

SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the August 15, 2024 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER:

Young called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Hayssen, Young, McCord, Jones, Jasper

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Hayssen moved with support from McCord to approve the July 18, 2024, Aviation Commission Minutes. Abstained: None Opposed: None All Ayes: Yes. Motion Carried.

AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:

A. Complaint Update

Stout reported that in July 2024 there were 316 noise complaints from 36 individual complainants compared to 92 complaints from 17 individual complaints in 2023, an increase of 243%. Stout added that our year-to-date total is 1,971 for 2024, compared to 496 in 2023,

Hayssen reported his analysis of the noise complaints. Hayssen found a minor discrepancy in the total and confirmed per his count 317 complaints for July of 2024. He added 62.5% of them were from 3 locations who generate the most complaint data each month. Citing two locations in Sebastopol which are close in proximity to each other, and one location in Calistoga as our top commenters each month. With the Calistoga location logging 86 of the 317 complaints. Hayssen also, reviewed the altitudes of the almost 200 complaints from these locations and was able to determine the only altitudes that were below the CFR FAR § 91.119 (CFR - Code of Federal Regulations, FAR - Federal Aviation Regulations), were takeoffs or landings at Sonoma County Airport, where these minimums don't apply.

Young added that we are doing a good job of offering people a way to voice their concerns, so we can analyze the information. Unfortunately, some of the noise complaints are within altitudes which are within acceptable limits, and this can skew the data for reporting purposes. Hayssen reported of the regular monthly complainants, most were citing flights with altitudes between 3,000 and 5,000 feet, with some reported as low as 2,500 feet, far above the minimum set by CFR FAR§ 91.119. Hayssen has also, received repeated phone calls with a west county 5th District group regarding noise issues. He is working with the District 5 group, and Airport Officials to schedule a meeting to review their concerns. Stout confirmed the 5th District group has yet to respond with a confirmation of availability for the whole group.

Stout also, included that he and Aivaliklis are working with staff to pull a full year of data from the Calistoga location, and try to use Vector to see if anything stands out. After this research is conducted the Airport may reach out to the Commission's Noise Committee to help guide the Airport to a resolution. He also, included that the activities from this location vary, and aircraft are coming in from the east over the area, and overflights coming out of the Bay Area. Hayssen added, while looking at a few of the complaints from the Calistoga complainant he saw that most flights were 3,500 to 5,000 feet above the complainant's home.

Jones asked if there are any benchmarks for what an acceptable level of noise is, and has the Airport considered installing monitoring equipment in some of the hot spots. Stout responded that

monitoring systems are very expensive, and by FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) definitions our 65-decibel contour is 98% on Airport Property, so there would be no Federal participation in a monitoring system. Stout added the areas complaining of aircraft noise are also, far from the Airport.

Stout is also, working with Airport Staff to delve into cause and effect, looking at the changes over time for the operations per complaint for our airline partners. Looking at the numbers for each airline partner, Alaska is right around 7 operations per complaint per operation, and most of these complaints are coming from the FAA changes to procedure. When the Redhead Procedure started being used during the month of March, we started seeing a significant increase in complaints in the Forestville and Guerneville areas. Hayssen added the urban areas of Sebastopol had fewer complaints, while the more rural areas are seeing an increase in traffic due to a lower population density. Jasper asked, if this was due to the new departure procedure, and Stout confirmed that it is. Jasper adds that this doesn't resolve the impact just subjects different people to it. Young also, added different people with a smaller number.

Stout also, notified the Commissioners that the draft of the 2023 Noise Complaint Summary is complete and would like to receive feedback. Stout called attention to page 11 of the summary, where Airport Staff tried to summarize findings, and if you take out the FAA's procedures that's the bulk of it, and Airport staff is trying to correlate some of these other complaints. Stout requested feedback be completed within a week or so, to enable staff time to provide information to Cignus, the consulting firm working with us on our approach feasibility study.

