

*The Maple, Beech and Cameron Lakes Area Property Owners Association*

Presentation to County Council – February 20<sup>th</sup> 2008

Thanks to organizations that provided information:

- Minister of Finance – The Honourable Greg Sorbara
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- ORNGE- operators of air ambulance services
- Ministry of Health
- Transport Canada

Today we hope to detail our major concerns re the proposed addition of a crosswind runway to the Stanhope Airport. A team of 4 people whose résumés are attached have spent hundreds of hours researching these issues. For each concern we have listed with it the 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification. We want to make it clear that we are not recommending the closing of the existing airport. Our concern is with the viability of the proposed addition of a crosswind runway. The support materials are all available on an as requested basis. The MBCLAPOA would also be willing to schedule follow up meetings to provide further detail and insight into the findings.

Given the large upfront costs and potentially enormous impact on local taxpayers we feel strongly that this proposal should be researched and debated thoroughly by all interested parties.

**ISSUES**

1. **Limited utility of a crosswind runway.** - A number of members of our association are pilots and regular users of the airport. Pilot after pilot have told us, and transport Canada has confirmed, that **“no safety conscious pilot would land his plane at an airport where the main, prevailing wind runway is not long enough for them to take off”** It is the prevailing wind runway, not the cross wind runway, that determines what size and type of planes that can use an airport. Our research has been unable to find an airport where the cross wind runway is longer than the prevailing wind runway – yet that is exactly what the “Stanhope Airport Business Vision” proposes

Examples:

Airport	Runway length – in feet		Comments
	Prevailing Wind (PW)	Cross Wind (CW)	
Muskoka	6,000’	2,180’	CW = grass
Simcoe	5,000’	none	No cross wind
Lindsay	3,500’	2,642’	CW = grass
Oshawa	4,000’	2,670’	
Stanhope	2,500’	4,000’	CW proposed

The existing runway is ideally situated, based on prevailing wind patterns over 90% of the time. Adding a prevailing wind runway will only increase the usability of the airport by approximately 5%. **Is a 5% increase in usability worth \$ millions?**

- **AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PLAN – CROSSWIND RUNWAY INVESTIGATION STANHOPE (HALIBURTON) AIRPORT**, Pryde Schropp McComb Inc, Sept. 25, 2001
- “Prevailing winds are from the west and as a result, the existing runway orientation is near optimum as a primary runway” (p15)
- ...the Stanhope Airport is proving 90.36% usability to small single engine aircraft. A small second runway (<800 metres) would result in a maximum of 95% usability for small engine aircraft. However, most larger aircraft that can land/takeoff on the 1200 metre long runway can handle a 13 knot crosswind, and as a result the usability of Runway 09-27 increase to 96.69% (p16)

- **1984 MASTER PLAN STUDY AND REPORT BY MARSHALL, MACKLIN, MONAGHAN ASSOCIATES**
  - Investigated a number of alternatives for the airport, including a crosswind runway similar to, though less ambitious than the one currently proposed. This option was not advanced, in part, due to the limitations which would result from surrounding terrain features which could cause turbulence in marginal wind direction conditions (hills immediately to the east and west of proposed runway) similar to those which affect the east end of the current runway. Limitations to the usable length of this alignment (Transport Canada design criteria) due to terrain concerns were also noted, as well as excessive cost.

2. **Impacts on Taxpayers** – Airports are very expensive to build, to maintain and most importantly most of them lose money year after year. Algonquin Highlands has already spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars on the proposed crosswind runway. The cost estimates that this vision is based on were generated in 2002-2003. Similar projects have seen costs escalate by 75% to more than double in just the last two years. The vision estimates that a complete re-build and upgrade of the existing runway and apron areas for 2010 will cost just over half of the 1988-9 cost estimate!

During our meeting with Ontario Finance Minister Sorbara he indicated that in his view the cost estimates for the proposed Stanhope airport expansion were grossly underestimated. He also indicated that the provincial government had no money for “luxury” projects like this.

In addition

- Many costs associated with the proposed expansion have not been included in the documents or budgetary estimates so far presented in its’ support;
- Environmental Impact Studies have not even been considered, though they will be required by both the Provincial and Federal governments if they are to consider funding at any level; Indemnification of property owners for degradation of or access to properties necessitated by clearances required at runway ends; Indemnification of property owners in the areas immediately adjacent to runway ends as a result of reduced property values or enjoyment of property due to noise, hazard or insurance concerns.
- Ongoing Operating losses - Other municipal airports in the vicinity all have on going losses. In fact we have been unable to find an Ontario Municipal airport that is making a profit or even breaking even.
  - Oshawa - last year losses \$270,000(1) - in previous years it was losing approximately \$700,000 per year
  - Lindsay - Lindsay lost \$40,000 (1) last year, on a 75,000 population base.
  - Simcoe –airport consistently loses money – Orillia’s 16% share of these losses and ongoing repairs was \$83,338 last year (total losses and repairs = \$510,000) (2)
  - Muskoka Airport – requires an annual subsidy from their taxpayers of \$335,000 (3)
  - Peterborough Airport – loses \$150,000 - \$200,000 per year (4)
    1. Steve Wilcox - Mgr Oshawa Airport
    2. ***Orillia Packet Times*** August 2007
    3. Muskoka Airport Strategic Business Plan 2006
    4. Lindsay Airport Meeting Jan 12 2008

