

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 26, 2010 MEETING OF
THE GROTON-NEW LONDON AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Present: Robert Browning, Susan Cullen, Bruce Delea, Syma Ebbin, Bud Fay, Gary Saunders, Tom Seidel, Carl Strand, Eric Thompson, Dave Wright and Catherine Young.

1. Mr. Strand opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

2. Minutes: The minutes of the October 27, 2009 meeting were passed to file.

3. Report on traffic activities: Ms. Young presented the fourth quarter report. Total airport traffic counts for the 4th quarter were: October- 3,180, November- 2,717, and December- 2,208. The October figure was less than the October 2008 total, while the November and December totals were greater than the corresponding months in 2008. The 2009 yearly total was 38,582 compared to 45,204 in 2008 and 51,977 in 2007. Ms. Young reported that similar traffic decreases have been occurring at airports throughout the country. Asked about the number of overflights handled by the air traffic controllers during the quarter, she said she did not have that information with her but that the FAA Contract Tower Airport Operations Count Record including overflight numbers is available from the airport manager's office at any time upon request. The Airport's Based Aircraft Inventory for fourth quarter was 54 aircraft, including 1109th CT AVCRAD Army National Guard aircraft. The reported number in October 2008 was 67 total aircraft. She reminded the Committee the '08 report of inventory included helicopters in for repair at the Guard, whereas now the 2009 inventory only includes actual based aircraft. In addition, the based aircraft inventory is now and will continue to be recorded on a monthly basis.

4. Report on noise complaints/low-flying aircraft and efforts to abate noise: Ms. Young reported that there were no complaints for the fourth quarter. There was a complaint in October about two low flying C-130s, but this involved operations outside the Groton Tower airspace. She referred the complainant to the FAA's Aviation Safety Hotline. She also received a complaint about a strobe light on a Pfizer building in New London that is apparently there to meet FAA obligations. Regarding efforts to minimize plane noise, she explained that when she trains new pilot users of the Airport on the first Thursday of each month, she discusses the aircraft noise abatement procedures and gives them each a copy of the Airport Noise Compatibility Program booklet.

5. Report on facility activities at CT Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD): Mr. Bruce Delea, Maintenance Foreman for the facility, reported in place of Mr. William O'Dell, the Flight Operations Officer because he was out of town. Flight activities have slowed this past year, although additional building space is needed to meet safety and security requirements. The Flexible Engine Diagnostic Stand (FEDS) that is used to test aircraft engines was recalibrated. To try as much as possible to reduce loud noise impacts on the local community when the FEDS is running, it is not operated during early morning or evening hours; and when louder helicopter engine models are tested, Mr. Delea notifies airport management in advance who, in turn, notifies the on-airport community and nearby residents. Mr. Delea further explained that due to increased security requirements, he was unable to give detailed numbers or data about current 1109th AVCRAD operations.

6. Status discussions:

a. Safety: Ms. Young reported on Runway Safety Area (RSA) permit progress based on information from Mr. David Head of CTDOT Planning: The DEP permit has been out to public notice which ended January 22nd. CTDOT is waiting for notice from DEP whether a hearing will be required. If not, CTDOT will tie up any loose ends among DOT, CT DEP, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Ebbin expressed surprise that she had not been notified. Ms. Young gave her a contact person at DEP. The EMAS blocks are expected to be delivered in FF2010 for installation in FF2011. Mr. Robert Browning distributed copies of a news article concerning the recent successful use of EMAS at the Yeager Airport in Charleston, West Virginia for an aborted takeoff.

b. Security: Ms. Young reported that safety and security training continues on an on-going basis.

c. Airport Improvements: In terms of progress on the Airport Master Plan Update (AMPU), Ms. Young reported on information submitted by Mr. Head. Working paper #3 – proposed future layout of the airport has been received from the consultant and will shortly be sent out for CTDOT and FAA review. It is expected that the AMPU Advisory Committee and a public informational meeting will be held late winter/early spring. For more information on AMPU, one should go to the airport website, www.groton-newlondonairport-ampu.org.

Ms. Young indicated that CTDOT is planning to work with a consultant to prepare a business development plan for each State GA airport which will include a discussion of airport names.

7. Other matters and activities: Mr. Gary Saunders, owner/operator of Saunders Aircraft Sales, addressed the Committee concerning periodic road flooding at the AMTRAK underpass on State Route 649 (South Road). Based on his research, fifty vehicles were disabled here over the six year time period of 2004 to 2009, and eighteen accidents were reported for the same time period. The Committee discussed many issues pertaining to this problem which has existed at this location for decades. It was agreed that a sub-committee consisting of Messer's Saunders, Fay, and Thompson would study the issue and report back to the Committee. Ms. Ebbin inquired if CT DOT had considered whether the subject of climate change/rising sea level would have an impact on this area. Ms. Young said that the following day she would be attending the first of three workshop meetings on Coastal Climate Adaptation in Groton and would bring the road flooding subject up. She reported that beginning January 2010 each quarterly meeting for the Airport Advisory Committee is now announced on the Groton Municipal TV cable channels. She asked Mr. Browning to bring back to Lanmar Aviation the offer to T-hangar tenants to be on the airport advisory committee email list. If interested, they should send an email to the airport manager. Ms. Young told the Committee she and CT DEP are working together to eliminate the public's feeding of birds at Bluff Point State Park, because this is unsafe due to the park's close proximity to the flight paths. She distributed highlights of the airport's current website; and a recent article from Airport Magazine describing the FAA contract tower program's success which has been in effect for 27 years. She announced that she has asked the Thames Valley Squadron of the CT Wing Civil Air Patrol to make a presentation at the next Committee meeting. Ms. Ebbin inquired if the Committee could receive an update of the Airport's cost and operating expenses, and Ms. Young said she would do this.

8. The next advisory committee meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2010, 7:00 PM at the Town of Groton Public Library, 52 Route 117, Groton, CT.

9. The meeting ended at 8:05 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Tom Seidel, Secretary.