Stout added, the Airport has received feedback on the questions for the Helicopter Approach Feasibility Study we are working on with Cignus. All information has been aggregated and is in draft form, and Stout requested Commissioners review and provide comments one more time. Before we work with Cignus to finalize the document and provide it to the helicopter operators.

Stout reported in July 2024 there were 7 general complaints compared to 0 in 2023, Year-to-date we're at 27 compared to 31, a decrease of 13% overall.

B. Tower Report/Update

The Airport had 7,443 operations in June compared to 7,518, a decrease of 1% from 2023. Year to date operations through June are 38,999 compared to 38,982 in 2023, even for the year.

Stout asked Jeremy Epperson with Sonoma Jet Center, if it felt like there was more traffic during the month of July last year for the Grove. Epperson noted the traffic was different during the month of July this year compared to last year. Last year more aircraft stayed for the weekend, whereas this year saw more drop and goes.

Hayssen's reflections on the Grove Event and the airspace restrictions from the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT), is that the tower worked well with those training new pilots. And despite the Notice to Air Men (NOTAM) basically reading as if the airport was closed, unless you read the fine print of the notice. While training students during this event, several arrivals and departures were completed, as well instrument approaches using VFR (Visual Flight Rules).

Stout announced the Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) Meeting on September 19th, and he thanked Hayssen for providing information about the annual Airport event. McCord and Hayssen have been working on a notice for the Airport to manage the Hayward Pre-RSAT meeting, as well as organizing a general Pilot and Air Traffic Controller zoom meeting. Hayssen and McCord will be reaching out to airport managers and staff to obtain a commitment for this zoom meeting to be

scheduled. This meeting is anticipated to be scheduled prior to the September 19th, RSAT meeting. Stout confirmed with O'Dell the Air Traffic Control Tower Manager, the proposed date is September 19th, and a time has not yet been confirmed. This annual FAA event goes over the past years runway deviations, pilot deviations and make any changes to Hotspots.

O'Dell informed the group of routine maintenance that will occur on the Mill Valley radar in September. While this maintenance is completed the tower will have limited or no access to the Mill Valley Radar. This radar is located on the top of Mount Tamalpais and is the main radar feed to the Airport. Air Traffic Controllers see these aircraft as targets on their Radar system. This maintenance doesn't impact much, but there are times when services are limited, and is scheduled for September 18th through September 30th, keep an eye out for a letter the airmen or NOTAM (Notice to Air Mission) with additional details about this maintenance.

O'Dell also, has a request in about the alternate landing surface with the San Francisco Airport Division office and is currently awaiting response.

C. Airline Update

In July the Airport set a new record for the third consecutive month for passenger counts. Passenger counts increased 34%, with 74,730 passengers compared to 55,925 in 2023. The year-to-date totals as of July saw an increase of 13%, with a total of 396,877 compared to 351,243. Stout anticipates a continued growth of 20- 30% year-over-year increase through the end of the year, with a projected year-end count of 700,000 total passengers. Contributing factors to this growth are increased seat counts and the changes in flight schedules from our partners.

D. Projects Update

Employee Update: Currently conducting interviews for an Airport IT person. Previously, the Airport used halftime departmental resources from the County, and it was determined the Airport needs are greater than halftime assistance from IT. We anticipate having someone onboard mid-September allowing the Airport to do more things inhouse, without the use of contractors. If the Airport doesn't utilize the IT person 100% of the time, they will also assist with Departmental needs and the time will get reimbursed to the Airport. All other Airport positions are filled.

Approach Feasibility Study: Cignus has had good meetings with the FAA, and they've received recommendations on what they think will be approved in the future. Now that Cignus has received this feedback, we've scheduled the next round of Community Meetings for October 2nd and 3rd. One meeting will be held in the Windsor area, while the other is planned for the Sebastopol area. Planning for these meetings is expected to wrap-up in the next week or two, and the Airport will be sending out notices once venues are confirmed. Drafts of all materials will be provided to the Commissioners for review prior to the meetings.

