

Airport Management Advisory Committee

**Minutes of Meeting –July 20, 2018 at Town Hall**

Arthur Malman, Chairman of Town of East Hampton’s Airport Management Advisory Committee (“AMAC”), called the meeting to order at 9 AM.

The following members of the AMAC were present: voting members: David Gruber, Pat Trunzo III, Steve Tuma, Charles Ehren, Munir Saltoun, Kent Feuerring (newly added member) and Arthur Malman and non-voting ex- officio members: Sylvia Overby and Jeff Bragman, Councilpersons and Co-Board liaisons for the AMAC, James Brundige, Interim Airport Director.

Absent was Len Bernard, the Town’s Chief Budget Officer, a non-voting member

Among others attending for all or part of the meeting were Bruce Miller, chief tower controller at HTO, Jeff Smith of the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council, Jonathan Sabin of the EH Aviation Association, residents of EH and neighboring towns who have been working toward helicopter noise reduction over their homes and other members of the public, certain of whom had environmental concerns about airport operations.

The agenda had been previously distributed to members and copies were distributed to attendees.

The next meetings were SCHEDULED for the following at Town Hall, at 9 AM:

**Friday, August 17**

**Thursday, September 20**

**Friday, October 19**

**Friday, December 7**

The draft minutes of the June 22, 2018 meeting, as previously distributed, were approved.

Sylvia Overby reported that the initial public survey work being conducted by town consultants for the Part 161 had been completed but that final results were not yet available. The survey questionnaire distributed by Sylvia Overby stated that its objectives where to identify passenger origin and to assess passenger travel mode preferences if flights were not available during preferred travel times. Arthur Malman noted that the survey questions covered most of questions raised in the 2017 HTO airport survey as Sylvia Overby thought would be the case.

Pat Trunzo III and David Gruber reiterated their prior observation that, without first determining what restrictions were to be imposed, the survey and other economic data gathering was without direction and a wasteful, premature expenditure.

Arthur Malman explained that, while members were happy to discuss alternative landing fee allocation formulas in detail as had been done by the AMAC and its predecessor BFAC previously (i.e. beyond the changed formula adopted by the town a couple of years ago which was based on weight only and dramatically reduced landing fees for helicopters), the AMAC would only do so if the town was now open to changing its prior position that the weight only formula for landing fees was not open to change. Sylvia Overby indicated that the town and its current attorneys were now open to considering how landing fees could be structured beyond weight alone. Accordingly landing fee allocations will be a major topic for the next AMAC meeting.

David Gruber pointed out that the FAA guidelines recognize wear and tear on airport infrastructure as the basis to allocate landing fees. Arthur Malman asked Munir Saltoun and James Brundige, prior to the next meeting, to consult with Len Bernard and come up with the costs (both current and reserves for replacements, etc.) associated with discrete HTO infrastructure and operating costs such as the pavements (runways and taxiways versus aircraft parking areas and aprons [including lighting of each], the tower, the 2 terminals, the fuel farm and fuel inventory, rest rooms, auto parking areas, snow removal, security, airport administrative services, etc.

Sylvia Overby asked that an environmental cost component also be included. Arthur Malman suggested an annual contribution to a reserve of \$100,000 toward environmental testing and minor remediation once the Town Attorney gave the go ahead. He had reported that, the Town's current position is that, despite strong AMAC recommendations from the late Bonnie Krupinski, Gene Oshrin and others for immediate environmental testing, no testing should be done while current litigation is pending. Pat Trunzo III and Charles Ehren questioned this reasoning by the Town Attorney and felt that there was no impediment to commencing immediate environmental testing.

Arthur Malman asked Bruce Miller to explain his decision to stop using the Southern Sierra route for helicopter flights incoming and outgoing at HTO because of heightened safety concerns.

Bruce Miller said that Jeff Smith has done an admirable job informing his pilots to "Fly Neighborly" by splitting the northern and southern helicopter routes 50/50. However, he went on to explain that while wanting to be neighborly, we have to be legal and safe and stated that you can't mix fixed wing aircraft with helicopters--because of the congestion it is unsafe.

He explained that the Sierra route has always been a problem because it took helicopters coming in from the south directly across the busy approach to main runway, running the Sierra, southern route, is "putting us down the tubes" and the tower personnel have been stretching the FAA safety guidelines with these procedures .

Moreover, as had been discussed at several AMAC meetings, since the "tower" was close to ground level, controllers in the tower had no ability to see helicopters approaching HTO from the south since their view was blocked by a stand of 50-60 foot trees. Although more than sufficient HTO funds are available (without bonding) to cover the cost of raising the tower to address this safety concern, the Town had recently indicated that it was unwilling to proceed at this time.

