

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date	August 24, 2009
	Agenda Item No. 56 Roll Call No. <u>09-</u> Communication No. <u>09-607</u> Submitted by: Craig Smith, A.A.E., Aviation Director	

AGENDA HEADING:

Public hearing on consideration of renaming the Des Moines International Airport.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend that the Des Moines City Council support the Airport Board’s decision to retain the name of our airport as the “Des Moines International Airport”.

On June 22, 2009 the Council referred to the Airport Board a request to rename the Des Moines International Airport. The proposal from Dr. K. L Hebron of Indianola is to rename the facility “Luther Smith International Airport”.

On July 13, 2009, the Council referred a second request to the Airport Board from John and Kay Jones of Des Moines to rename the facility “Arthur E. Thomas International Airport”.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the name of the airport would change the following is the estimated fiscal impact:

Amount: \$85,780 (Estimated)

Staff has gathered estimates for costs associated with either proposal. A preliminary list of items to be changed along with an estimate of costs:

Stationary	\$	615
Business Cards		1,721
New Airport Logo		10,000
Vehicle Markings		1,000
Front Entrance Sign		12,000
Street signs		2,045
Iowa DOT Signs		32,000
New clothing w/logo		1, 275
Staff time (estimated)*		25,000
 Estimated total		 \$85,780

In addition to the direct cost to the Airport, there are many tenants on the Airport that will incur costs associated with changing the Airport name.

*Staff time includes changes to the Airport website and various legal changes. It should be noted that neither proposer has suggested a financial contribution towards deferring associated costs.

Funding Source: The Airport has not budgeted for this item.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

On August 4, 2009, the Airport Board took this matter up in a public meeting. Airport staff provided the Board with a significant amount of information concerning changing the name of the Airport.

Attachment No. 1 to the Roll Call includes the Board Communication and all the information provided the Board for their consideration.

Attachment No. 2 to the Roll Call includes information that was presented at the Board Meeting on August 4, 2009.

It appears that the impetus for renaming the Airport began with a Des Moines Register article written by Marc Hansen, dated May 21, 2009. The article provides a summary of Luther Smith's life, first as a young child learning to fly aircraft at the Des Moines Airport and then his subsequent accomplishments as a World War II pilot and prisoner of war.

It is apparent that the article prompted the request by Dr Hebron, as it is referenced in his narrative.

In accordance with the City naming policy, Aviation Department staff requested a review by the City's Legal, Police, Fire, Information Technology, and Engineering Departments, as well as the Historic Preservation Commission.

The responses from the Police, Fire, and Information Technology Departments indicate that there will be no impact on these departments. The Engineering Department's response provides some cost data concerning potential changes needed to street and highway signs, which have been summarized in the Fiscal Impact section of this communication. The Legal Department response refers to the numerous places in the City Code and the Airport Board Regulations that refer to the Des Moines International Airport. Changes to those documents would occur by amendment.

Staff did not receive a formal response from the Historic Preservation Commission, but did receive comments from one of its members, Mr. Denny Marchand. His response follows:

The Tuskegee Airmen were by far the most unwanted group of pilots in WWII. Although highly qualified, and skilled, it took Eleanor Roosevelt's special touch to help get them in combat where they could risk their lives in service of their country. Luther Smith is an Iowan War Hero. His accomplishments through life serve as a reminder that anyone can overcome great odds and make a difference. I would strongly advocate re-naming Des Moines International Airport to Luther Smith International Airport as a tremendous way to honor Luther Smith's past, and a part of history that the citizens of Des Moines will always be proud of.

In accordance with the naming policy, staff gathered a significant amount of information which was presented to the Airport Board and is included in Attachment No. 1 to the Roll Call.

General Comments Concerning Both Proposals:

Aviation Department staff offers the following comments using the criteria established by the naming policy. The first three comments refer to both the requests equally:

1. **Overall Benefit to the City of Des Moines**

Determining the overall benefit to the City of Des Moines is, at best, difficult. If there are any tangible benefits, this can only be realized over time. There are no known immediate financial benefits to the City or the Airport.

