

Airport Management Advisory Committee
Minutes of Meeting – October 15, 2021, 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: Kent Feuerring, Steve Tuma, Munir Saltoun, Charles Ehren, and Arthur Malman, and ex-officio members, Jeff Bragman, Councilperson and Board liaison for the AMAC, Rebecca Hansen, the Town’s Chief Budget Officer and Jim Brundige, the airport Director.

Absent were Pat Trunzo III and David Gruber, voting members, and John Mak, a non-voting member

Among others attending for all or part of the Zoom meeting were Peter VanScoyoc, Supervisor, Kathee Burke-Gonzalez, Town Board member, Cate Rogers and John Whelan, candidates for the town board, Michael Wright of the Express News Group, Erin Sweeny, executive director of the EH Community Alliance, Sherly Gold of Say No to KHTO, John Cullen a member of the Northville Civic Council and the Riverhead Noise Task Force, Alex Gersten, Director of Airports and Ground Infrastructure for the National Business Aviation Association (“NBAA”), Terresa McCaskie of the Southold Town Helicopter Committee, Bernadette Ruggiero, controller of Sound Aircraft, Carolyn Gluck, Chair of Wainscott CAC, Jack Macaulay of East Moriches, Valerie Di Lore 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 by the town prior to the meeting.

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

November 12, December 10.

Arthur Malman noted that it was likely that all these meetings would be on Zoom.

The draft minutes of the September 17, 2021, meeting, previously distributed to members, were approved.

Arthur Malman expressed the sadness of the group regarding the passing of Zachary Cohen, a friend of the AMAC, who with humor, worked tirelessly for the Town and its people. As only one example, Zach threw himself, with his usual dedication, into dissecting a recommendation from airport consultants that acres of trees had to be cut down to protect aircraft approaches. He reviewed the math, finding errors and he walked through the forest identifying specific trees—at the end, a couple of dozen trees were trimmed, and acres of forest were saved. Be it to protect forests or people’s rights, Zach was there—he will be sorely missed.

Steve Tuma explained that Brian Prosser, the developer of the new aircraft tracking and complaint reporting system, had some family issues and the project had been delayed a few weeks but was back on track.

Jim Brundige reported on operations through September and his report is attached as Exhibit A. He noted that increases in operations this year over prior periods seemed to be slowing down.

The meeting turned to the Cooley October 6 letter and memo that had been recently posted to the town's website.

While the cover letter implied that Montauk Airport (MTP) could require prior permission to land jets and helicopters, the accompanying memo admitted that Cooley had not yet even looked at the FAA grant assurances that MTP signed, and which could eviscerate this conclusion. Moreover the 25-year MTP airport manager had stated that no prior permission was required to land—only to park since areas to park aircraft at MTP were very limited. Finally, FAA materials that Cooley reprinted as published by the FAA, were reportedly merely compiled by FAA personnel based upon materials supplied by airport managers—and in this case the words used by the MTP manager did not mean what Cooley contended. Jeff Bragman said that Cooley had FOILED the MTP grant assurances and further analysis of whether MTP could require permission to land would be forthcoming.

Arthur Malman pointed out that this was a critical issue, since some people who were suggesting that the Town could buy MTP and impose landing restrictions on helicopters and jets, do not realize that the grant assurance may prohibit prior landing permission at MTP until about 2028—no matter who buys it. Jeff Bragman said that the actual grant had been small and maybe there could be a way to repay it and avoid the prohibition, but this would also require further research.

Jeff Bragman reported that the town had some discussions with the owners of MTP airport, but these had ended several months ago.

Sheryl Gold said she thought that the re-envisioning suite of studies had been deficient since none had considered alternate uses of the airport's 600 acres. If residents understood the possibilities of alternate uses, they might be more amenable to closing the airport. Jeff Bragman said that the Board had tried to break airport considerations into two manageable segments and the first was the future of the airport itself. With regard to re envisioning studies in general, he said that these were drafts and would be supplemented.

Sheryl Gold felt that the town forums on the airport had been useless and aviation interests had dominated. Jeff Bragman and others disagreed and indicated a wide agreement on the fact that the status quo at HTO was not sustainable.

With reference to the suggestion that the Town take a first step of setting a curfew for operations at HTO, several participants thought this would be of minimal consequence, even as a first step, since relatively few operations would be affected.

Arthur Malman then brought up Jeff Bragman's proposal, not to close the airport for a year, but rather to have a test year with jets, helicopters and seaplanes prohibited as a realistic way, beyond theoretical studies, to see how communities are affected. Jeff Bragman pointed out that during this test year, if some items needed to be changed, adjustments could be made. He indicated that there would need to be fine tuning to work out the exact parameters for the test year but felt that this would be the best way to understand the real-world implications of the various choices. A discussion ensued on the implications during such a test year on the airport finances, personnel, operations as well as on residents.

One issue has been the magnitude of possible increases in helicopter operations at MTP, if HTO were closed to helicopters.

