



CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

URBAN PLANNING AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

STAFF REPORT

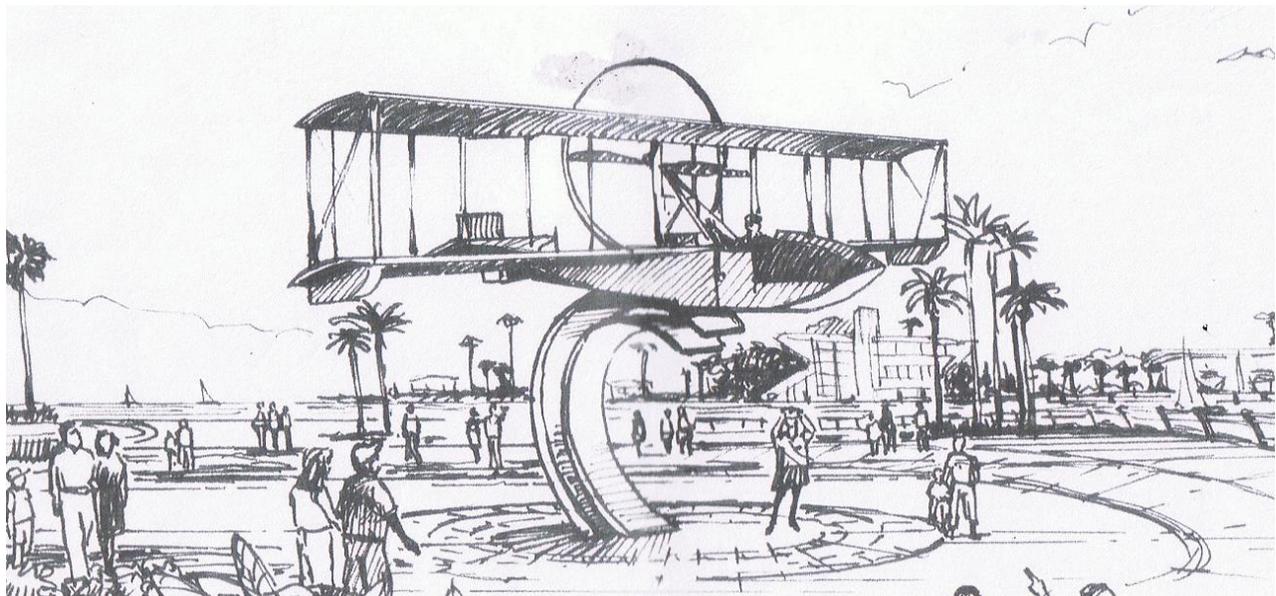
COMMUNITY PLANNING and PRESERVATION COMMISSION MARKERS AND MONUMENTS REQUEST

For **Public Hearing** and **Executive Action** on **September 10, 2019** beginning at 2:00 p.m., in the Auditorium of the Sunshine Center, 330 5th Street North, St. Petersburg, Florida

According to Planning and Development Services Department records, *Commissioner Lisa Wannemacher* resides or has a place of business within 2,000 feet of the subject property. *Commissioner Will Michaels* serves as President of Flight 2014, Inc., the entity responsible for submitting this application. All other possible conflicts should be declared upon the announcement of the item.

Case No.: MM 19-9060003

Address: New St. Petersburg Pier
Location: Pier Approach, See
Owner(s): City of St. Petersburg
Applicant: Flight 2014, Inc.
Request: Installation of monument commemorating the world's first commercial airline, which began operations in St. Petersburg on January 1, 1914.



Conceptual rendering of the proposed monument.

PROJECT OVERVIEW: The applicant, Flight 2014, Inc., is requesting approval from the City of St. Petersburg to install a monument commemorating the world's first commercial airline, the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line, which began operations in St. Petersburg, Florida, on January 1, 1914. Flight 2014, Inc. is a partnership between the Florida Aviation Historical Society, St. Petersburg Museum of History, and the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society. Additional participants include the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and other individuals. On August

REVIEW OF MARKERS AND MONUMENTS: In 2001, City Council adopted an official policy regarding the acceptance of markers and monuments. Under the criteria of this policy, if the marker is used to commemorate an historic event, building or person or group, it must be reviewed by the Community Planning and Preservation Commission ("CPPC") for consistency with the adopted policy. In this role, the CPPC is reviewing the application to certify whether the event, that is the subject of the proposed monument, made a significant contribution to history at a local, state, or national level (or in this instance, international level).

A. For the city of St. Petersburg to consider the placement of a plaque or monument on public property the following criterion must be met:

1. **To commemorate an Event, the event must have made a significant contribution to the history and culture at a local, regional, statewide, or national level. The location of the marker must have an association to the event or show just cause for its placement elsewhere within the City.**

The St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line is significant to the Sunshine City's local culture and heritage because it established St. Petersburg as the birthplace of the world's first regularly scheduled airline. The first flight occurred on January 1, 1914, when the Benoist Type XIV airboat departed for Tampa from the Central Yacht Basin. The event was reported nationally, and its important place in aviation history is undisputed. Attachment E of the application includes extensive details about this celebrated event and its historic figures.

