



FLEMING FLYER

FFAA Meeting – Tuesday, January 5th
6:30 PM Potluck Dinner, 7:00 PM Business Meeting

President's Pen

by Jay Ericson

The future of the Airport Tenants Organization

A question came up at the October Tenants Association meeting as to the purpose and ongoing viability of the Airport Tenants Association.

At that time the decision was made to give it some thought and revisit the question in January and make a decision at that time. What none of us did was to take a look at the calendar when we made that decision. The first Tuesday in January was January 1st so there was no January meeting. So since there was no January meeting I thought I would lay out the essence of the October discussion and what the options discussed are. Perhaps there are others?

The discussion came about because attendance has been declining dramatically. The thoughts were that there are no big issues going on right now so there is no driving reason for people to come or, perhaps, for the organization to exist at all.

Back in 1999 the issue was taxes and Jim Hancock led the fight at the capitol to reign in the taxes. Ten years ago the issue was saving the airport manager's job. I am happy to report that we won the fight on taxes and the city has committed to a full time airport manager for the foreseeable future.

Ten years ago we had 40 members. This past year we had only 10 members, and there were months where we didn't have that many attendees at the meeting.

So as we discussed in October the options are:

- Do nothing and continue into the future as we have since the organization was founded.
- Disband the organization. Find a good home for the money in the treasury and tell the IRS and the State of Minnesota that we are disbanded. The problem with this is that if we ever want to have an organization again there are a lot of things we would need to do to recreate it. It isn't as simple as just deciding to meet again. Once it's gone it's gone.
- Change the meeting frequency to some other number that makes more sense. Maybe quarterly, or semi annually. Then if it still doesn't seem to have any purpose after, say, a year, then we disband it.

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One person made the point that maybe the Airport Advisory Commission fills the role that the Tenants Association used to fill. An Airport Commission member pointed out that no one ever appears at the commission meetings to make their point or provide their opinion. When a significant outreach was made to the entire airport community prior to bringing Swift Fuel to the airport only two people showed up at that meeting. That begs the question, does anyone care? Are people willing to let the nine members of the commission, two of who aren't pilots, make these decisions for everyone?

For that matter, there is a vacancy on the commission at this time and when an airport hangar owner and frequent critic was approached about filling the vacancy they declined because they have a social commitment every Tuesday evening that they are unwilling to give up for 6 hours a year. Apparently they would rather stay on the sidelines and criticize instead.

Another member of the Association and a Commission member mentioned that the airport runway and taxiway will be undergoing a complete rebuild and partial reconfiguration and couldn't understand why people who use this airport seemingly have no interest in the project, except of course to take shots at airport management and commission members.

The next Airport Association meeting is February 5th at 7:00. Please come and help us decide how or whether the Tenants Association will or should continue.

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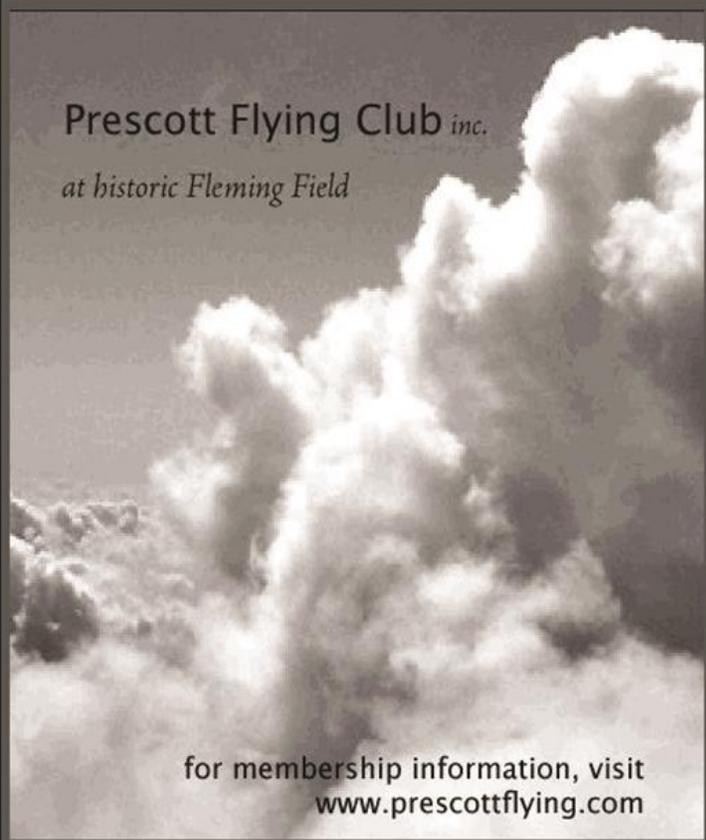
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