

Airport Management Advisory Committee  
**Minutes of Meeting – June 12, 2020 at Town Hall**

Arthur Malman, Chairman of Town of East Hampton’s Airport Management Advisory Committee (“AMAC”), called the meeting to order at 10 AM via Zoom meeting

The following members of the AMAC were present: voting members: Pat Trunzo III, Steve Tuma, Charles Ehren, Kent Feuerring, David Gruber, Munir Saltoun and Arthur Malman, and ex-officio members Jeff Bragman, Councilperson and Board liaison for the AMAC, and James Brundige, Airport Director.

Absent were Gene Oshrin, a voting member, John Mak, a non-voting member and Len Bernard, the Town’s Chief Budget Officer.

Among others attending for all or part of the telephone meeting were Michael Wright of the Express News Group, Katherine Slye of the East Hampton Aviation Association, John Kirrane of the Sag Harbor/Noyac Civic Association, Patricia Currie of Say No to KHTO, John Cullen a member of the Northville Civic Council and the Riverhead Noise Task Force, Teresa McCaskie of the Southold Town Helicopter Committee, Alex Gersten, Director of Airports and Ground Infrastructure for the National Business Aviation Association (“NBAA”), Jeff Smith of the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council, Ron Klausner of the Watermill/Southampton Aircraft Advisory Committee, Jim Stone, a resident of North Sea, Bernadette Ruggiero , Controller of Sound Aircraft and other residents of EH and neighboring towns who have aviation interests and/or who have been working toward helicopter and/or jet noise reduction over their homes and other members of the public and media.

The agenda had been previously distributed to members and made available to the public prior to the meeting and additional copies were distributed to attendees.

The next meetings are SCHEDULED for the following Fridays at Town Hall, at **TEN (10) AM:**

**JULY 10, AUGUST 14**

Arthur Malman noted that it was likely that the July 10 meeting would be on Zoom.

The draft minutes of the May 2020 meeting, as previously distributed with the correction to reflect the conversation between Kathryn Slye and Jeff Bragman on the status of economic and other studies, were approved.

Arthur Malman read the proposed insert on the status of the AMAC’s recommendation for these studies—now submitted by the Town Board to the town’s aviation counsel for further consultation with the Board on how to proceed.

James Brundige reviewed the items in his Airport Director’s June report (copy attached as Exhibit A).

Steve Tuma and James Brundige reported that, other than flights of HTO-based aircraft, there were recently few non-HTO-based aircraft flights per day coming into HTO, which tended to be larger jets and large helicopters-- typically privately owned by substantial individuals or corporations. James Brundige noted that there had been an uptick of landings in March as many NYC residents were relocating to the Hamptons because of covid, but May operations were down to about 50% of May 2019 and predominantly based aircraft exempt from landing fees. Landing fees this May alone were down 42% from May 2019—fewer but larger non-HTO based aircraft paying higher fees per landing.

Fewer landings also reduces fuel sales, parking lot and advertising revenue. Leases make up about half of airport revenues and Len Bernard reported by email that these payments are more or less on projection through mid-May, except that Hertz, which pays about \$90,000 per year is in bankruptcy and not paying rent and there is some question as to what NetJets and Blade will be paying full contractual rents with traffic so reduced.

Arthur Malman reported that he had not yet heard back from Charlie Marder about his suggestion that, since the Town Board has no interest in proceeding with a wooden guard rail to prevent a vehicle being damage were it to swerve off the road and have its windshield hit a horizontal member of the deer fence at the runway approaches, the town consider a barrier of plantings if it would not detract from the effectiveness of the deer fence. [Charlie Marder subsequently confirmed that he routinely used such plantings under and around his deer fence design and they did not detract from the efficacy of the deer fence]

Jim Brundige noted that under the advertising contract for the airport signage, the town has the right to approve ads and had generally avoided alcohol ads. However, the agency had now presented a wine ad and Jeff Bragman was asked to ascertain the board's reaction to accepting it.

