

Getting the hangar of it

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As the Pembroke and Area Airport continues to be a hub of activity, plans are in the works to build a new hangar.

Laurentian Valley Councillor Allan Wren, chairman of the airport commission, explained the commission is entertaining an expression of interest looking for people who would use a new hangar. The anticipated cost of the project is \$900,000, but Coun. Wren is confident the commission can put a business case together by seeking government grants to help cover a portion of the costs.

He provided an update on airport operations during a recent Laurentian Valley council committee meeting.

Because of the limited space in the existing hangar, the airport is currently losing between \$1,200 and \$2,000 a month for planes it has to turn away, according to Coun. Wren.

“We know the demand is there,” he said.

The hope is that money for the hangar could be obtained from various provincial and federal government sources as well as the commission.

The need for a new hangar could become even more pressing if the Pembroke and Area Airport secures a new airline carrier for scheduled passenger service, Coun. Wren noted.

The commission has received the preliminary results from last year’s survey of the area’s business community to gauge interest in having passenger service out of Pembroke and how much it would be used by businesses. Some items required clarification, but within the next month, it is expected the commission will receive the final report and be prepared to design individualized packages for different airlines and begin making presentations to the airlines, he explained.

Going forward, the Pembroke and Area Airport Commission will become a member of the Ottawa Valley Economic Development partners group.

This was one of the requests made by Coun. Wren, when he made a presentation to Renfrew County council at the end of January.

Part of his pitch was that if Renfrew County wants to be more competitive and open for business, the Pembroke and Area Airport needs to be front and centre and more involved with county departments.

“The airport is a major economic tool and it doesn’t make sense not to be part of the committee,” Councillor Wren said. “We are happy with the invitation.”

He will be making a presentation to the Ottawa Valley Economic Development partners group this month and will become a member around the table.

As indicated during his presentation, Coun. Wren reiterated that the Pembroke and Area Airport is a busy spot and the Ottawa Aviation Services will begin flight training out of the airport next month. This training will meet the growing interest of people who want to learn to fly, who will also be able to rent aircraft. Initially the training can accommodate between eight and 10 people, he noted.

Tina Peplinskie is a Daily Observer multimedia journalist