

Airpark Liaison Committee
December 2, 2009
4:00 to 5:30 pm
5th Floor Conference Room, Council Office Building

Committee members attending:

Howard Layer, Robert Anderson, Rosemary Arkoian, Joanne Atay, Roy Bevington, Eugene Casey, Robert Gawler, Meredith Saini, Donald Gray, John Luke, Keith Miller, Edward O'Connor, Nancy Shenk, Vanessa Francis, and Jeff Zyontz

Also attending: Hans Bjarno and Nancy Hislop

Agenda items:

1) Discussion of FAA letter to James Stevenson, November 9, 2009

The FAA found no evidence of any careless or reckless operations and no violations of FAA flight safety rules when the FAA inspectors observed Airpark flight operations. The FAA inspections were not announced to pilots and occurred during good flying weather on both a weekend and weekdays. Observations were made both at the Airpark and at the complainant's residence. The FAA further found that, for the purpose of applying its regulations, a takeoff does not end at the first turn of an aircraft after wheels-up.

Members were encouraged to report suspected violations of flight rules to the FAA and to the Revenue Authority through John Luke.

2) News from Park and Planning Staff

Vanessa Francis reported that the work program for M-NCPPC now includes a Master Plan Amendment for Gaithersburg East starting in September 2011. Gaithersburg East includes the Airpark.

In addition, M-NCPPC has produced a glossary of planning terms. Copies of the glossary are available through the Planning Department.

3) Presentation and discussion of alternative flight paths

Mr. Anderson handed the Committee a 3 page document that included the following noise abatement policy for departing runway 32:

Climb runway heading at best rate, when safely practical, approaching Snouffer School Road Corridor turn right 20 degrees to a heading of 340.

Continue to climb at best rate reducing RPM when safely possible.

Maintain 340 degree heading at best rate until reaching 2000 MSL, then make a right crosswind turn or proceed on course.

Use Runway 14 for departure whenever feasible.

Some Committee member question the 2000 MSL as a number not related to safety. Mr. Anderson noted that Fredrick Airport used a higher MSL in their noise abatement pattern: that statement was not supported by a copy of Fredrick Airport's noise abatement brochure. Mr. Anderson said he would bring supporting documents in future meetings if asked to do so.

Mr. Anderson said that he had no problem with the current flight pattern at the Airpark. He does have a problem with pilots not following the pattern. Touch and go flights by 3 particular aircraft models is a noise problem for East Montgomery Village. Mr. Gray noted that the single event noise was very different than longer duration noise standards used by the FAA.

Roy Bevington commented that full flaps, full power, and maximum RPMs in a turn was perceived as being unsafe. Ms. Saini noted that full power was the safe standard operating procedure during takeoffs and some planes could not regulate RPMs separately from power.

The Committee discussed safety statistics versus the perceptions of safety by nearby residents. Ms. Saini invited the community to an already scheduled December 16 meeting with pilots to share the new noise abatement brochure and safe operating procedures.

The Committee concluded that such a meeting would be helpful to address the issue of perceived danger, but that such a meeting should be scheduled after the holidays with broad community notice.