In addition to documented evidence of this important event, the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society was created to commemorate Tony Jannus and the airline. Each year the Society recognizes an individual who has significantly contributed to the advancement of commercial aviation. Past recipients, who come to St. Petersburg to receive the award include such aviation icons as Donald Douglas, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, Frank Borman, and many others. In 2010 the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics designated three historic aerospace sites: Bremen Airport, Germany; The National Mall, Washington D.C.; and the Central Yacht Basin of the St. Petersburg Municipal Marina. Sites previously dedicated include Boeing Red Barn, Seattle; Cape Canaveral Air Station; and Kitty Hawk, N.C.

B. Program

2. **Non-Standard Marker Program: A Non-Standard Marker may be used if a citizen would like to Commemorate or Memorialize an event, person, or building, with a custom designed marker.**

- *The applicant must coordinate all the design and manufacturing of the marker.*

The applicant is coordinating all design and manufacturing of the proposed monument. Additional details are included in the attached application.

- *The applicant will be required to present the design, proposed text, location, and justification for the marker for review by Urban Planning and Historic Preservation staff.*

The applicant has submitted all required information to City staff for review and inclusion in this report.

- *The applicant will be responsible for all costs associated with the marker including the manufacture, construction, permitting, and maintenance fee.*

According to information provided by the applicant, Flight 2014, Inc. "...undertook a vigorous fundraising campaign exceeding [their] goal of \$750,000." The applicant has also met with the City Pier Design and Construction Staff and Cultural Affairs Director to coordinate future maintenance costs, as required by the City's Markers and Monuments Policy.

- *When the marker is associated with an historic Event, Building, or Person, the application shall be reviewed by the CPPC and if the building is a local landmark, the applicant will also require COA approval.*

See above. The site is not a designated local landmark.

3. Monuments and Commemorative Artwork Program

- *Three dimensional monuments or plaque presentations without sculpture: Applications will be reviewed for compatibility with site, relationship to existing or planned public art installations, safety, security, maintenance. If the artwork is to be located on a historic building or site the application will be reviewed by the CPPC for location and installation methods.*

The monument is proposed to be located on the St. Pete Pier approach, where it will complement other public engagements and installations, including the Marketplace and a public art piece by renowned artist Janet Echelman. A condition of approval reaffirms that the final design and location shall be coordinated with the St. Pete Pier Design and Construction Staff and City Architect. The site is not a designated local landmark.

RECOMMENDATION

City Administration and Staff finds that the proposed monument meets the criteria for the City's Markers and Monuments Policy and recommends the Community Planning and Preservation Commission ("CPPC") **APPROVE** the contents of the monument proposal **WITH CONDITIONS**:

1. The CPPC is recommending approval of the proposed content thereby certifying its accuracy, importance to St. Petersburg's local history, and contribution to global commercial aviation. The final design, including all vertical elements, shall be coordinated for approval through the St. Pete Pier Design and Construction Staff, including Chris Ballestra, and City Architect Raul Quintana.
2. Relocation or removal, if required, shall be conducted in accordance with the City's Markers and Monuments Policy.

ATTACHMENTS

- Application with Attachments:
 - A. City Council Resolution
 - B. Mayor's Letter of Support
 - C. Schematic of Plaza
 - D. Conceptual Rendering of Benoist Monument
 - E. Draft Text for Narrative Panels
 - F. National Park Type Panel

ATTACHMENT: Application



FLIGHT 2014, Inc.

"Celebrating The Legacy of the World's First Airline"

P.O. Box 610, St. Petersburg, FL 33731

September 1, 2019

First Airline Monument Project Honorary Advisory Board

Aviation Members

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The Benoist Family
Edwin Colodny
Robert Crandall
Tom Jewsbury
Herbert D. Kelleher
Gary Kelly
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Clive Newcomb
Chris Steinocher
Kenneth Strickland
J. Paul Stellrecht (Ex Officio)

Derek S. Kilborn, Manager
Urban Planning & Historic Preservation Division
Planning & Development Services Department
City of St. Petersburg
175 5th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Dear Mr. Kilborn,

Flight 2014, Inc. is pleased to submit the attached update of our application for the World's First Airline Plaza and Monument.

As you are aware Flight 2014 has previously met with the City Council and the Mayor regarding the monument and received their strong support for the concept of the monument and associated plaza.

On the basis of this expression of support Flight 2014 Inc. undertook a vigorous fund raising campaign exceeding our goal of \$750,000.

We have also coordinated with the new Pier architects and City Pier Design and Construction Staff including Chris E. Ballestra and City Architect Raul Quintana regarding location and construction of the Monument Plaza.

The new monument and plaza will go far in making the First Airline story widely known and appreciated, including the amazing narrative of how early St. Petersburg leaders rallied to embrace the new aviation technology, and also appropriately mark and celebrate the birthplace of commercial aviation.

Primary Flight 2014 contact for this application is Will Michaels. Alternate contact is Flight 2014 Vice President Chris Davis.

Sincerely,

Will Michaels

Cc: Chris Ballestra & Raul Quintana
Wayne Atherholt

Flight 2014, Inc. (a 501c3 charitable organization) is a partnership of the Aviation Historical Society, St. Petersburg Museum of History, Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society, and St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce. 2014 was the centennial year of the First Airline.