While it may be possible to get capital cost financing from other levels of Government we all know that neither the province nor the feds have any interest in offsetting ongoing operating losses, Years ago when Orillia expressed moral support for the Simcoe airport did the plans call for their taxpayers to be providing annual subsidies of \$83,000? They are questioning the value of this cost – yet they have a population base of over 30,000 compared to Haliburton County at approximately 15,000 and they share the losses with Barrie and Oro-Medonte.

***Orillia Packet Times*** Article - August 15, 2007

The City of Orillia will review its involvement in the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport, following a damning report from the city treasurer that sees negligible benefits from investments in the facility over the years.

"*There does not appear to be returns to the city, except perhaps some political goodwill,*" Bob Ripley stated in a report discussed at Monday's council committee meeting.

The city has also been asked to contribute \$2.3 million as its capital share of a \$14.3-million, 10-year development plan at the facility on Line 7 in Oro-Medonte.

This year, Orillia's operating and capital commitments add up to \$83,338. 16% of the total

3. **Safety Of The Proposed Cross Wind Runway** – pilots and residents should be concerned that the runway, in direct contravention of Transport Canada guidelines, will be located less than 8 km of a number of landfill sites. Due to the potential for bird strikes.

The association has presented detailed information to the Algonquin Highlands council, citing Trans. Can. Regulations (*TP312 E*), illustrated with maps and diagrams and quoting officials of regulating authorities to this effect.

- o Bird strikes pose serious aviation risks to fliers. Transport Canada regulations recommend that no airport be located within 8 km of a landfill site. Three landfill sites are located within 8 km of the Stanhope Airport. The traffic patterns for both the existing and particularly the proposed runways route aircraft within less than 1 km of the Maple Lake landfill.

The glide path of the proposed runway contains some significant obstacles that have not been addressed and in fact may not be fixable. They include a solid granite ridge to the NW of the proposed strip which is 80 metres too high for safe take off and landing.

- o In order for an airstrip to be *certified or registered* its' construction and situation MUST conform to Transport Canada requirements. The Haliburton Stanhope Airport is currently operated as a *Registered Aerodrome*, which is a status requiring less frequent and rigorous inspections than for a *Certified Airport*, but is the minimum requirement for a facility to be listed in the Canada Flight Supplement. This listing is essential if one is to attract new operations of any magnitude. Whether registered or certified, technical requirements are essentially the, same though certification would be required in order for significant charter or scheduled operations. A significant limitation in respect to these specifications, one of which relates to the glide path approaching airplanes will take and the opposing take off pattern, is a solid granite ridge to the NW of the proposed strip. This feature is 80 metres too high from approximately 1 KM to the NW to permit operation as planned of the new runway. In addition trees on private properties to the NW to the shores of Cameron Lake will have to be removed, as well as trees to the shores of the Gull River (which represent the northern and southern boundaries respectively)

#### 4. **Economic Development Justification**

There are no identifiable cases to show that an investment in airport infrastructure will generate adequate returns to justify the economic investment. In addition there are environmental and social costs that have not been figured in.

We would invite members of council to go back in history to the benefits projected in previous plans for the airport and try and find benefits that have actually come true.

### **HALIBURTON/STANHOPE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT A BUSINESS VISION, Township of Algonquin Highlands, May 2006**

- Claims and projections of greatly increased airport usage and the potential for attracting industry, which would have significant positive impact on job creation and general economic development. These assertions have been made without any large scale, direct contact or interview processes eliciting solid intent from any business or sector to commit to establishing in the area.

### **1984 MASTER PLAN STUDY AND REPORT, Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan Associates**

- Similar projections were made in the reports and studies used to justify other government funding of the extension and improvement of the airport – i.e., did include written and verbal polling of potentially affected companies. To date, airport usage has barely attained the lowest levels projected and no significant additional industrial or other airport related development has been seen in spite of positive responses from many businesses polled.
5. **Public Opposition** – there have been 3 surveys or petitions that catalogued the public's opposition to this plan.
- This past summer over 650 people in Algonquin Highlands signed a petition asking that all spending and development on the proposed runway cease.
  - An independent survey carried out by ULINKS (Trent University) which achieved a response rate of 52% indicated that 70% of respondents did not feel the new runway would be beneficial
  - **An Algonquin Highlands councilor carried out an unofficial survey. Only 10% of people surveyed thought the project should move forward as planned.**

