

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

TAVCO

August 13, 2024

Minutes of the Tempe Aviation Commission meeting held via virtual Microsoft Teams meeting with call in +1 (480) 498-8745,,963985386# United States, Phoenix (Toll) Conference ID: 963 985 386# at the Tempe Public Library Second Floor Hackberry Room, on August 13, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

(MEMBERS) Present:

James P. Camargo
Joel Hunter
John Lynch, Chair
Stuart Mitnik
Peter H. Schelstraete*
Desiree Walker, Vice Chair*

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Alana Billingsley (Excused)
Aaron McBride
Vikas Seelam (Excused)

City Staff Present:

Lisette Camacho, Deputy City Manager*
Oddvar Tveit Temporary Aviation Coordinator

* Participants attending remotely.

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Mr. Lynch calls the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

Mr. Lynch ascertains that nobody is present in person or online to address the commission.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Meeting Minutes, May 7, 2024

Mr. Lynch asks if any members present have suggestions for amendments to the May meeting minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Schelstraete makes a motion to approve the May 7, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion is seconded by Mr. Camargo. The minutes are approved with Mr. Camargo, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Mitnik and Mr. Schelstraete. Ms. Walker's online voice vote could not be registered.

Agenda Item 4 – PHX Tower/TRACON visit

Mr. Lynch invited comments from members attending the June 11, 2024, tour about the experience. Mr. Schelstraete stated the air traffic controllers made presentations about the operations and logistics of air traffic control at PHX. The PHX TRACON has responsibility for airspace not only for PHX, but also Prescott, Flagstaff, Tucson and the Mesa Gateway airspace. They were also guided up in the PHX Tower where controllers direct ground operations at PHX. The group got all questions answered and he found it to be a pleasant and informative experience. He had sent business cards from the hosts to Mr. Tveit and would draft a thank you letter if the members agree.

Action:

Hearing no objections Mr. Lynch asked Mr. Schelstraete's draft letter to be sent to Mr. Tveit and forwarded to him for signature on behalf of the commission, before it being sent by staff to both the FAA tour hosts.

Mr. Camargo agreed that the hosts were answering all questions before and after the facility tour. He became confident about the staffing situation at the PHX Tower/TRACON. It appeared they did not have staffing challenges, which had been addressed in media nationally after air

traffic incidents reported in 2023. As an example, in the PHX tower it was set up with twenty assigned operators and currently they had twenty-six operators, including two in training. He believed it was sixty operators assigned to the TRACON. They were also told that pre-COVID the airport had 1100 daily operations. They were told PHX currently was at 1400 operations per day. These are tower operation counts. Mr. Lynch comments that he has listened in on PHX ATC communications but got no indication of controllers struggling with stress caused by operational workload. Mr. Tveit states that the commission was approached in 2023 by a Tempe resident concerned about air traffic incidents at PHX reported in the media. Incidents are investigated internally involving FAA Flight Standards, or if more serious, they are investigated by NTSB. Specific actions taken at airports involving ATC personnel are not disclosed to the public. Mr. Camargo comments the air traffic manager present assured them that they follow up on all incidents as required.

Mr. Lynch asks Mr. Tveit to distribute after the meeting comments on the tour submitted prior to the meeting by absent member, Alana Billingsley.

Agenda Item 5 – Staff Report

Q2 Report – PHX East Departure Operations, Noise and Complaints

Mr. Tveit includes a presentation layout that have the city's priorities listed. The commission's activities are reported in the annual report connected to two priorities, the quality-of-life priority and keeping strong community connections. The purpose of the quarterly east departure operations reports is to track measures included the 1994 IGA, which is about noise mitigation and Tempe citizens' quality of life. The commission also conducts public meetings, and special outreach like the event last fall, to communicate and make citizens aware of what the commission does for the city.

PHX had less departure activity to the east during the second quarter compared to the first quarter of 2024. There was a small change in compliance by airlines using departure procedures that include a first so called "fly-over" waypoint at 4-DME. Compliance is measured by the proximity of departure tracks to a departure waypoint, ([RNPO.3](#)), applied by airlines with special FAA authorization to apply more accurate navigation. Compliance rates by this measure for airlines using these procedures are for both quarters are within the 99%+. The typical waypoints on RNAV procedures are so called "fly-by" waypoints, which are producing flight tracks further away from the waypoint, particularly on procedures with turns. Procedures with a first waypoint outside 4-DME/Tempe borders all have turns, and compliance both quarters is much lower, down to 9 to 10% using the same measure. Classic departure procedures which have runway headings over the riverbed, are in limited use. Only three occurred during the second quarter, all far away from the monitored waypoints. Notices to airlines about deviating flights from PHX went down the second quarter with the reduced east departure volume.