*Email may be addressed to Flight2014inc@gmail.com. Website is www.airlinecentennial.org.
On-line tax deductible donations may be made at www.stpete.com/Flight2014.*

Flight 2014, Inc.

Application First Airline Plaza & Monument

(Originally Submitted January 11, 2019
Updated at City Request September 1, 2019)

This Application for the World's First Airline Plaza & Monument is submitted pursuant to "City of St. Petersburg Policy for Acceptance of Plaques, and Monuments" (July 30, 2018).

Flight 2014, Inc. is a 501c (3) charitable organization originally organized to celebrate the centennial of the world's first airline which originated in St. Petersburg in 1914. The Airline was known as the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line and flew between St. Petersburg and Tampa. Flight 2014 continues to celebrate the legacy of the first airline, and is now seeking to replace the 1938 historic marker on the Approach to the Pier with a more worthy monument. Flight 2014 is a partnership between the Florida Aviation Historical Society, the St. Petersburg Museum of History, and the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society. Additional participants include the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce and other individuals.

In 2016 Flight 2014 petitioned the City Council to support the concept of a new monument to include a replica of the Benoist Airboat (the first airliner) to be located on the south side of Second Avenue NE in the vicinity of the First Airline's original hangar and launch ramp. The Council unanimously expressed its strong support of the concept by resolution on June 16, 2016. A copy of the resolution is attached. Additionally, on June 22, 2016, Mayor Rick Kriseman expressed his strong support of the proposed monument (letter attached). On August 15, 2019 the Council unanimously adopted a resolution authorizing work on the plaza to surround the monument to proceed on the original site of the First Airline hangar.

Since 2016 Flight 2014 has conducted a vigorous campaign to raise sufficient funds for the monument. The campaign goal was to raise approximately \$750,000 which has been accomplished. The monument will be constructed in two phases. The first phase will be construction of the "Benoist Centennial Plaza." This will be a complete finished public space on the historic site to include panels telling the story of the world's first airline, including the amazing narrative of how early St. Petersburg leaders rallied to embrace the new aviation technology. The second phase will include installation of a sculptured replica of the first airliner, known as the *Benoist*. The replica will include busts of chief pilot Tony Jannus and St. Petersburg Mayor Abe Pheil, the first passenger. Given sufficient budget the monument may also include a statue of Tony Jannus giving his goggles and a pennant from the *Benoist* at the end of the first flight to ten-year-old Judy Bryan.

The plaza has been designed by Phil Graham Landscape Architecture with the engineering assistance of Karins Engineering Group and Griner Engineering. Services are being provided on a pro bono basis. Also Hennessey Construction is serving as general contractor on a quasi-pro bono basis. Flight 2014 has also met with the New Pier architects and City Pier Design and Construction Staff including Chris E. Ballestra and City Architect Raul Quintana to coordinate regarding location and construction of the Monument Plaza.

Flight 2014 Inc. is pleased to acknowledge the extensive enthusiastic support given the monument project from so many sectors including private citizens, the St. Petersburg business community, the airline and aviation industry, and the City of St. Petersburg.

A. Criteria

The purpose of this monument is to commemorate an event that has made a significant contribution to history and culture at local, regional, statewide, national, and international levels. The monument celebrates St. Petersburg, Florida, as the birthplace of commercial aviation. It replaces the 1938 monument previously marking this event which has been displaced due to construction of the new Pier. St. Petersburg's location as the site of the world's first fixed wing airline is well documented through numerous studies and publications including the Smithsonian Institution (for example see R. E. G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States Since 1914*).

In addition to celebrating the birth of global commercial aviation the monument also celebrates key persons and groups associated with the event including Percy Elliott Fansler, the originator of the idea for an airline; Thomas W. Benoist, the president and main financial backer of the airline; Tony Habersack Jannus, the airline's chief pilot; St. Petersburg Mayor Abram Cump Pheil, the first passenger; and the Board of Trade and City of St. Petersburg which provided financial and in-kind support.

The monument also marks the historic site of the airline as it is proposed to build the monument in the vicinity of the original airline hangar and launch site.

The text for the associated plaques for the monument and surrounding plaza is attached and has been reviewed by distinguished local historians including Warren J. Brown, M. D., Will Michaels, Ph. D., Gary Mormino, Ph. D., and Nevin D. Sitler, M. A., and Rui Farias of the St. Petersburg Museum of History.

The commemoration is most significant to the local culture and heritage of St. Petersburg.

B. Marker Programs

City monument guidelines provide for either "standard" or "non-standard" marker programs. The First Airline Monument will utilize non-standard custom designed markers. The proposed text for the markers or panels is attached. They will be located in the plaza, to be designated

the “Benoist Plaza,” named after both the president of the airline, Thomas W. Benoist, and the name of the first airliner, “The *Benoist*.”

In addition to the monument panels and plaques specified in the attachment, the monument also proposes to incorporate the two bronze plaques previously attached to the 1938 monument and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) plaque marking the Central Yacht Basin as the takeoff site of the First Airline, previously adjacent to the History Museum, into the new First Airline Monument and Plaza.

The composition of the panels will be gel coat laminate or similar as commonly used by the National Park Service.

