

Airport Management Advisory Committee  
**Minutes of Meeting – August 14, 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, David Gruber, Gene Oshrin, Munir Saltoun and Arthur Malman, and ex-officio members Jeff Bragman, Councilperson and Board liaison for the AMAC, James Brundige, Airport Director and Len Bernard, the Town’s Chief Budget Officer.

Absent were Kent Feuerring, , a voting member and John Mak, a non-voting member.

Among others attending for all or part of the telephone meeting were Michael Wright of the Express News Group, John Kirrane of the Sag Harbor/Noyac Civic Association, Patricia Currie and Sherly Gold 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”), Ron Klausner of the Watermill/Southampton Aircraft Advisory Committee, Jim Stone, a resident of North Sea, Bernadette Ruggiero , Controller of Sound Aircraft, Bill Dunn of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (“AOPA”) 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.

Arthur Malman explained that the meeting that had been scheduled for July 10 could not be held since there was a major lengthy internet outage of the town’s internet that resulted in few people signing on to the zoom session. The items on that meeting’s agenda had been carried over to this meeting.

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

**SEPTEMBER 11, OCTOBER 9, NOVEMBER 13, DECEMBER 11, JANUARY 8, FEBRUARY 12, MARCH 12, APRIL 16, MAY 7, JUNE 11**

Arthur Malman noted that it was likely that the September 11 meeting would be on Zoom.

The draft minutes of the June 2020 meeting, as previously distributed, were approved.

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

Although HTO operations were down 38% in July 2020 versus July 2019 (and 30% year to date), helicopter traffic this July versus July 2019 is down by 63%, with those coming in being the larger corporate helicopters with very few being the shared passenger Blade helicopters. Although operations are down 38%, landing fees being collected and fuel sales (and fuel flowage fees to the town) are each only down about 20% this year versus last year since the average non-based aircraft coming in are larger, paying higher landing fees and buying more fuel.

James Brundige reported that Vector's NextGen tracking system upgrade had been installed giving the town a much wider circle for tracking aircraft around the airport and that historical flight data for this wider would now be stored and could then be accessed when needed.

Jeff Bragman reported that there were negotiations underway for one new lease on airport property, but that these negotiations were confidential so he could not yet identify the potential tenant or type of space. He also reported that the Town Board was not interested in contracting for the Phase II pavement report that had been unanimously recommended by the AMAC.

Arthur Malman asked if this meant that the Board was interested in making no significant capital expenditures at the airport until it had made a decision on the airport's future in 2021, after FAA grant restrictions had expired, except for safety items or those that would have an immediate pay back. Jeff Bragman said this was not necessarily the case.

Jeff Bragman also reported that the town had determined to go ahead with environmental testing at the airport but was not prepared to give details. Pat Trunzo III felt that there was no reason to withhold this information.

It was reported that the FAA had finally determined, over an appeal from certain aviation interests, that the town had appropriately used airport fund monies to litigate denial of the town's attempt to limit certain operations at HTO, even though the Town had not ultimately been successful.

Sheryl Gold complained that she had asked Arthur Malman to add to the AMAC agenda the HMMH Report on operations and complaints and Senator Schumer's proposed bill revising the North Shore Route and he would not agree to do so, saying that AMAC members were generally familiar with noise issues and these matters were being handled by the town board and should be taken up with the town board--and the board had not requested the AMAC to discuss them. Moreover, Sheryl Gold said she did not think the board had asked the AMAC to study overflights and that this was just being done because aviation interests wanted it done. Arthur Malman pointed out that, while aviation interests had often asserted that some complaints to HTO were actually overflights, the AMAC study of the issue to see if overflight complaints could be separated from HTO operations had been suggested by David Gruber, clearly not someone identified as a proponent of increasing HTO operations.

Jeff Bragman explained that in general the Board did not fix the agendas of the various advisory committees. Although the Board or the liaison might ask a committee to consider a particular issue, the agenda of the committees were set by the members.

Arthur Malman explained that at our June meeting David Gruber had suggested that we study a finite week's operations during this slow summer period with covid-19 depressed operations and compare complaints with actual flight data to see if was feasible to understand which complaints are related to non-HTO operations and which to HTO operations. Trying to develop a very small test data base of complaints versus actual operations would show us if this would be feasible for the town to attempt on a more comprehensive larger scale. Even a very small data base would also let us address it from various directions to understand what additional insights could become obtainable and could give us more granular information on types of aircraft and other potentially useful information.