Mr. Mitnik asks if procedures with the fly-over waypoint at 4-DME results in less noise and if Southwest has been confronted with higher number of notices compared to other airlines. Mr. Lynch comments that that following these procedures over the fly-over way point out to 4-DME would on average keep departures on the most ideal flight paths away from neighborhoods on both sides of the riverbed and would reduce overall noise exposure from departure traffic. Mr. Lynch also states that deviation notices represent a miniscule number compared to all east departures during the quarter. Mr. Tveit responds that Tempe is not privy under the agreement to be informed about PHX communications with the airlines, apart from the written deviation notices. The commission has on occasions invited airline representatives to attend commission meetings but has not been successful.

Mr. Tveit shows annualized departure east west equalization, identifying small percentage variations from the first to the second quarter. Flow east and west are to some extent impacted by weather, and prevailing seasonal wind directions. Nighttime is the period most departures go east. In the early mornings winds start picking up from the east. Departures go against the prevailing wind direction.

Mr. Tveit displays a map of four aircraft complaints received by the city during the second quarter, fewer than the twelve complaints received during the first quarter when PHX had a higher number of departures towards the east.

The presentation includes flight paths that followed east procedures that caused most complaints to PHX, including the one Tempe resident filing over a thousand complaints to PHX from a location south of Baseline Rd.

Mr. Tveit ends his presentation showing the number of aircraft noise events registered by the PHX monitors located in Tempe exceeding 65 LDN, which was higher the first compared to the second quarter likely due to the difference in air traffic volumes. He also displays Lden noise values at the Tempe monitors.

Mr. Lynch concludes and Mr. Tveit confirms that except for difference in departure volumes between the two first quarters of 2024, no significant operational changes occurred from one quarter to the other. The Q2 report is posted on [AIRCRAFT NOISE | City of Tempe, AZ](#).

The members agree that based on the report it does not appear that Tempe citizens except for one or a few residents has a problem with the aircraft noise. Noise complaints do not seem to come from locations in Tempe aircraft are at lower altitudes where you would expect complaints, like from residents living in condominiums along the riverbed in north Tempe. Mr. Tveit responds that complaints can be triggered by residents observing a plane off the normal flight path, or longtime residents that remember how PHX operations used to be conducted. They would like better flight management that includes effective measures to prevent deviations and help mitigate the annoyance caused by PHX operations.

Tracking commission initiatives

Mr. Tveit shows historic examples of Word and Excel charts used by previous commissions to list and assign tasks for members under various proposed initiatives that potentially could result in recommendations to the Mayor and Council. This accounting was refined to charts with topics, status of progress on individual tasks reported at each commission meeting. The charts were updated by staff and presented for review at each meeting. This is an example to support the suggestions from Mr. Mitnik and Mr. Camargo made at the May meeting. The commission could use a similar chart to help the commission prepare a future public event.

Mr. Mitnik questions if there is anything the commission can do when apart from the arrival operations over Tempe, there seems to be little else to address with the public in a special event. Mr. Lynch states that the realization of the airport expansion plans is not imminent and also questioned what is to address with citizens when there is few complaints and PHX operations appear to run smoothly. The commission needs to have meetings to be able to hear and answer questions citizens might have. Mr. Mitnik and Mr. Lynch both states that the commission does not need to meet every month but should discuss preparing for another public event. Mr. Mitnik proposes to have each member to come up with no more than two topics the commission should work on going forward, and then decide which topics the commission is able to pursue under the commission's mandate.

Agenda Item 6 – Commissioners’ Business

Mr. Lynch suggests the next meeting be dedicated to a discussion of whether to have another public event this year and expand the agenda topic to be about “public outreach for TAVCO.” He asks Mr. Tveit to remind members thinking about what they like to see in the future regarding public outreach in about two weeks.

Agenda Item 7– Schedule Next TAVCO Meeting

The next TAVCO meeting was scheduled to Tuesday, September 10, 2024.

Agenda Item 8 – Adjournment.

Mr. Mitnik motions to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hunter seconds the motion. Motion approved by Mr. Camargo, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Mitnik and Mr. Schelstraete. Ms. Walker’s online voice vote could not be registered.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Prepared by: Oddvar Tveit