

Minutes from E16 Quarterly Users' Meeting - Dec. 7, 2017

Contributed by Paul Marshall
Tuesday, 12 December 2017

In attendance: County: Eric Peterson (Director of County Airports), E16 Users: Paul Marshall (SCAPA Director, SCAPA DART Co-Chair, CalPilots DART Program Manager), Andy Simmons (San Jose Sky Diving Owner), Dan Petroff (Wings of History President, SCAPA member), Walt Gyger (Tradewinds Aviation President and KRHV CAAPSO President), Gene Kindred (SCAPA Director and Wings of History), Mark van Wyk (SCAPA Director and Treasurer), Gary Robinson (Owner Magnum Aviation, SCAPA Member), Stan Faulwetter (SCAPA Member, 111th Aerial Photography Squadron), Steve Lamb (SCAPA Member, Magnum Aviation General Manager), Rod Pharis (SCAPA Director, DART Co-Chair), Jerry Bennett (SCAPA member, former Director of County Airports), Rick Nelson (SCAPA Member).

Paul Marshall called the meeting to order, summarized ongoing action with the Airport Enterprise Fund Business Plan Update and took notes. Eric Peterson provided an update on County airports affairs and took questions.

Conversation with the Deputy County Executive Sylvia Gallegos: Paul Marshall gave a summary of his 20 minute call with Sylvia Gallegos who reports to the County Executive, and who oversees Roads and Airports. Before her current job, Gallegos used to be Blanca Alvarado's chief of staff. Blanca Alvarado was the County Supervisor for the district including Reid Hillview and was adamantly opposed to the airport for years, and only a few weeks ago wrote a letter to the editor of the San Jose Mercury News advocating a shut down of the airport as a response to the recent crash of a plane into a house's garage in the neighborhood next to the airport. Marshall had heard Gallegos speak at the HLUET meeting in front of Supervisors Wasserman and Cortese about Reid Hillview, and she seemed quite knowledgeable but not wholly supportive. The week before that, Marshall had heard Michael Murdter tell the Airports Commission that the decision to revoke the operating permit of San Jose Skydiving was final and there was no recourse. With the county diverging so much from FAA guidance (skydiving, curfews, airport land use) it seems maybe the county has too much on its plate and doesn't have the time or (at the highest levels) the aviation experience to operate smoothly with the FAA and get an optimal result for our airports. Certainly, with about \$8.1M in capital projects forecasted in the next 5 years out of which \$7.3M of grants could be received from the FAA, we are putting our airports and conceivably pilots at enormous disadvantage if we don't take these free funds. She said that the FAA is terribly difficult to deal with and that the county wants to do things differently than the FAA prescribes and would possibly be willing to forego FAA capital funds – that was a purpose of the business plan update to scope out those things. Throughout the call she was courteous and generally supportive of the airports and a careful listener. At the end of the call Gallegos asked Marshall for information about airports that had been shut down. Marshall mentioned Fremont airport and Morgan Hill airport, but she wanted to know about shut downs going on right now. Marshall mentioned Santa Monica Airport and Chicago Meigs field as being perhaps the two most famous. Gallegos was amazed that the FAA would sign an agreement to close then Santa Monica airport in 12 years, and wanted to know more. Marshall declined to participate in that line of discussion further and replied that she could do her own research. It concerned Marshall that she was so interested in learning about how to shut down airports and do so over the objections of the FAA.

Airport Enterprise Fund Business Plan Update: The county staff brought to the Airports Commission, then the HLUET panel, and tomorrow Dec 12 to the County Board of Supervisors a proposal to update the Airport Enterprise Fund Business Plan. Staff is planning to hire Michael Murdter as a staff planner to do the work, and total outlays are expected to be about \$70K. There is some concern among pilots that this process will be slanted to enable the county to have better freedom to close one or more airports in the future. There is concern that \$7.3M of free funds will be ignored. There is concern that airport lands will be converted to commercial use to help pay for the airport, which could impair the amount of land available for aviation and emergency needs, or possibly set up the airport for a complete closure in the future. Reid Hillview appears to be the airport under attack at this time, but as goes Reid Hillview, so goes E16 in another 20 or 30 years. The benign version of this story is that a very small piece of land will be needed to help fund the necessary operations expenses to make our airports first class operations without unduly increasing pilot fees. It is not clear to the pilots where in this continuum the business plan update will fall. So we are concerned and recommend participation that is visible to our supervisors that they will hear and listen to. CAAPSO (new airport association at Reid Hillview) has done some wonderful work so far – where county staff has made statements like Reid Hillview doesn't have as many planes as it used to, CAAPSO has found that KRHV has averaged 5% annual operational growth the last 7 years and is currently the busiest bay area general aviation airport and has more annual

operations than many of the Class Charlie airports around California such as Santa Barbara, Monterey, Ontario, Burbank, Sacramento International, and Stockton.

