

MINUTES
REPUBLIC AIRPORT COMMISSION (RAC) MEETING
7150 REPUBLIC AIRPORT, ROOM 201
EAST FARMINGDALE, NEW YORK
OCTOBER 10, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Frank Nocerino at 7:00p.m. Also present were Vice-Chairman Vincent Bologna, Jr., Commission Members Stella Barbera, Robert Bodenmiller, and Richard Grant.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Nocerino began the meeting by asking everyone to keep the victims of the recent Farmingdale High School bus crash in their prayers, as well as the victims of the conflict in Israel.

The Chairman said that he and Airport Director Anthony Ceglio asked for a postponement of the 5-parcel Open House because he did not like the public being notified of the event at the last minute. He said he would like the 5-parcel information to be submitted to the Commission before it goes out to the public, and that he will keep everyone informed. He stated the Working Group will start up after the Open House event. He asked for the Towns and all the civic groups to submit a name to represent them in the Working Group.

II. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES FROM AUGUST 2023

Ms. Barbera motioned to adopt the minutes, seconded by Mr. Grant. The motion carried unanimously.

III. CHANGES AND/OR ADOPTION OF AGENDA

No changes.

IV. REPORTS, RESOLUTIONS, & OTHER BUSINESS

A. REPORTS

1. OPERATIONS, AIRCRAFT COMPLAINTS, & FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR JULY AND AUGUST 2023

Airport Manager Mr. John Lauth discussed the following:

Total Operations reported by FAA increased by 8% in July, and by 1.7% in August when compared to the previous year. Landings reported by Airport Operations in July and August decreased by 5.1% both months, the majority of which were attributed to single-engine aircraft. Touch & Go's increased by 24.5% in July and 14.7% in August. Passenger volume increased 0.1% in July and decreased 1.5% in August. Total Based Aircraft fell 10.5% in July and 11% in August.

July Aircraft Complaints totaled 156 from 17 households while August complaints were 103 from 19 households. The majority of July complaints were attributed to nighttime operations, while most August complaints were during the daytime. The majority of complaints in both July and August could not be identified by aircraft type or by runway and were reported as "Unknown". Residents living west and northwest of the Airport filed most of the complaints in both July and August. Touch & Go operations accounted for 3 complaints in July and 17 in August. "Unknown" aircraft that could not be identified as either Based or Transient accounted for most of the complaints filed in both July and August.

Chairman Nocerino commented that one person submitted 111 of the 156 complaints in July and probably used an automated software app. He added that the same person probably did not provide any direction/runway information, causing the high number of “Unknowns” reported under “Complaint by Runway”.

In July, Revenue was favorable for Landing Fees due to higher than anticipated landings. Rental Income was unfavorable due to a pending FAA office lease renewal. Miscellaneous Income was unfavorable due to the lack of film shoots and the entertainment industry strike. Fuel Fees was unfavorable due to fuel delivered to FBOs was less than anticipated. July Expenses were favorable overall. Labor Expenses were favorable due to a vacant position in Operations and an employee on leave. Employee Expenses were favorable due to foregoing attendance at the 2023 NYAMA (New York Aviation Management Association) conference. Communications Expenses were favorable due to vehicle radios in good working condition. Also favorable were Data Processing Expenses due to software support not being needed, Insurance Expenses due to property insurance premiums were lower than budgeted, and Professional Services Expenses because appraisal reports were not needed.

Revenue in August was favorable for Landings and Utilities Fees. Rental Income was unfavorable due to the FAA lease renewal. Miscellaneous Income was unfavorable due to the continued lack of film shoots. August Expenses were favorable overall. Labor Expense was favorable due to a vacant position in Operations and an employee still on leave. Also favorable were Communications Expenses due to radios in good working condition, Janitorial Expenses due to adequate custodial supplies on hand, and Professional Services Expenses due to lower than budgeted security system maintenance costs. Expenses for Vehicle Maintenance and Airport Maintenance were also lower than anticipated.

2. RECENT / CURRENT EVENTS

Airport Manager John Lauth reported on the following:

- a. **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Gateway, Sept 18-20:** Main Terminal served as a check point for TSA to screen helicopters flying to Manhattan during UNGA week.
- b. **Winter Preparations:** Vehicles are being prepped for winter operations. Airport staff and Key tenants will undergo annual Wildlife Hazard Management training in late October.
- c. **Internship Program for Vaughn College Students & Career Fair, Oct 11:** Three Vaughn students started a 90-day internship program this week. The Airport will also participate in a Career Fair at Vaughn College to recruit new employees and promote the internship program.
- d. **Girls in Aviation Day, Oct 21:** Airport staff will promote NYSDOT and Republic Airport at a student event to be held at Aviation High School in Queens.

Mr. Lauth added that FAA hosted its annual Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) meeting on September 27th to discuss runway incursion prevention, airfield signage, markings, lighting, and other safety issues. Pilots, flight schools, FBOs, Airport tenants and staff attended.

