

## Strawberry Patch RC Pilots Club: Meeting Minutes 7 May 2017

The meeting was called to order at 11:07 AM by President Phil Thain (delayed as two member's vehicles were approaching the field – all felt it was better to wait.) There were 24 members present.

Phil gave a status report and asked if members had any questions, but that there were some new business items that would invite discussion. No general questions.

Phil then asked for the Treasurer's report. Michael Pilla reported that the club has a balance of \$2321.90; not including recently deposited member's dues (\$30) that had not yet cleared. In addition, it was reported that a check had been written, just prior to the start of the meeting, in the amount of \$250.82, reimbursing the club's Field Marshal, Steve Prentice, for repairs to the club mower and fertilizer for the runway and pit area. Michael advised club members that Steve would want to discuss the club mower so to not get overly excited by the size of the balance.

Additional dues were collected prior to, and after, the meeting; eight members renewed paying cash and one person renewed by check. The unreconciled balance, after today's deposits were made, is: \$2,371.08. The bank requires a two-week period before completely clearing deposited checks; hence the term "unreconciled" was used.

Phil then asked for the Field Marshal's report. Steve Prentice explained that, of the \$250.82 reimbursement, approximately \$100 was for fertilizer and the balance was for mower repairs. Steve explained that he was able to obtain a good price on the fertilizer and also parts for the mower; no charge for labor, so a huge thank-you to Steve.

At the October meeting, last year, Steve reported (see prior meeting minutes) that "the mower deck was 'getting thin'". Steve described that, over the winter, he had found a significant hole in the deck that is now seven or eight inches long and that the remaining deck material was so thin that repairs were not possible. A member asked about looking for a replacement deck and Steve responded that he had searched, but was unable to find one. Furthermore, Steve reported that the club mower has a rather small cutting deck of 38". Steve indicated that any replacement should be at least 48". Steve based this recommendation from having to bring his personal mower to the field to cut at least once and observed the significant difference in reduced mowing time and quality of the cut.

Steve also explained that the blades are "high lift" and that the underlying soil is sandy; literally sandblasting the bottom of the cutting deck making the deck thin and causing a large hole to appear.

Steve reported on searches for a used replacement mower and other members brought up mowers that they had noticed posted as available.

There was no disagreement or discussion against purchasing a replacement mower, so Steve will resume his search.

**Phil then asked for the Safety Officer's report.** Eldon "Woody" Woodman mentioned an observation that club members were not always calling out their intentions; especially when about to takeoff and land and in which direction. Woody reminded us that the Club Guidelines request that we notify other pilots in the other two flying stations about our intentions. Members were reminded that landing craft have the right-of-way and that sailplanes, especially as they often do not have motors, have the right-of-way over powered craft.

Woody also said that he goes up and down the flight line as often as he can, but asked that each club member help with safety issues; specifically, if they see something not right to raise the issue. If uncomfortable raising it with the member, then to please report it to one of the club officers. Woody reminded us that it is our club and safety is a responsibility of all of us; so please help other members.

Larry Cutting related a safety issue that took place at his winter flying site in Florida. Apparently, someone had started a large gas-powered plane and was walking it through the pit area to the flight line by holding onto the vertical stabilizer. Unfortunately, he stumbled and the engine went to full power. Fortunately, the pilot was able to kill the engine and no one had been in the way, but the potential for serious damage was recognized and the Florida club instituted a policy that planes could not be started except at the flight line.

Woody explained that we had thought about that and our current club guidelines prohibit taxiing through the pits to the pilot stations, but do allow taxiing to the far ends of the field where there are gaps mowed in the tall grass specifically to allow large planes to be taxied safely to/from the pit area; the assumption being that the primary activity area; between the pits and the flight stations, is still deemed off-limits for taxiing. Woody requested that common sense be followed and, again, asked that we help each other out with safety.

One other item raised by Woody as a potential concern was members, to avoid taxiing in the pit area, carry their models, with engines running, to the flight line, but, the transmitter is still back in the pit area. Woody felt that this was a potentially unsafe situation and requested that the Tx be with the pilot at all times when the engine was running (or, for electric motors, armed.)