Arthur Malman pointed out that in order to understand what increases take place in the actual number of operations at MTP if HTO were closed to certain classes of aircraft, we need to know the number of operations at MTP in a normal year. In several re-envisioning studies, the consultants had erroneously assumed that there were 30,000 operations a year at MTP--slightly more than HTO--which is unrealistic. He indicated, although some material reportedly provided to the FAA by MTP had included that number, he had spoken directly with the MTP's long time manager who thought the correct number of annual operations was in the 12-15,000 range.

It was suggested that MTP would keep track of this since they charge landing fees. Others thought maybe the MTP records might not be accurate, since the MTP office is not open 24/7 and the field may not have the Vector system that HTO has to record operations.

It was suggested that, since Sound was working on a system to record flight tracks and originating and ending airports, maybe we could use this system for a week or so at both HTO and MTP and get a good ballpark number of the relative HTO and MTP operations as a test of the reported 30,000 annual operations at MTP. Steve Tuma said it would be better if MTP had one of the special aerals that he has at HTO for these purposes. He explained that the special aerial could be on the MTP field or just in the vicinity. Steve Tuma said he actually had an extra aerial, and it could be installed at MTP, if the owners agreed, or nearby or they were unreceptive.

Terresa McCaskie had several questions on airspace designations and tower operations and Jim Brundige explained the limits.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM

Respectfully submitted, Arthur Malman

AMAC
Airport Director's Update **October 15, 2021**

YEAR 2021	Total Ops	Source		Total Operations by type				Unknown Mode C	Seaplane* C-208
		Local	Transient	Piston Engine SE & ME	Turboprop Single Twin	Helicopters	Jets		
Jan	1,284	666	618	748	58	266	212		4
Feb	890	494	396	604	38	154	94		2
Mar	1,210	660	550	760	68	184	198		4
Apr	1,454	598	856	732	80	402	240		10
May	2,754	898	1,856	1,138	312	854	450		62
Jun	4,410	934	3,476	1,420	840	1,144	1,006		418
Jul	5,758	886	4,872	1,554	1,364	1,376	1,464		576
Aug	6,138	892	5,246	1,636	1,338	1,739	1,428		560
Sep	3,666	842	2,824	1,234	684	1,056	692		312
Total YTD	27,564	6,870	20,694	9,826	4,782	7,175	5,784		1,984

YEAR 2020	Total Ops	Source		Total Operations by type				Unknown Mode C	Seaplane*
		Local	Transient	Piston Engine SE & ME	Turboprop Single Twin	Helicopters	Jets		
Jan	802	482	320	566	22	160	54		6
Feb	834	506	328	624	16	144	50		0
Mar	796	450	346	530	50	116	100		0
Apr	622	420	202	474	12	70	66		0
May	1,242	470	772	654	108	166	314		34
Jun	2,650	590	2,060	1,022	416	526	686		156
Jul	4,330	1,364	2,966	2,006	766	704	854		326
Aug	4,574	1,262	3,312	1,906	862	740	1,066		332
Sep	3,486	852	2,634	1,364	538	834	750		232
Total YTD	19,336	6,396	12,940	9,146	2,790	3,460	3,940		1,086

YEAR 2019	Total Ops	Source		Total Operations by type				Unknown Mode C	Seaplane*
		Local	Transient	Piston Engine SE & ME	Turboprop Single Twin	Helicopters	Jets		
Jan	520	216	304	284	16	152	68		0
Feb	642	330	312	440	28	148	26		0
Mar	716	340	376	436	36	186	58		2
Apr	896	430	466	568	60	192	76		20
May	2,416	626	1,790	910	442	740	324		236
Jun	3,840	708	3,132	1,170	874	1,224	572		538
Jul	6,780	884	5,896	1,744	1,678	2,234	1,124		986
Aug	7,410	992	6,418	1,848	1,918	2,334	1,310		1,072
Sep	3,012	790	2,222	1,124	516	962	410		310
Total YTD	26,232	5,316	20,916	8,524	5,568	8,172	3,968		3,164

Note: Although I have included the 2020 Operations spreadsheet for your review, the only meaningful comparison of operations is between 2021 and 2019, 2019 being the last “normal” year of operations.

We’re up over 1300 operations in 2021 YTD vs 2019.

2021 vs 2019 YTD

Helicopters down 12% Jets up 45% Turboprops down 14 % Seaplane down 47%
Piston up 15%

Total Ops YTD through Sept 2021 vs Sept 2019 up 5%

Summary: While helicopters, Turboprops and Seaplane numbers are down vs 2019, Piston and Jet traffic ops are up for an overall increase of 5% YTD.

Financials

Gross Landing Fees Billed:

September 2021: \$320,965
September 2020: \$303,880
September 2019: \$212,930

YTD 2021: \$2,439,645
YTD 2020: \$1,475,830
YTD 2019: \$2,085,245

Fuel Sales in Gallons

September 2021: 134,999
September 2020: 127,527
September 2019: 79,563

YTD 2021: 1,002,379
YTD 2020: 611,393
YTD 2019: 815,601

Gross Revenue to the Town 2021 YTD at \$.30/gal.: \$300,714
Gross Revenue to the Town 2020 YTD at \$.30/gal.: \$183,418
Gross Revenue to the Town 2019 YTD at \$.30/gal.: \$224,680