B. OTHER NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS

Airport Director Anthony Ceglie reported on the following:

1. **Alpha Taxiway Project:** Runway 14/32 will remain closed until October 25th. The project is on schedule to be completed by Thanksgiving.
2. **5-Parcel Development Project:** Completion of the restaurant demolition is expected within the next week.
3. **Runway 1/19 Pavement Design Project:** A meeting with FAA was canceled due to the impending government shutdown. Funding may be delayed as a result and the project may not begin until 2025.
4. **Breslau Development/Hangar 85:** Final plans have been reviewed. A Building Permit was issued to Modern Aviation to start the work which is expected to be finished by Fall 2024.

Mr. Ceglio referred to questions at the August RAC meeting regarding Stratosphere's tie-down fees on Echo ramp. He said the State reached out to Stratosphere and discussions are being held to ensure that the rates going forward will be fair and reasonable.

V. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Six (6) individuals commented.

Chairman Nocerino adjourned the meeting at 7:49pm.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by:
**Anthony C. Ceglio on behalf of Executive Secretary
Republic Airport Commission**

PUBLIC COMMENTS
REPUBLIC AIRPORT COMMISSION
October 10, 2023

Ms. Nancy Cypser of the Woodland Civic Association asked groups if groups that were not invited can submit names for the Working Group. Chairman Nocerino answered yes, and local officials can have a representative from their office in the Group. Commission Member Barbera added that representatives are needed from the Towns of Oyster Bay, Huntington, and Babylon.

Ms. Jessica Santangelo, President of Woodland Civic Association, commented that she still has not received copies of leases awarded to Stratosphere which she requested through FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) in June. Airport Director Anthony Ceglio responded that he has asked the State about the request and was told they are working on it.

Ms. Santangelo expressed concern that the 5-parcel Open House format will give the community a “one-sided narrative”. It is important that people who do not attend RAC meetings and who are less familiar with this issue be exposed to the concerns of those who are more involved. She asked if the Civic groups can have a station at the Open House so that attendees have an opportunity to hear from them. Chairman Nocerino said he thought it might be a good idea and would think about it.

Ms. Santangelo stated there might be value in starting the Working Group before the Open House so that the Group can talk about concerns they already have and be prepared when they come to the event. Chairman Nocerino stated his reasoning for starting the Working Group after the Open House is so the Working Group can prioritize the many questions they will come up with.

Ms. Santangelo said she was disappointed to hear that the RAC recommended postponing the Open House. She would have been fine having the Open House and Stratosphere not “having all their stuff together”. She said if we keep “putting dates on the books” to hold the Open House, where the public will be involved, and then they say, “oh, we’re just not ready”, then it becomes a slippery slope.

Dr. Bob Corona, an Echo Tenant, said he has 4 tie-down spots on Echo ramp and asked to know if they are going to “push us out” and what the new tie-downs will cost. Chairman Nocerino said the rates are being looked into. Dr. Corona asked if there is a timeframe. Mr. Ceglio said information will be provided when it becomes available but tie down tenants will certainly not be pushed out within the next couple months.

Mr. James Keane, an Echo Tenant, asked what authority NYSDOT has to influence the tie-down rates because it is a commercial operation and they can set whatever rates that work for their business. Mr. Ceglio responded that FAA Grant Assurances require fair and reasonable rates to be set by the airport, and this is applied to our tenants as well. The airport is responsible for reviewing rates to make sure they are fair and reasonable. We are discussing this right now with Stratosphere. Mr. Keane said the challenge for pilots on Echo ramp is that they are getting mixed messages about what is going to happen and when. We are being put in a difficult position in terms of decision-making because we do not have consistent information. I want to be sure we are given the right information and the right timeline to help with our decision.

Mr. Mark Goldberg, an Echo Tenant, thanked the Commission and Airport for looking into the proposed increase in tie-down pricing which he finds to be an insult. He said that pilots have uncertainty about when the airplanes are moving and the pricing, and he asked the Commission to give the pilots a timeline.

Mr. Gene Pileggi, an Echo Tenant, asked if the lease for the parcel information is public. Chairman Nocerino said it is public information but it must be requested from the State using the FOIL process, which can take a long time. Mr. Pileggi asked if he needed legal help to get it. Ms. Jessica Santangelo commented that she asked a lawyer about it and was told there is nothing that can be done to get the lease faster. Mr. Pileggi asked if it would help to withhold payment for his tie-down spot. The Chairman said no.

Ms. Nancy Cypser of the Woodland Civic Association referred to questions she asked at the August RAC meeting about the Operations reports and asked for a definition of the term "Operations". Mr. Ceglie responded that a takeoff or a landing is considered an operation. He said the Tower also includes overflights in their numbers. The tower reported numbers can be found on the FAA ATADS webpage: [Air Traffic Activity System \(ATADS\)](#) . Mr. Lauth said the top number on the Operations report labeled "A" is from the FAA. The numbers labeled "B" are reported by the Airport, which are just the landings. Ms. Cypser stated that she compared the operations numbers in the Environmental Assessment (EA), the Noise Contour report, and the monthly Operations reports, and apparently there are differences. Mr. Lauth stated the Noise Contour numbers are calculated by typically doubling the number of landings. Ms. Cypser said those calculations do not add up. Mr. Lauth suggested that Ms. Cypser meet with the Airport to discuss her findings.

###