**Phil then proceeded to new business.** Phil mentioned that he had been approached by some members wondering if the fences at the ends of the runway could be removed; at least the fence at the large pond end. Before requesting member comments, Phil reminded us that the fence close to the tree line had been put in place to prevent people from driving over Albert's irrigation pipes. Phil repeated his explanation from last season whereby someone had driven over one of the pipes; severely denting it and Albert was not happy about that. The club had voted to reimburse Albert, explaining that we did not think it was a club member. As expected, Albert appreciated the offer, but declined reimbursement. Member consensus appeared to be to keep that fence in place and that it was close enough to the tree line as to not be a factor or concern when landing dead-stick from that direction. Phil stated that, because we mow the pit area and the runway, it is enticing for other, non-club members, to drive and that might have led to driving over Albert's irrigation pipe last season.

The discussion then focused on the fence at the pond end. That fence had been put in place at the end of last season to prevent folks from driving on the club runway; especially over the winter. The fence

appeared to do its job and, as we have observed non-members driving on our runway, throughout the last season, discussion centered on whether to remove the fence to help prevent dead-stick landings from being adversely impacted or whether it was worth keeping the fence in place thereby avoiding having people driving on the runway.

One of the club members, Ernie Eaton, estimated that the lost glide path was between 10 and 12', at most. Furthermore, the orange plastic fencing material was soft enough to not damage planes that might inadvertently hit the fence in an emergency. It was acknowledged that the posts might do some damage, but that the fence appeared to be doing its job. Phil called for a vote and the majority agreed that the fence should remain; at least for a while.

Phil next reminded members that Mark Higgins had a Slo-Poke three-channel trainer available at no cost and folks should contact Mark or any club officer if they were interested. Michael reminded folks that a photo of Mark's plane is on the club website.

This discussion led to a question by Tim Hebert about whether the club had a dedicated trainer as he observed his Florida winter club provides. Phil mentioned that he has several slow planes that he brings out for training. There appeared to be universal surprise that Phil had even one slow plane, but the laughter eventually subsided.

Chris Pinette mentioned that his daughter had assisted in the building of a Sig Kadet and that the model had helped train thousands of new pilots. Chris offered it for club use by interested parties contacting Chris. Chris mentioned that it was nitro powered and that might be a potential problem as so many club members flew electric powered craft, exclusively. After the laughter subsided, Chris was thanked. Mark Higgins also brings a slow flying plane to assist in training. So, with Phil, Chris, and Mark, it was felt that the club had sufficient options to assist training new pilots.

Phil next raised the matter of whether the club should participate in the AMA Headquarters Flight Awareness Day, scheduled for 12 August, and for which AMA headquarters was seeking club participation. Phil was concerned that such programs were generally intended to entice new folks to join a club. Other members joined Phil in mentioning that we have a fixed membership limit in order to keep the number of cars to a small amount on any given flying day. So, introducing someone to RC flying and they informing them that there is a waiting list to join the club, was felt to not be a good idea. The consensus was that our club could not, in any practical sense, participate in the national day.

Phil then reminded all of us about the agreement with Sanford Airport and he and Woody reiterated the 400' altitude limit that each member must observe and that all of us have a responsibility to advise others of either flying too high, or that a full-size plane was in the vicinity and to "stand-down" as quickly as possible; i.e., land or at least reduce altitude quickly. Ernie Eaton explained how, from our field's vantage point, we cannot see, and normally cannot hear, airport operations. However, once a full-size craft was even slightly above the ground, our field is quite visible. Ernie provided some concrete information that, e.g., a Sanford airport runway was 6,000' but our field was perhaps only 8,000 feet from the airport.

Ernie suggested that the club send a copy of the signed airport manager agreement (handled by Ernie Eaton and past-president Larry Ventura) to the airport manager as a reminder that the RC club is still here and that we are abiding by the terms of the agreement. Ernie recommended that the club send a copy by mail and also drop one off in person. Phil and Ernie will discuss and follow-up.

Michael reminded folks that gliders using an ALES device (altitude limiting motor run), set for an intermediate altitude of 125 meters, was actually 410'. The consensus was that 10' was within the margin of error and Woody reminded all of us to help monitor other modelers on the flight line.

There was nothing else to report, so the meeting was adjourned at 11:43 AM.

Michael Pilla, Secretary