Steve Tuma and James Brundige were asked if they had been able to compile data on the number and duration of flight holds during summer 2019 due to HTO being a maximum. They explained that this was a more difficult to find than expected, but they would report back by the next meeting what could be reconstructed.

Arthur Malman noted that, in connection with a review of the Town's minimum standards for airport users, last reviewed in the 1980's, the town's insurance agent had come up with a table of reasonable minimum insurance levels for the various types of businesses at the airport. These had been developed by the agent with the request that he consider levels of insurance that he would advise a business to maintain at its minimum if he were representing the business. With the exception of the addition of a \$50 million excess liability for fueling operations that Munir Saltoun had recommend (and Steve Tuma confirmed was in fact provided by the wholesale suppliers of fuel to fuel farms, including that of the town), the recommendations appeared appropriate will be incorporated in the AMAC's suggested revised minimum standards

Pat Trunzo III asked why there should be any minimum standards adopted since the town would soon be out of the FAA grant assurances and he did not think any were generally required for airports by the FAA. Several members pointed out that having minimum standards would be good business practice and James Brundige read a portion of FAA guidelines strongly recommending that airports adopt them. David Gruber renewed his suggestion that we look at other similar airports such as Aspen, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and West Hampton. Also, Truckee airport at Lake Tahoe was suggested as perhaps the one most similar to HTO.

Alex Gersten` pointed out that all airports were unique and just picking up provisions for minimum standards from several might not get us to a set appropriate for HTO and renewed his recommendation that HTO engage a consultant to help. David Gruber and Arthur Malman explained that we were not ruling out a consultant, but thought that we should start first by looking at other airports and seeing what things were being considered

Arthur Malman suggested that Steve Tuma, James Brundige and he would, after looking at some other airports' standards and working on revisions to the old form of HTO minimum standards, present to the AMAC a redline of the various sections of the minimum standards and town code airport sections that the AMAC could consider recommending to the Town Board for updating.

The meeting next moved on to a consideration of a new tracking system being recommended to replace the town's older Multilateralization system which was at or near the end of its useful life. Arthur Malman noted that the new L3 Harris system suggested by James Brundige was based on the new ADS-B transponder systems to which aircraft were generally required to upgrade over the last couple of years. Kent Feuerring was asked if he could poll the EH Pilot's association to see how many had upgraded. Kent Feuerring explained that, since an aircraft would need to have upgraded to the new system to fly much beyond the immediate vicinity of HTO, he would estimate that 95% or more of HTO based aircraft had upgraded but would confirm by next meeting.

John Kirrane questioned whether some pilots were turning off transponders to avoid being seen breaking out of voluntary routes. Arthur Malman explained that the AMAC had investigated this in depth several months ago and found that the rumor had started when someone mis-stated that the FAA had indicated that pilots WERE turning off their transponders. However, upon further research, it turned out that the FAA had actually said that, while pilots COULD turn off a transponder, the FAA DOUBTED ANY WOULD since turning off a transponder would jeopardize the plane's safety since others might not see it. It was senseless to suggest that a pilot would put his or her safety at risk to avoid flying a voluntary route when there was no penalty for deviating from it.

Arthur Malman stated that, since he understood that L3 Harris was already building a demo ADS-B tracking system model for HTO, it seemed that, at no cost to the town, HTO could have both its existing multilateralization system and the new ADS-B system operate for a while over the summer. Meanwhile James Brundige could call a couple of other similar airports to HTO, such as Truckee, which was just installing it, to find out how it was working out.

David Gruber asked James Brundige and Steve Tuma to explain the new L3Harris system in detail. James Brundige said he was having a call on Monday with Vector and Harris to go over this and invited any interested member to join and learn more [James Brundige later withdrew this invitation since the town preferred to have only its personnel involved in the call at this stage].

John Kirrane, Teresa McCaskie and others noted that they were still seeing many aircraft in the HTO airspace, some of which were not following voluntary flight paths. James Brundige noted that many complaints filed were actually related to aircraft not landing at HTO but merely flying in its airspace, which is happening more often now with greatly reduced HTO operations and less need for the transecting aircraft to avoid often crowded seasonal airspace over HTO.