Attachments:

- A. Council Resolution.
- B. Mayor’s Letter.
- C. Schematic of the Plaza.
- D. Conceptual rendering of Monument Sculpture.
- E. Draft Text for Narrative Panels.
- F. National Park Type Panel Example

RESOLUTION NO. 2016 - _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT OF A PROPOSED MONUMENT WITH ARTWORK COMMEMORATING THE WORLDS FIRST COMMERCIAL AIRLINE AND THE SOUTH SIDE OF SECOND AVENUE NE IN THE AREA REFERRED TO ON THE PARKS AND WATERFRONT MAP AS THE PIER PARKING AREA AS THE PROPOSED LOCATION FOR PLACEMENT OF SUCH PROPOSED MONUMENT WITH ARTWORK; PROVIDING THAT ACCEPTING THE MONUMENT WITH ARTWORK IS SUBJECT TO REQUIRED PROCESSES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, St. Petersburg is the birthplace of global commercial aviation; and

WHEREAS, the "St. Petersburg – Tampa Airboat Line" was the worlds first commercial airline and began operations in St. Petersburg on January 1st, 1914; and

WHEREAS, the first commercial airline is a testament to the support and vision of early City leaders including Mayor Abe Phiel, Mayor Noel Mitchell and the Board of Trade; and

WHEREAS, since 1938 there has been a modest monument celebrating the birthplace of the first commercial airline on the approach to the Pier; and

WHEREAS, a new first airline monument will (i) be a worthy tribute to St. Petersburg as the birthplace of global commercial aviation; (ii) be a tribute to early City leaders who embraced new technology; (iii) serve as a destination monument for both City residents and visitors; and (iv) promote a greater understanding and appreciation of our City's heritage; and

WHEREAS, the St. Petersburg City Council ("City Council") has previously adopted rules and procedures for the acceptance of monuments with artwork; and

WHEREAS, such rules and procedures for the acceptance of monuments with artwork provide that an application be submitted and reviewed for historic accuracy; and

WHEREAS, if approved for historic accuracy, such application shall be referred to the Office of Cultural Affairs, who shall commence the process for donations of art to the City pursuant to Chapter 5, Article IV, Division 2 of the St. Petersburg City Code; and

WHEREAS, the process requires that a gifts panel be created to review the application (and other factors set forth in the City Code), and make a recommendation to the Public Arts Commission, who will then make a recommendation to the City Council concerning acceptance of the monument with artwork and the location for

placement of the monument with artwork; and

WHEREAS, a private organization, Flight 2014, Inc. ("Flight 2014") has requested that City Council adopt a resolution expressing support for the concept of a proposed new monument with artwork and the proposed location for placement of such proposed monument with artwork prior to Flight 2014 soliciting donations and commissioning of the monument with artwork; and

WHEREAS, the monument with artwork, as proposed, would consist of a full scale replica of the Benoist Airboat (employed by the first airline) to be located on the south side of Second Avenue NE in the area referred to on the Parks and Waterfront Map as the Pier Parking Area.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of St. Petersburg, Florida that this Council hereby expresses its strong support for the concept of a proposed monument with artwork to be commissioned by Flight 2014 (which consists of a full scale replica of the Benoist Airboat commemorating the first commercial airline) and the south side of Second Avenue NE in the area referred to on the Parks and Waterfront Map as the Pier Parking Area as the proposed location for placement of such proposed monument with artwork.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution in support is subject to completion of the required review processes, including those set forth in this Resolution, and that City Council's consideration of acceptance of the monument with artwork when completed and/or its approval of the placement of completed monument with artwork at a location on the south side of Second Avenue NE in the area referred to on the Parks and Waterfront Map as the Pier Parking Area is not restricted by this Resolution and the Council may accept or reject the monument with artwork or select an alternate location if it deems that appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Flight 2014 shall keep City Administration, the City's construction manager for the Pier Project and the Pier Approach Project, and the City's architect firms for the Pier Project and the Pier Approach Project informed of the status of the monument with artwork and shall endeavor to coordinate the location for the placement of the monument with artwork (provided such monument with artwork and location obtained all required approvals) with the completion of the Pier District Project.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

Approved as to form and content:

City Attorney (designee)

6-16-16 New Business Item
273340 FINAL



CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

Office of the Mayor

RICK KRISEMAN, Mayor

June 22, 2016

Will Michaels, Ph. D.
President
Flight 2014
c/o St. Petersburg Museum of History
335 2nd Avenue Northeast
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Dear Dr. Michaels:

I am writing to you today in strong support of a monument, to be featured as part of the new St. Petersburg Pier and Pier District, recognizing and honoring St. Petersburg as the birthplace of global commercial aviation. In 1914, the "St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line" began operation with regularly scheduled flights between St. Petersburg and Tampa.

Since 1938, there has been a modest monument celebrating the birthplace of America's First Airline on the St. Petersburg Pier Approach. Given current plans for the new St. Petersburg Pier, Pier Approach and Pier District, it is appropriate to replace the present monument with new, worthy commemoration of the birthplace of global commercial aviation.