The spring 2017 micro resurfacing pavement project is behind schedule, looking like late spring 2018 but the schedule is uncertain. The airport was closed for a day a couple of weeks ago while pavement digouts and replacement took place. The airport is expected to be closed for about four days for the remaining microresurfacing and initial striping. The airport would be closed for 1 more day at a later time to do some final striping. Staff brought the package to the supervisors, it was approved and bid, and then it started to get cold so they are waiting for warm dry weather to proceed. Pavement will be improved at both E16 and KRHV.

VASI Repair, Pilot Controlled Lighting: Our runway VASI recently failed. Ernie was able to adjust it and get it working again. Someone complained that the lights at E16 only have one intensity. Operations will check to see if they have the ability to give it the 3/5/7 brightness, whereby there are low/medium/high light intensity levels depending on whether you give the radio transmitter on 122.7 3/5/7 clicks. Problem reporting : All problems should be reported on the county airport's operations number of 408 918 7700, leaving a voice mail message if no one answers. RHV Operations extension is 77901, and E16 Operations extension is 77903. Pam Srvldin recently left the airport – she was the one who checked the web based trouble reporting service. They are working to reassign her duty of checking the web fault reporting system for the interim until they replace her. But as of meeting time it was not being reviewed.

The County Trailer is still moving forward. The old trailer has been removed. New trailer installation is expected in February, and if complete at that time, will have been a 14 month project.

Paper Towels and toilet paper are said to not be reliably working at bathrooms at the north end of G/H hangar row. Eric will check.

Potential SCAPA pavement projects: County staff says to talk to Magnum for permission to fix the pavement at the northwest gate, it is Magnum's area of authority. For approval for possible SCAPA DART operations shelter flush-mounted ground anchors on the south ramp at the 50' gate, Eric would like to see a simple drawing of how the anchors would be put in the ground, and where they would be placed. Update: SCAPA needs to prepare a drawing. The south ramp will not be microresurfaced during the coming work.

Solar panel project – solar panels have now been installed 3/8 of a mile from the approach end of runway 32. The FAA did not release the property for the project, but the county decided to build it anyway. It is one of the reasons they consider the FAA difficult to deal with. We are told that the revenue generated from the solar panels will be credited to the Airport Enterprise Fund and will help make the airport more self sufficient. PG&E has not yet tied the power into their grid but is close. Eric said that over the something like 20 year analysis period with loan paid off in 15 years that the system would generate \$8.9M of benefit at San Martin and \$6.2M of benefit at Reid Hillview. There are still some details to work out, like how does the money flow through the various county agencies and into the Airport Enterprise Fund, and will the full amount flow through or just the wholesale amount. The county wants a direct credit to its power usage at other locations and not just a wholesale price for its produced power. This bears further review going forward.

SCAPA review of county enterprise fund financials. Has still not happened – this has been an open action item for Paul Marshall and Ken Betts. The county is going into an update of its Business plan. The project proposal will be put in front of the supervisors tomorrow and so a review can be result in SCAPA providing better comments to the business plan update that will go on. During presentation of the current quarter financials, it was noted that the report does not show what the actual revenues and expenses are, so it is not possible to tell if the airport is running in the red or the black. Eric said that last year's budget was budgeted in the red but came in in the black. He said this year's budget will likely be in the red if the tractors are purchased. It appears they are talking about cash accounting and using no depreciation for the tractors, so all of the purchase price is taken as a hit against the income in the year in which the tractors are purchased. Eric said the budget is public information and he will try to get a copy for us. In any case, the budget shows dollars received and spent and would be a useful document

to review.

FAA Grant Funding: The county has decided to not ask for FAA funding until the business plan is complete. Apparently the county would like to be the complete master of its own destiny as far as the airports go, and would consider it desirable to use some of the property to generate income so that the airports can operate in the black without FAA money and without having to capture all that money from airport users. Secondly, Michael Murdter has said that the county should not accept grant funding if operational funding is not in place. The business plan would identify how those operational funds are to be generated.

VASI: The VASI recently failed for a few hours. Ernie was able to reset it.