**Proposed Airport Expansion Survey**, Chris Torzsok (4<sup>th</sup> year Trent University Student), 2006 (this survey was supervised by faculty at Trent University to comply with statistical models and sampling requirements as well as U-Links to maintain impartiality). Results:

- 89% of respondents never use the airport
- 30% thought the expansion will be beneficial
- 65% felt it would create excessive noise
- 22% felt it was a wise use of township money
- 68% felt it would disrupt the peaceful rural character
- 58% were concerned that it would harm the environment
- 66% felt economic development based on tourism offered greater social and economic benefits

**Stanhope Airport Questionnaire**, Carol Moffat (Councillor of Algonquin Highlights but not in an official capacity), Dec 2007

- 10% thought the project should move forward as planned
- 48.5% thought that the project should stop immediately
- 35.1% felt that this project should be approached with caution

**In summary, the proposed addition of a cross wind runway at the Stanhope Airport:**

- **is very limited in it's usefulness**
- **will cost area taxpayers dearly for decades to come**
- **will be unsafe**
- **is not economically viable and**
- **is opposed by the voters**

**Given that the county now supports the Stanhope airport with an annual \$10,000 subsidy and both senior levels of government have indicated that they will not subsidize the inevitable annual losses – if this scheme goes ahead is it not inevitable that the annual losses will be borne by all county taxpayers and not just those of Algonquin Highlands?**

**Respected members of council, we would willingly work with this council to develop sound alternate business plans that would create jobs in the County without costing us so dearly.**

**Presented by Doug Palmer** on behalf of the directors of **The Maple, Beech and Cameron Lakes Area Property Owners Association** on February 20<sup>th</sup> 2008

For further information please contact

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### **Comments from Prospective Users of the Stanhope Airport**

**ORNGE** – (air ambulance operators) – Tom Lepine – VP Operations

- Question – does ORNGE need the proposed new crosswinds runway at the Stanhope Airport?
  - Answer - “ORNGE has not identified a need for a new runway at the Stanhope Airport”
- Question – is there a proposal to establish an ORNGE operation at the Stanhope Airport?
  - Answer – “No”

**OPP** – Brian L Wagner – Inspector Field Support Bureau

- Question – Does the municipality of Algonquin Highlands need an additional, crosswinds runway to provide essential OPP services for its ratepayers?
  - Answer -  
The OPP are unable to normally land the OPP Pilatus PC12 fixed wing aircraft on the existing runway at Stanhope. They have and will continue to utilize the Stanhope Airport for the OPP helicopters as required by the local detachment or for fuel stops through the area.
- Question - Has OPP made any requests or recommendations about the proposed expansion?
  - Answer – “No”
- Question - Is there a proposal to establish an OPP operation at the Stanhope airport?
  - Answer – “No”

**Ministry of Natural Resources** – Ken Gibbons – Fire Program Manager

- In order for the CT 415 Water Bomber to land, refuel and take the following are the preferred minimum requirements
  - Runway Length – 4000’
  - Parking area – 120’ x 120’ – cement or asphalt capable of holding the weight of the Chris Lang 415 of approximately 36,750 lbs
  - Fuelling Requirements – Jet A – Single point pressure refuelling
- There has not been any formal discussions between the Stanhope Airport managers and the MNR Fire Program regarding the construction of a cross strip

## Résumés of Researchers

- Paul MacInnes in his corporate life was a Vice President of Canada's largest food company where he was in charge of a division with sales of \$1.1 Billion and 3500 employees. In 1991 Paul founded Paul D. MacInnes & Associates Ltd. a consulting company that has done work for the federal government and all 10 provinces. He has written numerous successful business plans and conducted economic development projects in many parts of Canada. Paul is a full time resident of Haliburton County.
  
- Andy Muirhead has worked in mining and mineral exploration in North and South America, Africa and the South Pacific for over 25 years. **His direct experience includes the planning, construction and operational supervision of private airstrips in 3 countries, leading to an advanced knowledge of technical requirements and regulations.** In addition, his experience includes surveying / map-making, construction planning and supervision and ground testing – geotechnical work.
  
- Ian Wall is a Professional Engineer with over 30 years of experience in a wide variety of engineering functions including design, project management, inspection, maintenance, and quality. He has a cottage and future retirement home on a Maple Lake property that has been in his family since before his birth. He has served as director, vice-president, and president of the MBCLAPOA. In the latter capacity, he did extensive research into the airport expansion proposal and has discussed the proposal with hundreds of people including government agencies, cottagers, and local residents.
  
- Napier Simpson has worked in North and South America as a trainer and a consultant in sales and marketing, tourism, economic development and business planning. He has completed numerous business plans, market viability analyses and been involved with over 20 start-ups. Napier has a bachelor of economics and masters in business administration and splits his time year round between Huron and Haliburton counties.