Bruce Miller also explained that requesting helicopters to approach landings at higher altitudes than 500 feet and quickly climb to above 500 ft. on take offs (whether from the north or the south) was atypical for normal FAA operations and was a continuing operational and safety concern for Tracon which is the FAA's regional controller.

Jeff Smith described the existing helicopter routes and noise abatement procedures and explained the problems with other alternatives considered.

Jeff Smith also explained that, in response to concerns from residents under the northern helicopter routes that less than half the helicopters were actually using the southern route, the ERHC had recently reiterated to its members that the goal was to split the operations between north and south.

Bruce Miller noted that as a consequence of increased helicopter traffic generally and the increased emphasis on use of the southern route, the long term safety concerns of the tower personnel, based on FAA control tower safety guidelines (which he read to the meeting) the tower personnel could no longer permit the continued use of the southern helicopter routes for HTO. David Gruber and Arthur Malman asked about alternatives to have the helicopters coming from the south land south of the main runway and avoid flying through the approaches to the main runway. Arthur Malman suggested a helicopter landing site on the southern portion of runway 4-22 which was no longer used as a runway and would also not be needed as a taxiway, which could be expanded and resurfaced for this purpose; helicopter parking and a small auxiliary passenger terminal could be added.

While members generally supported this idea, Bruce Miller explained that once he got the helicopters from the south touching down at the bottom of 4-22, itself south of the main runway, it would not be any more of a concern for the tower to have the helicopters taxi or hover over to the main terminal when there was a break in traffic on the main runway (much as is the case with controlling fixed wing craft normally taxiing around the airport).

However this still left the problem of sight lines to the south from the tower, unless the tower were raised above tree level, especially since landing the helicopters south of the main runway when coming from the south would require earlier visual contact with the helicopters which were not now visible from the low tower because of the trees.

Discussion about moving the tower to other parts of the field followed. Arthur Malman pointed out that the tower could not be repositioned without complying with detailed FAA requirements which would take many months, although his understanding was that raising the tower at its present location could streamline somewhat the FAA review procedures. [although not clear to participants at the meeting, it was later learned that Robinson Aviation, which runs the tower for the town and employs the controllers, was still reviewing Bruce's recommendations and planned to discuss them with the town before action was taken to terminate the southern route; Robinson's chief controller then visited HTO and felt that neither the southern route nor the tower height were substantial problems].

The meeting returned to its prior discussions several months ago about alternatives for raising the tower and Jim Brundige said he would re-distribute the materials developed by Baker Engineering for this to the AMAC [these were subsequently emailed to members].

James Brundige distributed his monthly report on capital projects (a copy of which is attached as Exhibit A). Bruce Miller described the increasing problems with deer on the runways and the danger to passengers and property along with some interim measures, coordinated with the airport management and Sound Aircraft personnel to scare off the deer temporarily just before an aircraft lands.

Arthur Malman proposed that, since the perimeter fence was a safety issue and it may take several more weeks to finalize the optimum solution at the two runway ends (e.g. low double fence, bridge grating or cattle crossing at the runway ends or in the road (with or without heating to melt ice and snow), displacement of the runways on the eastern ends with or without adding compensating sections on the western ends, further discussions with the FAA on lighting a fence hazard or moving Daniels Hole road eastward as anticipated by the ALP), the town move forward immediately for all other sections of the fence and gates and leave open in the bid documents how these specialized runway end sections would be handled.

All members and the liaisons supported this approach and James Brundige was asked to move forward immediately with the purchasing department for bid documents.

Sylvia Overby noted that the town board was considering how to more actively seek tenants for vacant airport land.

The meeting adjourned at 11 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malman

**AMAC Meeting**  
**Airport Director's Update**  
**July 20, 2018**

**Taxiway A Extension and Taxiway D Overlay Project**

- Waiting for Town Board approval to proceed.
- Funding in place.

**Resolution to close Runway 4-22 as a Runway—Install Signage per FAA**

- Mandated by the FAA.
- Engineering and Bid Specs have been prepared by Baker.
- Ready to go to bid, but cannot be done without a public hearing and environmental assessment per Town Code.
- After all comments are heard and it has been determined that no SEQRA action is required, Town Board passes the resolution and a pen and ink change is made to the ALP.
- When that process is complete, pavement that used to be Runway 4-22 cannot become a runway again without a public hearing and environmental assessment and FAA approval.

**Perimeter Fence**

- Bridge Grating Determination—Attached.
- Must have 4 foot fence along Daniels Hole Rd. and Industrial Rd. to keep vehicles and pedestrians out.
- Deer population has grown in the last few weeks. Culling in progress.

**Crack Sealing**

- Baker has been authorized to proceed with engineering and bidding-Resolution 2018-806
- Baker is making a site visit for this project next week.
- The goal is to go to bid and complete the project before winter weather sets in.

**NY State DEC Testing at Airport**

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