During that last meeting David Gruber had pointed out that, with lower than usual operations, this would be a more manageable undertaking on a test basis. Jim Stone, who had explained that he had a background in these types of studies although outside the aviation industry, had cautioned at that last meeting that a particular low traffic week might give skewed data. David Gruber had agreed but had said that we could at least start to understand the process of data extraction to see if would be feasible for the town to pursue on a larger scale

Arthur Malman thanked the people who, following up on David Gruber's suggestion, had sent their noise complaint information for the agreed upon week to Jim Brundige. He especially thanked Sound Aircraft that had dedicated the time of one of its senior employees working long hours for several days, using historical data from Sound's own tracking systems (that at the time were more sophisticated than the town's older systems), to compare the complaint data to actual retrievable historical flight paths.

Preliminary results had confirmed that some complaints to HTO may have been for overflights the results were not yet ready for public comment, but one next step would be to see if all the complaints submitted had been studied. He noted that at least two complaints had come into HTO about an hour apart on June 8---a date he recalled because it was his mother's 101<sup>st</sup> birthday and his own anniversary when he had been outdoors at his own home and remember the continuous distracting aircraft noise. However, a review of the flight path revealed that the particular aircraft had taken off from Westhampton, had made several passes over and around the area of HTO but had never landed at HTO---perhaps being the flight of a student pilot on a training exercise.

John Kirrane said that he was sure his own complaints had only been about aircraft operating at HTO and not overflights.

Teresa McCaskie was upset that she had gotten an email from an employee of Sound, with a logo strongly supporting continued operations at HTO, relating to her personal complaints and felt that this sharing of her address information with Sound had been inappropriate.

David Gruber explained that the Sound employee had been well intentioned in following up privately with her and had been the one working long hours on the data. The town had neither the computer system nor the employee time to check the data for the week in question and Sound had volunteered to help out-- this particular employee doing the data research. Moreover, after she had brought it up the issue, the analysis had continued with only general locations of villages or hamlets identified to make it usable but with no specific street addresses.

Teresa McCaskie also stated that since Sound had gotten her address, aircraft had been purposely flying over her house. Arthur Malman pointed out that her address had been readily obtainable on the internet for many years and she has been a high visibility anti-aircraft noise advocate for many years, so it is highly unlikely that anyone would have needed the complaint data to find her home address—and we had no reason to believe that they had gotten it from her complaint to the town or if there were, in fact, any purposeful overflights of her home.

Len Bernard explained that noise complaints, like other matters submitted to or worked on by the town board, with a few exceptions not pertinent to noise complaints, were subject to any member of the public obtaining copies of the actual complaints by making a FOIL request and so any item included in a complaint would be available for public inspection.

Sheryl Gold pointed out that the complaints studied so far had been from only one of the systems people used to file noise complaints and 2/3 of complaints were coming from systems that had not been studied. It was felt that this was a constructive point and would certainly need to be considered in a broader study.

Teresa McCaskie also pointed out that often people do not instantaneously report a complaint and that the time stamp on a complaint could be a few minutes later. It was thought this was also a valid point and would likewise need to be considered.

A question was raised as to why the Town's new sophisticated aircraft tracking system was not used to study the complaint data for the week in question and instead Sound had done the initial work. Arthur Malman explained that the Town's new system had not yet been operational during the week that the prior meeting had agreed to study, so that the town's new system had no way to retrieve and compare historical aircraft tracking data for that particular week.

Moreover, the town had not authorized any of its employees to devote the substantial time that would be needed to do even this very limited preliminary test study. Finally, this AMAC project was not supposed to be a definitive study of extensive complaint data to HTO but only, as David Gruber had suggested at the initial meeting where this idea came up, an attempt to study a very small sample on a slow week. This small study would let us understand whether it would even be possible for the town, were it to embark upon a more comprehensive study by outside professionals, to see if a correlation could be found, based on available data to distinguish among complaints to HTO to figure out which were related to HTO operations and which were overflights not related to HTO but going to and from other destinations.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Arthur Malman

**Exhibit A**

**AMAC Meeting**  
**Airport Director's Update**  
**Aug 14, 2020**

**Airport Operations**

July 2020 Operations **Total 4416**

Helicopter 711      Jet 852      Turboprop 772    (Seaplane) 331    Other (incl. Piston) 2081

July 2019 Operations **Total 7109**

Helicopter 2357      Jet 1166      Turboprop 1719    (Seaplane) 1017    Other (incl. Piston) 1867

Month of July 2020

Helicopters down 70%      Jets down 27%      Seaplanes down 67%      Other up 12%

**Total Ops in July down 38%.    Overall traffic YTD down 30%**

**Construction and Maintenance Projects**

**Baker**—Runway and Taxiway crack sealing and painting have been put off until after Labor Day.

**Savik and Murray**—Lighting bids have closed and are being evaluated by Purchasing and the engineers.

**Vector Aircraft Tracking**

Town Board passed a resolution to accept Vector's proposal for a NextGen tracking upgrade.

**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}

None at this meeting