

Airpark Community Advisory Committee (ACAC)

September 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
Karen Kodjanian
Councilmember Luedtke Aide Aaron Kraut, non-voting
William “Skip” Reindollar
Ruben Rosario, non-voting
Lynne Stein Benzion
Dale Tuttle

MCDOT Staff Liaison:

Joe Pospisil

Guests:

Mollie Hilty
Jeannie Bayer
Jake Adler
Roger Anderson
Adam Anderson
Lucy Seifert
Bruce Vivari
Sheryl Arnold
Rebecca Trupp
Barbara Fischer
Dale Tibbett

Action Items

August 20th Meeting Minutes Approval

No modifications were proposed by committee members to the August 20th meeting minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously by the committee and posted on the [ACAC Webpage](#).

Discussion Items

Discussion of Available Data

Findings of an initial report were presented by members of the data subcommittee. This presentation is available on [ACAC Website](#) on the *Resources* Page.

The data subcommittee discussed how residents who might initially reach out to MC311 are directed to contact Airpark staff and provided necessary links. However, there was still some uncertainty whether MC311 does take in any aviation-related complaints. It was also noted that noise and safety complaints outside of a 6-mile radius of the Airpark fall under jurisdiction of the FAA ombudsman.

Summarizing the existing complaint data, a large volume of reports had been submitted by a small number of residents. A committee member indicated that FAA decisions may be influenced by data available to them and wondered how to get more residents involved. It was questioned whether residents feel deterred from submitting reports because they believed nothing would be done. Committee members wondered if more information was available on the number of complaints and where the complaints originated from. The ACAC staff liaison offered to plot the noise & safety report data on a map if location information was available. This data would be displayed in a manner that would not disclose the exact address of the resident who filed a complaint.

The subcommittee discussed the need for accurate flight information data and provided some sample data which is available to the public on the [Airpark Flight Data](#) webpage. The data summarized on the Airpark website is collected by the vendor, FlightAware. A key question for FlightAware is how “Touch and Goes” and “Pattern Operations” are defined since Touch and Goes are a significant concern to residents. The vendor provided distinctions between these two categories. Committee members wondered if these distinctions accurately captured aircraft operations at the Airpark and whether these categories could be modified.

Other issues with the available data related to an inability to identify specific aircraft. For example, an aircraft’s N-Number is not always provided in FlightAware records. It was mentioned that aircraft tracking apps with more complete flight information are available; however, this data is only available in real time and not stored. Another issue that may exist is connecting specific to the flight schools and clubs operating out of the Airpark. Most provide information on their fleets; however, the largest flight school, Washington International Flight Academy, has affiliated aircraft that are not part of their fleet.

Finally, one of the subcommittee members had been collecting Airpark operations data prior to serving on the committee. A comparison of FlightAware Pattern Operations data and data collected by the committee member for 3 particular days were shown to have similar figures. Additional data collected by the committee member in 2021 was provided at the end of the presentation.

Need for Data from FAA

It was determined during the subcommittee presentation that the committee should obtain all available data from the FAA within a certain time period that pertains to the Airpark.

The following motion was made after committee discussion:

Request from the FAA all available reports submitted by residents within a 10-mile radius of the Montgomery County Airpark from January 1, 2019, to the present.

* This motion was unanimously approved.ⁱ

Need for Public Input

Discussion to set a date for a town hall style meeting was preempted by a discussion to consider giving members of the community an opportunity to participate during the meetings. Several committee members expressed a desire to reserve a portion of each meeting to collect community input. This input would not only give community members an opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions but may also provide information and ideas that could be used by the committee to complete its mission.

The following motion was made after committee discussion:

Beginning with the October 15th meeting the last 15 minutes of each meeting will be dedicated to collecting input directly from the community. Residents will be given up to 2 minutes to speak on issues related to Airpark operations.

* This motion was unanimously approved.ⁱⁱ

No date was set for a dedicated town hall style meeting before meeting adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm

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

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