Airports located in large populated cities with multiple airports have, out of necessity, adopted other names to avoid confusion. Over time, the public has become familiar with many of the names of these major airports (LaGuardia Airport, etc.), but they do not represent a valid comparison to Des Moines.

For those airports in U.S. cities similar to Des Moines, there are cases where airports have been named for other than the primary city in which they are located. Examples are as follows:

Airports named after individuals:

T.F. Green Int'l Airport
Austin Straubel Int'l Airport
Bishop International Airport
Hector International Airport
Norman Y. Mineta Airport
Eugene Bradley International
Will Rogers World Airport
Gerald R. Ford Airport
General Mitchell Int'l Airport

Airports named for other geographic regions:

Capital City Airport
Tri-Cities Airport
Eastern Iowa Airport
Southwest Florida Airport
Valley International Airport

As is evident, these airports are not identifiable to the general public. It is clear to staff that to the average traveler, the location of these airports is obscured because of the chosen name. From a marketing and branding perspective, staff believes that any renaming will be detrimental. People from around the world seeking air travel to Des Moines may experience difficulty identifying the best or closest airport. The Iowa Caucuses, along with a number of other events, give Des Moines an international position.

Over the course of the past five years the Airport has spent a considerable amount of time, effort, and dollars to market and brand the Airport. The Board established a committee in 2004 for the purpose of developing an identifying logo. The Airport spent many hours and over \$5,000 on this project.

Additionally, the Board has authorized and expended over \$500,000 on marketing and advertising efforts during the past five years. We have used the logo exclusively in all our marketing materials along with television and print advertising. Changing the name of the Airport will require development of a new logo and staff will also need to create a successful marketing campaign.

2. Positive Reflection on the City

It is difficult for staff to evaluate if either proposed change will be a positive reflection on the City. This is very subjective and can only be determined over time. In the case of Luther Smith, because he is still living, this perspective could change in the future as well.

3. Purpose and Mission of the City

The City's Vision Statement is -- We aspire to be the city of choice for ourselves and future generations - beautiful, clean and safe. We will achieve our vision through a healthy economy, strong businesses, vital neighborhoods, excellent schools, a vibrant downtown, and extensive recreational and cultural opportunities. We will preserve our City's friendly, hometown atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of its people. We require innovative governance that is accessible, accountable, and efficient with a system of funding that is fair, affordable, and stable.

The City's Mission Statement is -- To provide and maintain essential services that meet the collective basic needs of the citizens of Des Moines and to identify and seize opportunities for a higher quality of life.

It is not immediately clear whether either naming proposal would significantly deter from, or support, the Vision Statement or Mission Statement of the City.

Comments Specific to the Luther Smith Proposal:

Very briefly, Mr. Luther Smith was born and raised in Des Moines, graduated from Roosevelt High School, and received two engineering degrees from the University of Iowa. He learned how to fly aircraft at the Des Moines Airport under the instruction of Howard Gregory before joining the military and becoming a Tuskegee Airman.

Mr. Smith is a World War II veteran and was wounded in combat when he bailed out of his P-51 fighter plane over Yugoslavia on his 133rd combat mission. He was captured and spent several months as a prisoner of war.

In 2007, President Bush honored Mr. Smith and 200 other airmen with the Congressional Gold Medal. Mr. Smith has also received the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor.

4. The proposed name is well known to all citizens and/or acknowledged by other national, state or local community organizations for lasting significance.

It is unknown and difficult to determine how many people in the community recognize the name Luther Smith. Staff is confident that there are several people supportive of this proposal. This is evident by the information that was received and included in the information provided to the Airport Board.

