

SONOMA COUNTY AVIATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the October 21, 2021 Meeting

This meeting was conducted virtually over Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER:

Young called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Young, Duste, Hayssen, Internicola, and Starrett **Absent:** McCord

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Internicola moved with support from Starrett to approve the September 16, 2021 Aviation Commission Minutes. All Ayes: Motion Carried.

AIRPORT MANAGER REPORT:

A. Complaint Update

Stout reported in September there were 45 aircraft related complaints compared to 43 in 2020; an increase of 4.7%. Year to date there were 807 complaints compared to 848 in 2020, a difference of 4.8%. There were 7 general complaints received compared to 0 in 2020. Most of these complaints were related to the parking lot closure to the solar project. Year to date there have been 8 general complaints compared to 5 in 2020, an increase of 60%.

Vector, the company used to track noise complaints, will be releasing updates to the portal, including an easier to use navigation bar. This should be launched in the next few weeks. The Airport has also requested that the map in the portal allow the public to see what other airports are in the vicinity, and for Vector to make the legend more clear for the public to more easily determine if a flight is an overflight, arrival, or departure.

Duste commented that the unique complaints over time show that complaints stay fairly constant. Complaint spikes tend to be due to a repeat callers. Hayssen noted that arrival and departure patterns seem to have changed from the past, but there do not seem to be airspace violations.

B. Tower Report/Update

There were 8,153 operations in August, compared to 5,163 in 2020, an increase of 57%. Year to date there have been 61,908 operations compared to 41,871 in 2020, an increase of 48%. Young noted that the August 2021 operation numbers are similar to years prior to 2020.

Craig Lucas noted that there is a new developmental controller, and another one will be starting at the end of November. Stout asked if the solar canopies have had an impact on the tower. Lucas confirmed that there have been no complaints.

C. Airline Update

August numbers were delayed coming from airline partners, so they were not reported on in the September meeting. In August there were 45,086 passengers compared to 11,850 in 2020, an increase of 280%. In August 2019 there were 51,831 passengers. In September there were 49,951 passengers, compared to 17,185, an increase of 190%. In 2019 there were 52,962 passengers. Year

to date there have been 283,630 passengers compared to 147,637 passengers in 2020 and 361,981 passengers in 2019.

Young noted the contrast between 2020 and 2021 numbers, especially regarding parking and car rental revenue. Stout noted that the Airport was able to get more maintenance work done during that time. Hayssen agreed that tourism seems noticeably up.

Internicola asked if there are any updates on Hertz. Stout confirmed that the Airport is waiting for a resolution of their prior agreement before a new agreement is proposed.

D. Projects Update

- **Terminal Modernization Project:** The project is on track, and the contractor has been working on Phase 2. The deep footings have been poured, and work continues on the baggage makeup area and airline offices. Once the airlines are moved, the rental car offices will move to the modular. The siding is finished on the new bag makeup room and a canopy will be put over the outside outbound bag belt.
- **Solar Panel Installation:** Rows 2 and 3 are currently being worked on, and we are slightly ahead of schedule. The goal is to have it functional by the end of the year to power the Airport as well as five tenants. Additional power will be available to cover the terminal project once that is complete.
- **Approach Review Request for Qualifications:**
Bids are still out. We received a significant number of technical questions, which extended the due date. The goal is to have Board approval to proceed by the end of January.
- **Eucalyptus Tree Removal:** The bid packet for the tree removal is with Purchasing. Internicola asked for confirmation regarding how many trees will be cut down and if there are plans to plant trees elsewhere in the county. Stout confirmed that there is a potential for 1800 eucalyptus trees to be removed if all areas are covered and trees will not be replaced at the Airport. Hayssen asked about carbon footprint of removing the trees. Stout confirmed that the trees of concern are those in the approach, which may obstruct runways.
- **Taxiway A Overlay Project:** The Airport reviewed the draft safety plans for a Taxiway A overlay with the FAA. The goal is for bids to go out in early 2022 with a start date in the summer.
- **EAA Driveway:** The paving of the EAA driveway has been delayed due to the deadline for the Taxiway A paperwork with the FAA. Young asked for confirmation that PropJet moved to their new location at the Airport. Stout confirmed that they have. Hayssen noted that Sonoma Jet Center will be using the hangar that PropJet vacated.

E. Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) Update

The FAA rejected our modifications to standards. We received approval from our FAA certification inspector for the painting, and we hope to include this in the airport layout plan with notations. We have incorporated the FAA's design changes on Taxiway A and the Runway 20 intersection. Once we get feedback the project can move forward. It would likely be 5-6 years before we move forward with the physical reconfiguration of this area. The next step would be an environmental review.

Young asked to confirm if taxiway H and A would be removed or just painted over. He also asked for confirmation if they could be kept for general aviation. Stout confirmed that portions of Taxiway A and H would be removed to reduce confusion.

