Airpark Community Advisory Committee (ACAC)

December 17, 2024
7 – 8:30 PM

Montgomery County Upper County Community Center
8201 Emory Grove Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Attendees:

Members:
Bobbi Besley
Justin Bollum, non-voting
H Michael Brown
Councilmember Luedtke Aide Aaron Kraut, non-voting
William "Skip" Reindollar
Ruben Rosario, non-voting
Lynne Stein Benzion
Dale Tuttle
Rony Ledany
Karen Kodjanian

MCDOT Staff Liaison:
Joe Pospisil

Guests:
John Varian
Nancy Shenk
Barbara Fischer
Saundra Prather
Esther Wells
Roger Anderson
Adam Anderson

Action Items

November 19th Meeting Minutes Approval
No modifications were proposed by committee members to the November 19th meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously by the committee and posted on the ACAC Webpage.

Reports and Announcements

FAA Data Request

Following the November meeting, the committee liaison reached out to Board, Committees, and Commissions (BCC) staff and County's Federal Relations Coordinator regarding data the ACAC would like to obtain from the FAA. This included noise complaint data going back to 2019 and safety and maintenance data going back to 2004. The committee liaison had not received much

detail on the status of this request prior to the December meeting. However, BCC staff reached out to a contact in the FAA who was able to confirm that the FAA does not collect noise complaint data for airports. Monitoring and noise complaint tracking is done by individual airports. This FAA contact offered to reach out to the Baltimore Flights Standards District Office (FSDO) regarding safety data requested by the committee.

Discussion on Meeting Invitation for FAA and/or Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) Representatives

The committee discussed the need to invite a representative from either the FAA or MAA (or both) to a committee meeting, which is required under County Code Section 42-34A(e)(1)(B).

The committee discussed the need to be specific on the topics it want representatives from these administrations to address in order to get the correct staff familiar with the subject matter(s). Topics discussed by the committee were a desire to get more clarification from the FAA on actions that could be taken to address various community concerns, like noise, and what and why certain limitations exist. Committee members were also interested in seeing if these administrations could provide examples from other airports on how noise and safety concerns have been addressed. More specifically the committee would be interested in airports of a similar size. This was a topic that may be best addressed by the MAA.

At the end of this discussion no date had been set for a meeting to invite an FAA or MAA representative to attend.

Follow Up from Data Subcommittee

Data Subcommittee members updated the committee on continued efforts with the vendor (FlightAware) to see if improvements could be made to the data they provide the Airpark.

Follow Up from Community and Facilities Subcommittee

Members of the Community and Facilities Subcommittee provided a summary of the topics discussed during their first meetings. A top priority they identified was a need to ensure everyone in the community was provided with the same information. This would be done by providing more details and information about topics and community concerns on the ACAC website. Community concerns that the Airpark runway will be extended was an example given as a topic where more accurate information needs to be made available.

At the request of a subcommittee member, a CoStar commercial real estate database search was run for the industrial area around the Airpark. The search revealed that over 20% of the industrial tenants that CoStar is able to pull for Montgomery County are based in the Airpark. While this may not be indicative of the exact percentage of industrial companies in the county, it does indicate that the Airpark represents a significant area of industrial strength within Montgomery County.

As part of the Airpark Community, more needs to be learned about the businesses around the Airpark, those that have a direct connection to the Airpark and general aviation and those that do not. A subcommittee member would follow up with Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to see if they had additional information on the businesses in the area.

Economic development and what this could mean was discussed. Any pursuit of additional development must take into account concerns of the entire Airpark community. This would include those residents most impacted by its operations, businesses that rely on the Airpark to operate as well as the County as a whole. The committee did not go into a more detailed discussion on types of economic development.

Noise Abatement

The committee discussed the existing noise abatement procedures and potential ways to improve compliance. Committee members familiar with Airpark operations estimated a very high percentage of the pilots do not follow these procedures, which are not mandatory. Though not a cure-all, it is believed that if more pilots simply complied with the procedures this would provide relief for area residents.

One idea that was brought up to help improve compliance was providing more education for pilots and the flight schools on the procedures. Another was to add this information to the Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS), which pilots reference for weather information. Although compliance is not mandatory, committee members also questioned whether there were "sticks" that could be used such as including compliance language in licensing agreements. No decisions on what actions to take were made.

* Discussion of January Meeting Start Time

Prior to moving to the community input portion of the meeting, the committee discussed the possibility of starting the January meeting early to ensure the entire hour and a half meeting time would be devoted to community input. The earlier start time would allow for brief discussion of committee business, such as updates from sub-committees. It was determined that the January 29th meeting would begin at 6:30 pm rather than 7 pm. [i]

<u>Community Input/Feedback</u>

No members of the community spoke at this meeting.

Following a unanimous committee vote the meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm

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[i] Asterisk (*) preceding text denotes amended text to original minutes.