

Airpark Liaison Committee
Minutes
November 7, 2018
3rd Floor Council Conference Room
Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD

Meeting start time: 4:00 PM

Meeting end time: 5:10 PM

The following attended:

Committee Members: Howard Layer, Chair; Rosemary Arkoian; Michael Boone; Steve Findley; Robert Gawler; Keith Miller; Terry O’Grady; Richard Peppin; Nancy Shenk; Chunhua Wan; Richard Wilder; Alan Young; Jeff Zyontz (Staff)

Other County Staff: Catherine Matthews

- 1) Chairman Layer had everyone introduce themselves.
- 2) Mr. Miller presented an update on Airpark activities.

Operations

The Maryland Aviation Authority reported 74,000 operations (all landings and take-offs) this year. That compares to 48,000 operations in 2016. Although operations increased year to year, it is still far less than Airpark peak operations before 9/11. There are approximately 150 planes based at the Airpark. That number has not changed in recent years.

Complaints are running between 50 and 60 a year. All of those complaints are coming from 14 households. Most complaints are from East Montgomery Village; however, there have been new complaints from the Cyprus Gardens area. (A Committee member requested information on how to make a complaint. That information is on the Airpark website and was sent by email to the Committee 11/8/18.)

In response to a complaint, FAA staff from the Baltimore Flight Standards District Office conducted an unannounced inspection of Airpark operations in the spring of 2018. The inspector did not find any safety problems. There have been complaints to the Airpark about flight activities at a federal facility 10 miles from the Airpark in Laytonsille.

In response to a question, Mr. Miller reported that there have been no problems with Airpark interference with the County’s new training facility to the north of the Airpark. Department of Government Services is looking into the garage lighting but there have been no changes.

A new lighting system, which is designed to keep landing planes on the approved glide path, was installed and should be turned on immediately after the FAA approves its use. FAA approval is expected no later than December 2018. This may help avoid problems with planes flying low in the Cyprus Garden area.

In the past year, there was a single incident of equipment stolen (from 4 parked planes).

Anyone flying drones within 5 miles of an airport is required to contact the airport before flying. The Airpark received 80 requests to do so. Requests in the approaches to the Airpark were denied to avoid conflicts with flight operations. There have been no reported incidents of drones interfering with flight operations at the Airpark.

Renovations

- The taxiway project is complete. Final inspection is scheduled for November 8, 2018.
The next phase of improvement will be land acquisition. That will depend on federal and state funding.
- There is a problem with stormwater getting into the terminal building. That will be stabilized.
- Off-site trees that were creating a safety issue for pilots were removed on the northern end of the runway.

3) Questions and answers

What happened in terms of Airpark operations resulting from the jet accident 2 years ago?

The crash was the result of pilot error. In particular, it was caused by the pilot not using de-icing equipment in weather conditions that required its use. The FAA establishes the standards for pilot training and annual or biannual certification. The Airpark does not have any role in that area. Airpark operations were not found to be the cause of the crash. Operations and instructions to pilots using the Airpark have not changed.

What happened to the aviation education program mentioned at the last ALC meeting?

MCPS started a new Aviation Engineering Program (developed by AOPA) based out of Magruder High School. The Airpark is helping that program by making people available for class activities and on-site learning opportunities. The Airpark will host an event with the class on November 15. The Airpark may have summer interns from the Magruder program.

What happened to the Airpark open house?

It was canceled last year because of the taxiway construction project. There will be an event in the spring and the Committee will be invited.

What is the Airpark doing about increasing revenue?

There are 4.7 acres of vacant usable area on the Airpark site. Opportunities to house aviation businesses on that site will be pursued. (Skydiving is not permitted due to the Airpark's proximity to DC. A facility for drones would create conflicts with flight operations. Increased hangar space is not economically advantageous.)

What is happening at Davis Airport?

A zoning text amendment was approved by the Council to make airport operation and expanding the runway at the site legal. The airport is completing safety improvements. The Davis Airport owners are seeking to purchase County property, but there has been no disposition of property.

- 4) Chairman Layer adjourned the meeting at 5:10 PM.