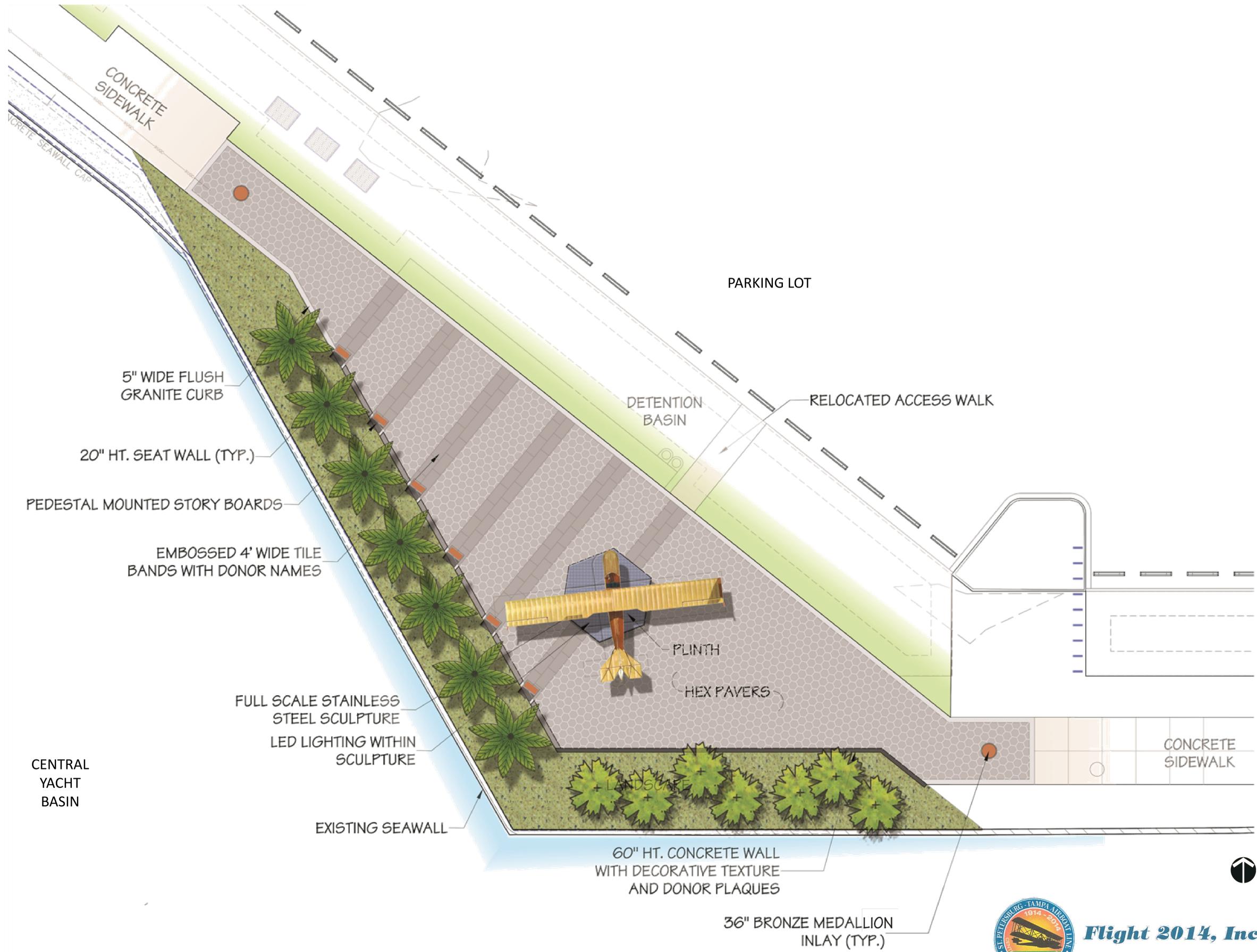
I commend your work with the "Flight 2014" organization, utilizing representatives from the Florida Aviation Historical Society, the History Museum, the Tony Jannus Distinguished Flying Society, and the Chamber of Commerce to lead the planning and fund-raising drive for this effort.

This important monument will also serve as a testament to early city leaders such as Mayor Abe Pheil who has the distinction of being the first passenger on the world's first airline. Mayor Pheil and other city leaders appreciated innovation and were willing to take a risk to launch a new business and promote the city. I believe the proposed new First Airline Monument will be a worthy tribute to St. Petersburg as the birthplace of global commercial aviation and the early city leaders who embraced new technology; serve as a destination monument for both residents and tourists; and promote greater understanding and appreciation of St. Petersburg's special heritage.

Thank you and the Flight 2014 Team for your vision and your leadership.

