

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2017 MEETING OF  
THE GROTON-NEW LONDON AIRPORT (KGON) ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

ATTENDING: Bill Allen, Robert Browning, Tom Durkin, Franz Edson, George McMillan, Stephanie Molden, Barry Pallanck, Liz Raisbeck, Carl Strand, Eric Thompson, Eugenia Villagra

**1. Call to Order:** Mr. Thompson opened the meeting at 7:02PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Thompson -The draft minutes of the October 2016 meeting were approved and then passed to file.

**3. Report on Air Traffic Activities:** Mr. Durkin reported that the annual 2016 traffic was consistent with the past few years. Traffic in December 2016 was also typical for the time of year. Airport activity typically (over 2009-2016) rises between January and August, peaks in August, and falls off through the rest of the year. The fourth quarter traffic operations count was 8,168, compared to 8,950 in Q4 2015. Monthly traffic counts were: October- 2,939, November- 2,638, and December- 2,591.

Mr. Edson reported that he had secured the KGON airport to be one of the four locations of the 2017 AOPA (Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association) [Fly-In events](#). Groton will be host to the Fly-In on October 6-7, 2017, which is Columbus Day weekend. Mr. Thompson and other members commended Mr. Edson on obtaining this opportunity for attracting business to the airport and to the wider Southeastern Connecticut region. Mr. Edson noted that the goal is to attract pilots and travelers to the region and to encourage them to return in the future to enjoy the amenities. In addition, Mr. Edson is looking for volunteers to assist with the event.

Mr. Pallanck and Mr. Thompson mentioned that the airport will again sponsor activities on National Aviation Day, which is August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The goal of the event is to raise awareness about the airport and aviation in general, as well as to reach out to young people who could pursue a career in aviation. Members noted that the industry will shortly be facing a shortage of pilots and other aviation professionals.

Mr. Browning of The Mystic Jet Center noted that 2016 and early 2017 have been good for business.

**4. Report on Noise Complaints/Low-Flying Aircraft and Efforts to Abate Noise:** Mr. Durkin reported that he had spoken to a concerned resident of Jupiter Point Road on December 27<sup>th</sup>, who complained that two C-130s had been landing close to residential areas. After another resident raised concerns about C-130s creating too much noise, Mr. Durkin reached out to the Connecticut and Rhode Island Air National Guard bases to remind pilots to follow the noise abatement procedures at KGON. Mr. Thompson recalled that Air Traffic Control at KGON will occasionally tell pilots to “go straight out”, which results in not following noise abatement procedures. Mr. Durkin will follow up with Air Traffic Control to see if there is a reason that pilots are asked to do this, such as safety, weather, or other air traffic.

**5. Status Discussions:**

*a. Safety:* Mr. Pallanck said that an area was identified in area C that needed pavement work, and that

repairs had also been made to a drainage basin. The drainage basin had to be repaired before the winter freeze/thaw cycles to prevent further damage to the area around the basin.

*b. Security:* Mr. Pallanck had nothing new to report.

*c. Airport Improvements:* Mr. Pallanck reviewed the various projects underway at the airport, including the new roof on the airport maintenance building and new sliding doors in the terminal building. Mr. Pallanck added information about future efforts in fixing the vestibule, vestibule roofs, and power washing the buildings.

In addition it was noted that the restaurant at the airport, the Beacon Bar & Grille, had recently closed, but that efforts are underway to have an area restaurateur open a new dining establishment for airport patrons. Members noted their approval with this development, both in terms of attracting airport business and as an asset for the wider community. Mr. Thompson said that he had heard at least 10-15 potential fly-ins change their plans to land at KGON once they heard that there was not a restaurant on premises.

Mr. Pallanck said that the runway is not due to be repaired until at least 2021, due to funds currently being used to repair the runway at Oxford Airport. The cost of the Oxford repairs was estimated at between \$26-28M.

There was a short discussion about whether the EMAS was operational at KGON, as some members had seen notifications that it was not working. Mr. Thompson suggested that the EMAS was operational, but could not be used for airplanes over a certain size and speed, such as the large planes used to bring First Lady Obama's supplies to Groton on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 for her visit to the Sub Base.

**6. Other Matters and Activities:** Mr. Pallanck recapped the December 8th meeting on the Draft Environmental Assessment for Tree Obstruction Removal. He said that the event was well attended and greatly appreciated by those that attended. It was noted that the course of action for the project has not yet been determined.

Mr. Thompson said that he thought the presenters from the consulting firm, CHA, could have made it clear why the clearing is such an important issue for the airport. He mentioned that he had seen some flyers and emails from individuals and groups concerned about the ecological impacts of the clearing on Bluff point.

Mr. Edson said that he spoke with someone from the CT Fund for the Environment and explained the issues, and considered this one-on-one conversation more successful than the other information available on this topic. Mr. Thompson stated that KGON and the FAA see room for common ground between themselves and the community, and do not want to pursue a "scorched earth policy" regarding Bluff Point, and that they consider protecting the area to be an important goal, while maintaining safe access to the airport.

**7. Meeting Schedule for 2017:** The entire 2017 meeting schedule is included as an attachment to these minutes.

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**8. Date of Next Meeting:** April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Meeting will be held at the Town of Groton Public Library, 52 Route 117, Groton.

**9. Adjournment:** The meeting ended at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Stephanie Molden