

**Michigan Aeronautics Commission
General Aviation Committee**

To promote long-term, sustainable growth of general aviation throughout Michigan.

Commissioner Pete Kamarainen, Chairman

*Office of Aeronautics
Commission Room
2700 Port Lansing Road
Lansing MI 48906*

February 26, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Dick Acker, Dennis Bowdoin, Bryan Budds, Brad Frederick, Eric Jaroch, Pete Kamarainen, Karl Klimek, David Powell, John Strehl

Members Absent: Sean Brosnan, Bill Cattley, Rick Fiddler, Paul Flinsky, Mark Johnson, Mark Perry

Aero Staff Present: Rick Hammond, Hilary Vanderstow

Other Present: Sean Harte, Jim Koslosky, Stephanie Snell, Miles Weaver

Introductions & Welcome

Pete Kamarainen opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes Approval

Meeting minutes from October 23, 2012 were approved.

Update from John Strehl / FBO's

Pete Kamarainen opens the discussion of keeping fixed base operator (FBO)'s active.

John Strehl describes the decrease demand for 100 lo – lead fuel. Airports with FBO's are looking for an advocacy program. 100 lo – lead is less than 1% of the total petroleum market. Many dealers are getting out of the 100 lo – lead market completely. FBO's are closing due to this lack of sales and causing pilots to fly further for petroleum.

Pete Kamarainen explained the importance and the help of having a business based on an airport.

Maple Grove Airport recently downgraded their fuel farm to 1,000 gallon tanks. This has lowered cost and restrictions on Dennis Bowdoin. By buying in a smaller volume but sharing with other airports, the fuel is still being purchased at the same price. However, they restrictions such as inspections are no longer needed. By downgrading the fuel farm, Dennis is looking to save a few thousand dollars. If more fuel is needed, another 1,000 above ground tank can be added.

Roscommon County Blodgett Memorial Airport only sold around 500 gallons of fuel in January. This is mostly due to the season, and fewer pilots are out flying. The fee for insurance on underground storage is also too high to make a profit.

Rick Hammond brought up the topic of the AOPA memberships. Overall, the membership has not dropped noticeably. There is no good way to track how many members are flying.

The numbers of people getting involved in every recreational sport is decreasing. The younger generations are not getting involved in community activities such as flying, snowmobiling, boy scouts and girl scouts. There has been a huge shift culturally. Flying is not seen as an exciting thing to younger generations. Flying is known as a normal mode of transportation.

Social Media Update

The Fly Michigan Facebook page is up to approximately 150 “likes.” Now the goal is to add content and encourage people to contribute by adding pictures and events to the page.

SocialFlight is a website that shows all aviation events happening near a specified location. This website would be a good tool to use together with the Fly Michigan Facebook page.

Flying Clubs / Encouraging Interest

The AOPA has been pushing for more flying clubs in order to get airplanes out of the hangers and in the air. They are working on information sessions and webinars to learn about the ideal flying club. There are a few successful flying clubs around Michigan currently, including one located in Flint. However, flying clubs have a difficult time gaining pilots. The price of earning a pilot’s license and joining a flying club is often too high for people to justify.

Brad Frederick brought up the idea of trying to get airplane owners to donate their un – used airplanes to flying clubs or other aviation clubs.

As a committee, actions need to be considered on how to motivate and encourage people to get their airplanes out of the hangers and fly. One idea to do this would be to start a campaign such as “fly a family.” If general aviation pilots could donate their time and money to take interested people flying, it would help fuel sales as well as spark interest for younger pilots.

Minnesota has a passport program that which rewards people for visiting multiple airports in the state. When a person visits an airport, they receive some sort of stamp on their “passport.” After so many stamps, the person receives some kind of gift such as a bag, or jacket. This could be a starting point for a campaign in Michigan. The top pilots could be recognized in newspapers, or newsletters, including the Office of Aeronautics’ e – newsletter.

The Michigan Air Tour is still successful; however, most of the attendees seem to be the same year after year. Younger people are needed to keep the air tour going in the

future. One idea to get new people aware and interested could be to allow non – pilots on the air tour with the help of sponsors. Another option would be to start an air race, with prizes offered for the pilot / plane with the quickest time, most stops, or other accomplishments. In the past, Michigan has been the home to aviation rallies such as the Southern Michigan All Ladies Lark (S.M.A.L.L.). The S.M.A.L.L. rally made pilots rely on a compass, clock and chart in order to reach a pre – determined destination within a certain time.

The term “race” creates a question for liability. A way to get around this while still appealing to the younger people could be a day long air tour, with a few airports involved. This would minimize cost (no hotel, etc.) and could help promote the original air tour. A day air tour could incorporate Michigan’s lighthouses and great lakes. They could also be centered around events going on near airports in Michigan. These ideas would help get airplanes out of the hanger and flying.

Another idea to get the older generation back flying is to have mentor programs with new or in school pilots. This would give new pilots experience, as well as keep older pilots in the air, that might not be able to fly on their own. It also keeps people purchasing fuel.

Since the cost for a pilot’s license is high, the committee brought up offering grants to students. The commission gets funding for an Air Service grant, which goes to the public airports for marketing. However, the private, non – profit, general aviation airports would not be eligible. If a grant were offered, a non – profit organization could handle the grants. The recipients of the grant would have the obligation to work with kids in their community to help mentor young people. They could also attend the Michigan Great Lakes Conference, and become an active member in the aviation community. The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) would be interested in getting involved with offering grants. The committee would like to schedule a meeting with a member of AOPA to discuss this opportunity.

The committee would need the help of foundations, flight schools, the Office of Aeronautics, and the Commission to get a foundation to offer grants. The selling line of the new foundation could be to “Support the creation of a foundation to fund grants to learn to fly.” The AOPA is going to want to know where the money would be coming from, before they take a part in the foundation. The committee will speak with Rick Fiddler regarding getting in contact with the West Michigan Aviation Academy for money sponsorship.

Other

Many people are not aware of the community events happening at the airports around Michigan. Midwest Flyer magazine has a Department of Transportation section in their publication for two states that list all of the aviation events in the community. Getting a section for Michigan would be beneficial for people who are not online, but are still interested in learning about aviation events.

Alpena is in the running to become the center of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) testing, development, maintenance, and manufacturing.

Starting March 1st, 2013, Clare Municipal Airport will be offering free AvFuel. When a pilot stops at the airport and purchases fuel, they can enter into a drawing to try to win

fuel up to \$100.

The Great Lakes Aviation Conference is scheduled for February 14 – 15, 2014.

Many people would like the Office of Aeronautics to create a teacher's workshop.

Brad Frederick met with the Michigan Private Airstrip Owners Association regarding the recreational use statute and they have decided to back off from the original extensive amendment. They are requesting letters of support from the General Aviation Committee and the Aeronautics Commission.

Pete Kamarainen adjourned the meeting at 12:08.