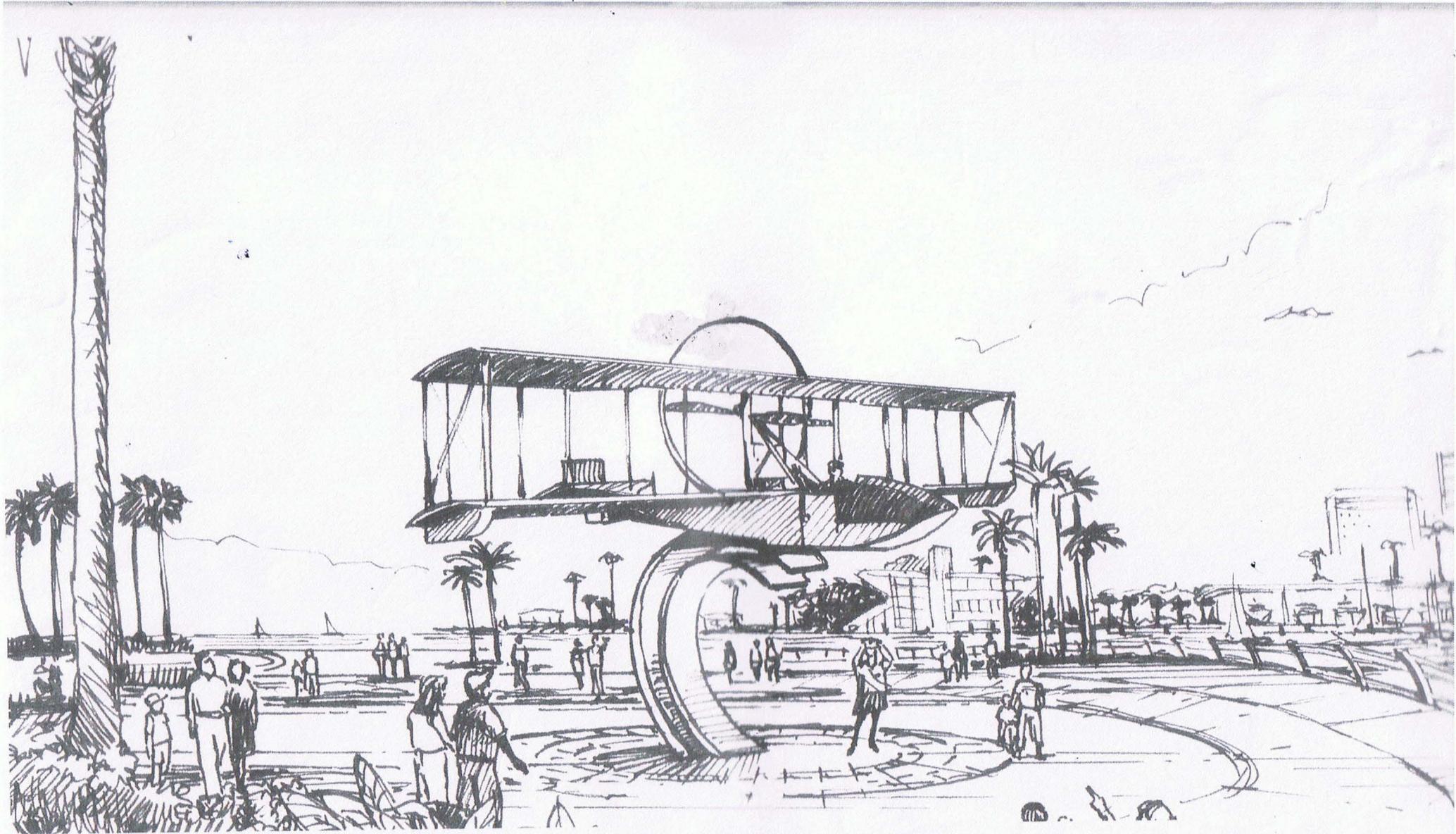
Sincerely,

Rick Kriseman, Mayor



Flight 2014, Inc.





Benoist Park Memorial Installation

Attachment E

World's First Airline Plaza & Monument

Panel Text

(Submitted January 11, 2019.
Updated September 2, 2019)

The First Airline Monument Plaza, to be known as the “Benoist Centennial Plaza,” will include six panels telling the story of the airline. These will be evenly spaced along a low concrete wall on the west side (water side) of the plaza. Also there will be four recognition plaques. Below is a summary listing of the panels, followed by draft content for each.

Narrative Panels

#1 World's First Airline (Overview) Panel

#2 Percy Fansler Panel

#3 Tom Benoist Panel

#4 Tony Jannus Panel

#5 Abe Pheil Panel

#6 Benoist Airboat Panel

Recognition Plaques

#1 Jannus Award Recipients Plaque

#2 Airboat Presenting Sponsor Plaque

#3 Other Major Monument Sponsors Plaque

#4 Flight 2014 Board Plaque

Note: Also to be incorporated into the monument are the bronze panels from the 1938 monument and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) plaque and major donor recognition pavers. Given sufficient budget the monument may also include a statute of Tony Jannus giving his goggles and a pennant from the *Benoist* at the termination of the first flight to ten-year-old Judy Bryan, also with an explanatory panel.

Detailed Panel Text

#1 World's First Airline Story Panel (Images of Benoist Airboat)

On this site on New Year's Day, 1914, the **World's First Airline** was launched. The name of the airline was the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line. Its first airliner was called the "*Benoist*," named after the manufacturer, Thomas W. Benoist. The *Benoist* was an "airboat" or what is now called a seaplane. The airboat took flight from the adjacent Central Yacht Basin. A crowd of 3,000 people waved the plane off as it headed across Tampa Bay reaching a peak altitude of approximately 150 feet. Its pilot was Tony Jannus and its single passenger was early St. Petersburg Mayor Abram ("Abe") C. Pheil. After a flight of 23 minutes and 21 miles the plane touched down on the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa where it was welcomed by an even larger crowd of 3,500.