Hayssen asked to confirm if the north run-up would remain in the same location. He also asked to confirm if there is an approach hold similar to the 20 approach hold. Stout confirmed that it would be a runway hold. The run-up area would remain in the same location, but would be shortened slightly.

F. Job Fair

The job fair was hosted yesterday at the Airport with over 30 employers and over 220 job seekers. The event was held in the Kaiser Air hangar from noon to 3pm. Employers and job seekers have provided positive feedback. The goal is to offer job fairs twice a year with the next one being in the spring. Starrett asked if there are statistics on how many people were hired from the fair, but Stout noted that it is too early to tell.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Sustainable Aviation Fuel

Stout noted that SFO is pushing state legislation (AB-1322) to provide credits to sustainable jet fuel manufacturers. They had a meeting with the California Airports Council in September to seek feedback from other airports.

Young noted that this topic can be removed from future agendas unless an update becomes available. Stout recommended that the Commission draft a letter of support for the bill and will advise when it is appropriate. Duste commented that if we are able to have a speaker on the topic it would also be good to include that on a future agenda. Stout will work on getting the president of NATA for a future meeting.

B. Airport Noise Complaint Process

Cincotta presented on the process for noise complaints at the Airport. Noise complaints are received via phone, voicemail, email, or Vector (online portal). All complaints are then added by Airport staff to Vector, and correlated based on information available. Flights may not be able to be correlated if they are an overflight or if not enough data. These flights will be listed as “unknown” in reports. Letters are sent monthly to airlines and general aviation pilots that the Airport received complaints related to their activity. Complaint data is used to put together monthly noise reports, which are sent to the Aviation Commission and posted on the website, and an Annual Report is sent to the Board of Supervisors. The Airport recently launched a Good Neighbor website, which includes more information regarding noise and how to submit a complaint.

Hayssen asked for more information on how most noise complaints are received. Based on the most recent reports, voicemail is the most common method.

Internicola asked if it would be possible to include information on the approach redesign on the Good Neighbor website. Stout confirmed that this is the goal, including the work of the Commission sub-committee on the update of the noise abatement guide, which has not been updated in 15 years. Once the new guide is ready, the Airport will provide outreach to partners regarding the updates.

Young noted that pilots may react negatively to the complaint letters because they may not understand the purpose of the letter if the pilot is not doing anything wrong. The purpose of the letter is to bring awareness to noise sensitive areas. Internicola asked if anything can be done by the Airport regarding noise. Young confirmed that only the FAA can take action, but they typically do

not. Internicola noted that it may be helpful to include information on the FAA response to the noise complaint flowchart.

Internicola asked for confirmation that all complaints are included, not just first time complainers. Stout confirmed that all complaints are tracked, but new complaints can be helpful with determining new sensitive areas.

Hayssen noted that he and McCord stress noise abatement and the fly neighborly program.

ACTION ITEMS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Stout noted that the Airport is completing a passenger leakage study that looks at what airports passengers from the STS catchment area are using. The goal is to put this on the November meeting as a discussion item.

Internicola asked if we plan to add surcharges to tickets to account for inflation. Stout confirmed the Airport charges a passenger facility charge of \$4.50, which is set by the FAA, and funds received pay for Airport improvement projects. The airline rates and charges are being reviewed and will go to the Board of Supervisors in 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Rick Savel emailed comments ahead of the deadline on Wednesday. He also joined the meeting to confirm that his comments were received. He recommended adding information to the website that would help Airport staff correlate flights.

Leslie Mikulich commented that she is on the Airport Land Use Commission and she would like to know if late flights are subject to noise ordinances set by communities.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Young addressed the public comment that was submitted via email by Savel. The Air Transport element of the Sonoma County General Plan may be of interest. There are 6 different goals under Section V, which talks about scheduled air carriers and protecting adjacent areas. This can be found online. The ALUC may get involved in new projects near the airport, but it is outside the purview of the Commission. Public comments can be made throughout the meeting on these particular items, they do not need to wait for the Public Comment section. The Public Comment section is intended more for non-agenda items. Duste noted that typically there is a comment made at the beginning of the meeting that people can ask questions during the meeting. Stout confirmed that the Airport would update the agenda for future meetings.

Stout noted that the county's Airport area specific plan under Permit Sonoma addresses areas near the airport and not the Airport. Permit Sonoma asks for feedback on certain sections of the plan, but the Airport is not involved in this process.

Internicola asked for confirmation regarding how much discretion the Airport has over who can fly out of the Airport. Stout confirmed that if a company meets the requirements in the general plan we are not able to prevent them from using the Airport as long as there is space.

ADJOURN:

Hayssen moved with support from Duste to adjourn. All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Stout", written over a horizontal line.

Jon Stout, AAE, CAE
Airport Manager