John Kirrane asked about the deviation from voluntary routes on a particular time on the prior Wednesday. Jeff Smith explained that he personally had been flying the helicopter in question and weather at that particular day and time required deviation from the voluntary routes. Patricia Currie raised questions about the under-use and over-use of certain routes and a detailed discussion ensued.

John Kirrane asked if the routes had been chosen in part to avoid overflights of more expensive houses. Jeff Smith and James Brundige said that this had not been a consideration. Arthur Malman noted that one voluntary HTO helicopter route was over Georgica Pond, with some of the area's most expensive houses, and that the main HTO Jet route was directly over the center of EH Village's most expensive homes.

David Gruber suggested that we study a finite week's operations and compare complaints with actual flight data to see which complaints are related to non-HTO operations and which to HTO operations, and gaining more granular information on types of aircraft and other information. He felt that with lower than usual operations this would be a more manageable undertaking. Jim Stone, who explained that he had a background in these types of studies although outside the aviation industry, cautioned that a particular low traffic week might give skewed data. David Gruber agreed but said that we could at least start to understand the problem.

John Kirrane questioned whether he could get data on complaints previously filed but it was thought that the complaint data company that he and others had been using could supply the historical information.

Arthur Malman suggested that since Sound's and the town's aircraft tracking systems were the most sophisticated as far as complete data, that John Kirrane work with Teresa McCaskie, Patricia Currie, Ron Klausner and others to consolidate and compile their best data for the week chosen and then that could be cross checked by Sound's and the Town's system.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Arthur Malman

## **Exhibit A**

### AMAC Meeting Airport Director's Update June 12, 2020

#### **Construction and Maintenance Projects**

Baker--The runway/taxiway crack sealing and painting project: The contractor, who hails from Pennsylvania, is making plans to be here in two weeks to complete the work.

Savik and Murray--The Airfield lighting, Ramp lighting and Sound Proofing projects:

- Airfield Lighting will be sent to contractors for a bid next week.
- Ramp Lighting: Bid package to be given to Jeanne next week. The plan is for all solar powered lamps that the manufacturer guarantees will provide full power all night for one week with no sun. These lights will only be on for about 2 hours every night and will be dark skies compliant. Solar power reduces the cost considerably, not only operating costs, but also installation costs—no trenching or wires running from the Terminal building out to the ramp.
- Soundproofing: still waiting for signed proposal and Purchase Order.

**Environmental, Economic and Other Studies**—No Change Jeff Bragman submitted the three Environmental proposals to the other Town Board members for consideration. The Economic Study is being conducted by David Gruber and Kent Feuerring.

**Deer Fence-Guard Rail**—No Change The estimated cost of installing a Guard Rail along Daniels Hole Road is \$77,000. The draft Resolution to proceed with the work has not been adopted by the Town Board.

**Revised Airport Regulations**-no change from last month The Airport Minimum Standards document is presumed to have been adopted by the Town in the 1980s. Minimum Standards are not required for General Aviation airports, but are recommended and represent good business practices. In order for the Minimum Standards guideline to have more clout, perhaps they should be incorporated into the Town Code. Revised Town Code must be approved by the Town Board and by the New York Department of State. Suggested insurance coverage by Arthur and Muni is attached to this report.

**Vector Aircraft Tracking-Discussion** Our Vector Multilateration Tracking system that was initially installed about 13 years ago is beginning to degrade. Tom Breen, Vectors Tech guru and Pete Coleton, Vector Airport Solutions CEO, have proposed an upgrade utilizing a combination of ADS-B and L3Harris FAA feed that will be more accurate and result in lower annual cost. With the Harris feed, the system will also be much more accurate than the free public tracking systems. L3Harris is the sole provider to the FAA for tracking aircraft. Details attached.

**Exhibit B**

{ALSO TO BE ATTACHED BY THE TOWN TO ITS FILE COPY OF THE FINAL MINUTES ARE THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS PRESENTED TO THE MEETING}

Materials on suggested insurance coverage and the L3 Harris System referred to in Exhibit A