Airline Apron Reconstruction: Working with the contractor to finalize the 1st phase of the construction contract. The 1st Grant for that apron has been approved by Congress and the Grant should be on the way. A 2nd Grant is still pending with a 3rd under review. The FAA has not been able to provide discretionary funds to give bigger Grants. The Airport has been using its entitlement and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding a match to entitlements. Currently the Airport receives about 5 million dollars a year that the Airport can allocate.

Airport Restaurant Transition: Work has started on the patio improvements, and a new sewer line has been installed and tied into the grease interceptor. It's anticipated the remainder of the work will take approximately 6-7 weeks to complete and is dependent on the arrival of their new store front and cabinets. Jasper asked if the issues with pricing have been resolved, and Hayssen added pricing was to be 10% above the benchmark for the area. Stout added we are working with the Restaurant to update their pricing and will ensure the restaurant will be inline with their agreement with the Airport for pricing once their final menu is published.

Airport Organizational Review: No updates to report. Airport staff would like to wrap this project up by the end of September and submit to the Board with the Airports annual report.

Asset Management System (previously referred to as Accounts Receivable System): Airport staff completed a live test run of the asset management system and discovered additional tweaks needed prior to going live. Airport staff are hopeful we'll be able to go live with this software at the beginning of September.

- **Consolidated Rental Car Facility:** No updates to report. Airport staff is working on setting-up meetings with the rental car companies to confirm the strategy for this project.
- **Wildlife Exclusion Fence:** Made good progress with the permitting agencies for the mitigation sites, permits are currently under review and the Airport anticipates approval of within the next 2 weeks or so. The projected completion of this project is the end of this year.
- **Runway 02/20 Alternate Surface:** The tower has a request information about the alternate landing surface with the San Francisco Airport Division office and is currently awaiting response. The tower is also, awaiting clarifications from the Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) on the guidelines for an alternate surface runway.
- **Airport Admin Backup Generator:** Still working on punch list items to close out this project.
- **Runway 14/32 Preliminary Engineering Study:** Geotech Company is expected to come back out next week for 3 nights to complete boring samples needed for assessments. As well as, one night of final survey work. All the preliminary work is expected to be completed by the end of next week.
- **ARFF Building:** Awaiting approval from the FAA for conceptual sizing and eligibility of this project. A second discussions with Sonoma County Fire District for integration of this joint station is scheduled in 2 weeks.
- **ATCT (Air Traffic Control Tower) Siting Study:** FAA coming the second week of September to complete the virtual sighting for the Tower.
- **FEMA Hazard Grant – Tree Removal Phase Mitigation II:** Continuing to wait for follow-up from FEMA that will solidify the Grant.
- **Sustainability Master Plan:** Airport staff has reviewed the draft and provided our edits to the consultant. The Airport is also, partnering with the County's Sustainability Office to help maximize our efforts. Public engagement meetings will be scheduled at a later for this project.
- **Airport Microgrid:** Reached out to the Arcata Airport to assist with the selection of proposers for the project because they have a microgrid. Arcata had partnered with 6 different agencies to complete their microgrid project. This will allow the Airport to select a consulting team for this project.
- **Hangar Development RFI:** This RFI (Request for Information) is being reviewed by County Counsel and the Airport anticipates it will be posted soon.
- **AirportNEXT Survey:** The survey process is now closed, and the Airport will be reviewing the data with Airport Council International. This survey program is through Airport Counsel International and provides benchmarking of airports in pure categories related to business, tourism, and those types of stakeholders. After the informal review of data has been provided, the Airport will then provide the information to the public.