The airline was timed to take advantage of the tourist season as well as provide time-saving travel between St. Petersburg and Tampa for residents. It operated from January to the end of March when the Airboat Line contract with the Board of Trade and the City of St. Petersburg expired. Cost of a ticket was \$5.00 each way, and also \$5.00 per 100 pounds of freight. More than a thousand passengers were carried without injury. With the help of a modest subsidy from the St. Petersburg Board of Trade the airline came close to breaking even. The airline was nationally publicized, including the front page of the *New York Times*, demonstrating the practicality of modern airline travel.

(Prior to the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line's formation, the German Airship Travel Corporation organized Zeppelin dirigibles, or blimps, into regularly scheduled air service in Europe. The St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line was the world's first regularly scheduled fixed-wing airline and the genesis of today's modern commercial aviation industry. For the full story visit the St. Petersburg Museum of History.)

"All told we believe that our work has stamped St. Petersburg as the aviation headquarters of Florida and this is largely due to the hearty cooperation of the city and citizens of the town."

--Tony Jannus, April, 1914

#2 Percy Elliott Fansler Story Panel (Images of Percy Fansler)

Percival ("Percy") E. Fansler (1881-1937) was a visionary who reimagined early aviation as a regularly-scheduled commercial airline. Fansler, an electrical and mechanical engineer, was sales manager for the Jacksonville, Florida, branch of a marine engine company when he came across an article describing Tony Jannus' record-making 1912 long-distance flight in an airboat down the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers from Omaha to New Orleans. In the article, the airplane's designer, Thomas W. Benoist, discussed the potential cost of carrying packages, mail, and passengers. Fansler contacted Benoist to discuss the idea of setting up a scheduled airline service. Benoist was enthusiastic about the idea. It was decided to operate the service between St. Petersburg and Tampa as the cities were only eighteen air miles apart, but travel between the two was difficult due. Travel by passenger boat took

two hours. Depending on schedules, travel by train was from five to as many as twelve hours. Travel by car could take a whole day. As there were no airports at the time Tampa Bay offered an ideal place for the airboats to take off and land.

Fansler presented the concept of the airline to the St. Petersburg Board of Trade where it was eagerly received. He led negotiations with the Board of Trade and the City and became Manager of the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line. Later, during World War I, he went on to serve as Chief of the Engine Section for the Eastern Division of the U. S. Bureau of Aircraft Production. In 2003 Fansler was inducted into the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame.

"What was impossible yesterday is an accomplishment of today, while tomorrow holds the unbelievable."

-- Percival Fansler, Founder of St. Petersburg – Tampa Airboat Line January 1, 1914

#3 Thomas Benoist Story Panel (Images of Thomas Benoist)

Thomas W. Benoist (1874 – 1917) was an aviator and aircraft manufacturer operating near St. Louis, Missouri. Over a period of ten years, he formed the world's first aircraft parts distribution company and established one of the leading early American aircraft manufacturing companies and a flying school. Benoist (pronounced Ben-wah) built planes for civilian use, sacrificing some of the speed and maneuverability of other manufacturers that built for military use.

From January through March 1914 Benoist operated the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line. He served as the airline's president, assumed financial responsibility, provided the planes, and engaged his test pilot and flight instructor, Tony Jannus. On December 17, 1913, he signed a three-month contract for operation of the airline with the St. Petersburg Board of Trade and the City of St. Petersburg. The Board of Trade agreed to subsidize the airline and the City agreed to build a hangar. Two airboats provided twice-daily service across Tampa Bay and occasionally to other nearby destinations. In 2012 Thomas Benoist was inducted into the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame.

"Someday people will be crossing oceans on airliners like they do on steamships today."

-- Thomas Benoist, President, St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line, 1914.

#4 Tony Jannus Story Panel (Images of Tony Jannus)

Antony ("Tony") Habersack Jannus (1889-1916) was a pioneer test pilot and aviation barnstormer. He was a young, magnetic personality who crossed paths with such early aviation legends as Glenn Curtis, the Wright Brothers, Lincoln Beachley, Katherine Stinson, and Glenn Martin.

In 1912 Jannus set early records for passenger flight time and for overwater flight, and he was the pilot when Albert Berry made the first successful parachute jump. He held the first federal airline license. Jannus was also a self-taught aeronautical engineer. He researched aviation accidents so that

he could learn from them and prided himself on safe flying. He loved to teach others to fly, or at least give them the opportunity to experience flight.

Jannus joined the Benoist Aircraft Company as flight instructor and chief test pilot in 1911. He served as chief pilot of the First Airline, and was frequently featured in extensive national media coverage. Jannus died in World War I near Sevastopol on the Black Sea when his plane, a Curtiss H-7 which he was using to train Russian pilots, developed engine problems and crashed.

Jannus was inducted into the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame in 2003. In 2006 his portrait was added to the First Flight shrine at the Wright Brothers National Memorial. In 2010 he was designated a "Great Floridian" by the State of Florida. The Tony Jannus Award, created to perpetuate his legacy, recognizes outstanding individual achievement in commercial aviation and is conferred annually by the **Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society**, founded by the Chambers of Commerce of St. Petersburg and Tampa in 1964.

"To me flying is not the successful defying of death but the indulgence in the poetry of mechanical motion, a dustless, bumpless, fascinating speed; an abstraction from things material into infinite space; an abandon that is yet more exciting but less irrational than any other form of mechanical propulsion."

