

Airline History Museum

3 December 2024

The Airline History Museum (AHM), as you know, has been through the wringer for the last few years, embroiled in a battle with the City of Kansas City, with the FAA docketing a formal complaint submitted by AHM.

This all began when the City of Kansas City (via the City Council and the KC Aviation Department) decided to void an agreement we had with the City allowing AHM a full rent abatement for use of Hangar 9 through 2035 (it's all exhaustively documented). Signature Aviation became the de facto supervisor of Downtown Airport and, in short order, went after the Museum for rent they did not owe. A lawsuit was the result.

To our absolute astonishment, the State of Missouri ruled against AHM. Locked out of the hangar for 2 years running now, Signature has showed no evidence of wanting to talk, even though AHM has made multiple offers.

Outside of the illegal lockout, AHM filed a Part 16 Complaint with the FAA, essentially spelling out chapter and verse how the City, the Aviation Department, and the City Council allowed Signature Aviation to run Downtown Airport, either through deliberate or benign neglect in violation of Grant Assurances.

The Part 16 Complaint specifically demonstrates how the City misused the funds from government grants meant to support aviation efforts at the Downtown Airport, as well as at MCI through repeated violations of the terms of FAA Grant Assurances issued to the City. The City relies heavily on those grants, which is millions of dollars.

The Part 16 Complaint goes on to cite separate instances where: AHM has lost revenue due to the Museum closure; AHM has been denied use of the space leased to them; AHM has been denied use of their own aircraft, access to the airport; been deprived of the benefits of abatements and support which were granted (but diverted to Signature Aviation) and suffered damage to our reputation and loss of donor confidence.

The KC Aviation Department must follow FAA Regulations in the management of aviation-related activities to qualify for these grants. They have not.
So, what is the Good News?

As it is public information, we are sharing that the dear, beloved Connie, has a new owner. A true supporter of aviation and other historical birds, the Connie welcomes this support.

For now, we are awaiting the decision by the FAA, which is due 12/10/2024. They could investigate some, none, or all our Complaints. No doubt, if the FAA sides with AHM, you can expect follow-up legal activity on our part to be granted access to the entire fleet.

If you are reading this, please know you have the power to help keep the museum and all the artifacts in the great city. Let the Mayor and your City Council Representative hear you. Support the museum by a letter to the editor of the KC Star.

The museum is not gone, and the desire is to open the doors so all can see the rich history Kansas City has had in part of aviation!