Airport (PHL).
- Recommendation of the Chair, seconded by multiple members, was to go back to ABS and inquire about any conflicts of interest, and if those concerns are satisfied, to proceed with a contract with ABS. If they can not satisfy that concern, then the Task Force will work with the second-choice consultant: Ernst & Young.
- All members then voted to approve the recommendation of the Chair to engage ABS, subject to resolving the conflict of interest question.

Timeline:

- The Task Force will likely have two more meetings
- Next meeting in early January, after Consultant reviews leases, financial data, other needed information, and makes recommendation for what they see the Wilmington Airport opportunities to be.
- The Consultant will present a preliminary report to the Task Force and address questions / comments from the Task Force members.
- Consultant will then prepare a final report for the Task Force
- Task Force will meet again to prepare a written recommendation letter to the CE, including the Consultant's report

January meeting (tentative): Weds 1/8/2020, 9-11am

The Consultant will be expected to present at that meeting

Request: can there be an interim meeting before January to tour the airport? (Tamarra to coordinate and share details with Task Force members).

Public Comment:

Joe Martin, Dumont Aviation Group: We're excited that the Task Force has been empaneled and are available to provide data that might be needed. We ask that the airport tenants be kept in mind as the consultant proceeds with the analysis and ask that the consultant consider the processes that tenants encounter in working out of the Wilmington Airport. Some of these processes work well; others do not work well for tenants.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25am