--Tony Jannus, January 2, 1914

#5 Abe Pheil Story Panel (Images)

Abram ("Abe") Cump Pheil (1867-1922). St. Petersburg Mayor Abe Pheil was the first passenger on the First Airline. The airline held a charity auction to determine who should have the honor of being the first passenger. Mayor Pheil successfully bid \$400 (\$10,000 in 2019 currency) for that privilege. Pheil then accompanied pilot Tony Jannus on the first flight across Tampa Bay. Upon landing in Tampa Pheil's first words were "unbutton my overcoat," as his hands were greasy from helping with an engine adjustment. Jannus and Pheil were then welcomed by Tampa Mayor Donald B. McKay.

Mayor Pheil came to St. Petersburg in 1894 where he began work in a sawmill for a dollar a day. Later he purchased the sawmill and also bought the St. Petersburg Novelty Works, another sawmill and large building supply company. Later he built the Pheil Hotel and Theater, one of the city's first skyscraper at 11 stories. As mayor he did much to improve St. Petersburg's downtown street conditions and was instrumental in bringing natural gas to the city. Pheil was first elected to the City Council in 1904 and was reelected in 1906. He was elected mayor in 1912.

The first woman to fly on the First Airline was Mae Peabody of Dubuque, Iowa. While she did not fly across the bay, she engaged a special flight on January 2nd flying to an altitude of 200 feet. She is also the first woman to fly on any plane in St. Petersburg.

"It was simply grand. The waves below boiled away and climbed towards us, but we were out of reach. The wind cut into our faces and almost took away my breath, but it was fine. Its lots more fun riding in the wind than simply sailing over the calm sea."

--Mae Peabody, First Woman to Fly on the First Airline, January 2, 1914

#6 Benoist Airboat Story Panel (Images)

The first airliner, known as “The *Benoist*,” was designated as Benoist Airboat Model XIV, no. 43. The model number referred to the year in which the plane was offered for sale (1914). The number indicated that it was the 43rd aircraft to be built from the beginning of the Benoist Aeroplane Company. It was an airboat or seaplane and also a biplane.

The airplane was 26 feet (7.925 meters) long. The upper and lower wings both had a span of 44 feet 6 inches (13.411 meters). Originally they were 33 feet long but were lengthened to accommodate the single passenger to be carried by the airline in addition to the pilot. Empty, the Type XIV weighed 1,250 pounds (567 kilograms). The wooden bow was painted green and the wings were yellow. The hull was built of three thicknesses of spruce, with special fabric between.

The *Benoist* was powered by a water-cooled, normally-aspirated, 477.129-cubic-inch-displacement (7.819 liter) Roberts Motor Company 1913 Model 6-X two-cycle inline six-cylinder engine. The engine generated 66 horsepower at 1,000 r.p.m., and 75 horsepower at 1,225 r.p.m. It was a direct-drive engine which turned a 10-foot (3.048 meter) diameter two-bladed wooden propeller in a pusher configuration. The engine was 4 feet, 4.5 inches (1.334 meters) long, 2 feet, 1 inch (0.635 meters) high and 2 feet, 0 inches (0.610 meters) wide. It weighed 275 pounds (125 kilograms).

The plane had a maximum speed of 64 miles per hour (103 kilometers per hour) and a range of 125 miles (201 kilometers).

“The short flight from St. Petersburg to Tampa ignited an industry that changed the way we travel...”

-- President Barrack Obama, January 1, 2014

First Airline Quotes

Some of the following quotes also may be incorporated into the monument image wall:

“What was impossible yesterday is an accomplishment of today, while tomorrow holds the unbelievable.”

-- Percival Fansler, Founder of St. Petersburg – Tampa Airboat Line January 1, 1914

“Someday people will be crossing oceans on airliners like they do on steamships today.”

-- Thomas Benoist, President, St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line, 1914.

“To me flying is not the successful defying of death but the indulgence in the poetry of mechanical motion, a dustless, bumpless, fascinating speed; an abstraction from things material into infinite space; an abandon that is yet more exciting but less irrational than any other form of mechanical propulsion.”

--Tony Jannus, January 2, 1914

“All told we believe that our work has stamped St. Petersburg as the aviation headquarters of Florida and this is largely due to the hearty cooperation of the city and citizens of the town.”

--Tony Jannus, April, 1914

"It was simply grand. The waves below boiled away and climbed towards us, but we were out of reach. The wind cut into our faces and almost took away my breath, but it was fine. Its lots more fun riding in the wind than simply sailing over the calm sea."

--Mae Peabody, First Woman to Fly on the First Airline, January 2, 1914

"Because of Tony Jannus, because of others like him, this country is number one in aviation..."

--President John F. Kennedy, November 30, 1963

"If Jannus had lived beyond the age of 27, Charles Lindbergh would have had a serious rival."

--R. E. G. Davis, Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum

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The Tarbell House



The Tarbell House, built in 1892, is a prime example of the Queen Anne style. It was designed by the architect John C. Van Dine and built by the Tarbell family. The house is located in Astoria, Oregon, and is now a museum. It features a large front porch, a prominent chimney, and a variety of architectural details. The house was built for the Tarbell family, who were prominent in the Astoria community. The house is a fine example of the Queen Anne style, which was popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The house is a well-preserved example of the style and is a popular attraction for visitors to Astoria.