5. Citizen input and support for name change/commemoration.

The Airport received a number of letters of support and additional documentation related to the Luther Smith request. It is anticipated that other support, both for and against, changing the name of the Airport will be provided to the Council during the public hearing process. It should also be noted that comments associated with the newspaper articles surrounding the renaming of the Airport are largely opposed to any renaming.

6. No duplication of names or repeated recognition of a specific person or group.

No other airport has been named in honor of Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith has previously been honored in Des Moines at two different locations. First, Mr. Smith is included in the recognition of the Tuskegee Airmen at the Fort Des Moines Museum. Additionally, in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen, there is a replica P-51 aircraft located at the entrance to the Iowa Air National Guard Base. The Tuskegee Airman Memorial was dedicated on November 9, 2002 and sponsored by the Fort Des Moines Park and Education Center. The display features the names of Tuskegee Airmen on a plaque mounted on the base of the replica aircraft. Mr. Smith's name also appears on the side of the aircraft. Attachment No. 1 to the Roll Call includes pictures of the replica P-51 aircraft, the plaque, and the side of the aircraft depicting Mr. Smith's name.

Comments Specific to the Arthur Thomas Proposal:

Very briefly, Mr. Arthur Thomas was the Airport Manager for Des Moines Airport from 1932 until he retired in 1965. It is clear that Mr. Thomas had significant influence on the planning and design of the Airport from its inception and is generally credited with much of its the early growth and development.

Included in Attachment No. 1 to the Roll Call provides a summary of Mr. Thomas's accomplishments. This information was provided by individuals who support the proposal.

4. The proposed name is well known to all citizens and/or acknowledged by other national, state or local community organizations for lasting significance.

It is unknown and difficult to determine how many people in the community recognize the name of Arthur Thomas. Staff is confident that there are several people supportive of this proposal. This is evident by the information that was sent to be included in this communication.

5. Citizen input and support for name change/commemoration.

It is anticipated that other support, both for and against, changing the name of the Airport will be provided to the Council during the public hearing process.

Included in Attachment No. 1 to the Roll Call are additional letters of support and opposition to changing the name of the Airport. It should also be noted that comments associated with the newspaper articles surrounding the renaming of the Airport are largely opposed to any renaming.

6. No duplication of names or repeated recognition of a specific person or group.

There are no other airports named for Mr. Thomas.

He has been honored by the City of Des Moines with a plaque currently located in the Terminal Lobby. Attachment No. 1 to the Roll Call includes a picture of the plaque displayed in the Terminal Lobby.

AIRPORT BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On August 4, 2009, the Airport Board held a public hearing on the issue of renaming the Airport. There were nine speakers that provided additional information to the Board concerning this matter. The Board did receive and file additional information provided by the speakers. This information is provided in Attachment No. 2 to the Roll Call.

The Airport Board voted 5-2 to retain the current name: Des Moines International Airport.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: June 22, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-1153

Action: Referred to the Airport Board a request to rename the Des Moines International Airport. The proposal from Dr. K. L Hebron of Indianola is to rename the facility "Luther Smith International Airport". Moved by Hensley to receive, file and refer to the Airport Board for their recommendation, pursuant to the Naming Policy. Motion Carried 6-1. Absent: Mahaffey.

Date: July 13, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-1263

Action: Referred to the Airport Board a request to rename the Des Moines International Airport from John and Kay Jones of Des Moines is to rename the facility "Arthur E. Thomas International Airport". Moved by Meyer to receive, file and refer to the Airport Board for their recommendation, pursuant to the Naming Policy. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: August 10, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-1263

Action: Set date of hearing as 08/24/2009 for consideration to rename the Airport. Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Roll Call Number: 09-1442

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Date: August 4, 2009.

Resolution Number: A09-147

Action: The Airport Board recommends that the Airport retain the current name: Des Moines International Airport. Moved by Hansell. Motion Carried 5-2; Yeas: Brooks, Cupp, Erickson, Hansell, Ward. Nays: Gentry, Ross.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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