- **Runway 14/32 Repair Project:** Repair project went very well, 22 hours of well-orchestrated work, with only a couple minor glitches. And the grooving occurred 2 weeks ago.
- **Temporary Overflow Parking Lot:** This lot is now complete and Airport staff is working with the rental car companies to determine how many spaces to allocate to each rental car company. It's anticipated rental cars will move-in to this lot by the end of next week. While the employee parking situation is still being worked out with each company.
- **Apron E - Helicopter and Aircraft Parking Apron:** Going to the board in August.
- **Terminal Area Sidewalk and ADA Improvements:** If approved by the Board of Supervisors this project will extend the sidewalks on the Northside of Airport at Ordinance, as well as a couple other improvements. Going to the board in August.
- **Apron A - Remote Parking Apron:** Looking into adding additional remote parking west of CalFire. There in the culvert Area near the intersection of Juliette and Kilo. Going to the Board in August.
- **Building Demo:** Wrapping up environmental and awaiting Historical Review of sites. The Airport has been working with the FAA on this for a year and a half. Hoping to get the sheds near the garden and the old FAA building on Becker demoed by the fall.
- **Website RFP (Request for Proposal):** The Airport anticipates getting this out in the next 3-4 months. And next year we'll have a reimagined website.
- **Security System Maintenance Services RFP:** This Request for Proposal (RFP) will assist the Airport in the selection process for a Security Systems Maintenance Contractor. The selected contractor will handle the preventative maintenance for the Airports security gates and doors.

Stout reviewed the list of Future Board Items.

ACTION ITEMS:

Cancel September Meeting

Action: This action is necessary to cancel September 19, 2024 Meeting due to scheduling conflicts

Resolution: The Aviation Commission hereby approves the canceling of the September 19, 2024 Aviation Commission meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Airport Land Use Commission

Stout is working with the other airport managers in the county to set up a time to review the four applications provided by the County Clerk. He's hoping to have this review completed in about two weeks.

B. Limited Maintenance Providers/Access

This topic is to discuss General Aviation (GA) requirements for limited-service providers and access to service providers at the Airports FBO's (Fixed Base Operators). The concerns with individuals on the airfield not being able to get their aircraft maintained, this includes, older fleet, legacy, and experimental aircraft. There needs to be a discussion about how these people will get their aircraft maintenance they need over the next decade and beyond. Determination if changes to the minimum standards are needed to allow for outside maintenance, as well as where this maintenance will be allowable, such as a hangar or other designated maintenance area. While doing this the Airport also, needs to be able to control "through the fence" operations which have been an issue in the past. Additionally, these operations can cause safety and regulatory concerns for the Airport because they

don't know what going on in their Hangars. Young suggested putting together an anonymous survey to send out to tenants to obtain their feedback about their experience with maintenance availability at the Airport. Young and Jones agreed to be a Commission Ad Hoc to look at the maintenance issues, meet with the FBOs and assist with the survey.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No email comments received before or during the meeting. Young opened comments to the attendees in person.

Epperson touched on some of the insurance related reasons that cause aircraft to be turned away for maintenance from Sonoma Jet Center. An example he provided: the FBO performs a pre-inspection of the aircraft and if anything is out of the norm they will refuse service. Some of the reasons for refusal of service are discrepancies in logbooks, gaps in maintenance history, a part that wasn't properly tagged, etcetera. With this pre-inspection it doesn't matter if the aircraft is a 2010 or a 1965, if the pre-inspection is failed the aircraft will be refused service due to insurance liability reasons.

Fitzgerald a member of the Westside Airport Neighbors group, she appreciated the initial draft of recommendation to pilots, in particular helicopter pilots. She especially liked the first bullet, stating that the ATCT may move GA traffic to the East Side for their pattern work, allowing helicopters to use runway 02-20. She also, reported the Helico has been especially disruptive the last couple of weeks. Fitzgerald also, asked if the Airport has asked the Board of Supervisors for noise monitoring equipment. The Westside Airport Neighbors also, find it worrisome that Helico has not been a part of the discussions with the Airport or Airport Management, and indicates it's a requirement in their lease with the Airport that they should be responsive to all requests from the Airport Manager.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

A general consensus from the Commissioners is that Limited Maintenance Providers/ Access on the airfield needs to remain a topic until things are rectified with the issues.

ADJOURN:

Starrett moved with support from McCord to adjourn. All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Stout, AAE, CAE
Airport Manager