



Minutes Tempe Aviation Commission September 8, 2009

Minutes of the Tempe Aviation Commission meeting held on September 8, 2009, 6:30 p.m., at the Public Works Conference Room, Garden Level, City Hall Complex, 31 E. Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Dick Collins
Sally Clements
Tara Ellman
Gloria Regensberg (Chair)
Barbara Sherman (On Phone)
Alyson Star
David Swanson (Vice Chair)
Connie Thompson (On Phone)
Duane Washkowiak

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Karyn Gitlis
Gary Goren (Excused)
William Justus (Excused)
Curtis Ritland (Excused)

City Staff Present:

Nancy Ryan, Project Manager
Oddvar Tveit, Environmental Quality Specialist

Citizens Present:

Kylie Clifford
Cynthia Burkhart

Meeting convened at 6:34 p.m.

Gloria called the meeting to order.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

Cynthia Burkhart expressed concerns over low flying aircraft over her home south of Elliot and west of Rural Roads, quite noticeable in the mornings and evenings when spending time outside. She had contacted Tempe staff to get information about who to call to voice her concerns, and asked the members about minimum flight altitudes for air traffic over her home. Staff commented that her home was located under the alignment for an RNAV instrument approach path coming in from the southwest over Gila Bend where the altitudes of incoming aircraft are determined by descent profiles towards the east from higher altitudes to intercept the final approach paths over the Salt River/ Town Lake area after turns are made north based on guidance given to pilots by PHX air traffic controllers. With support from members the chair recommended Cynthia to continue calling the City of Phoenix and also make her concerns known to the Tempe Mayor and Council.

Agenda Item 2 – Consideration of Meeting Minutes (August 16th, 2009)

Barbara suggested one edit on the last page of the minutes and moved to approve the minutes as amended. Duane seconded the motion. The amended minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item 3 – Updates From Staff

Tour of WGA:

Two members of the Commission attended the tour. With reference to brochures provided to TAVCO members by the airport, staff reported that attendants were briefed on activities and future development plans including terminals on the west side of the airport and recent additions to business jet repair facilities at the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Questions were asked about Allegiant Airlines operations at the airport.

Nancy Ryan presented the environmental restoration project and wildlife management in the Tempe section of the Salt River.

Rio Salado Environmental Restoration:

The program was initiated in 1990 by Phoenix, Tempe and the US Army Corps of Engineers to model diverse habitats and natural riparian corridors that used to exist in that area. An EIS was completed in 1998. Completion dates and the location and restoration areas with plantings were shown and explained, also improvements to paths on the south and north side at the west end of the Town Lake.

Wildlife Management:

The City has a contract with the USDA Services to monitor wildlife in the management area, and provide recommendations to the City about wildlife management including a risk assessment of wildlife to aviation. Observation stations and data on observed species in the management area were displayed. The bird counts had decreased with construction in the Rio Salado area and its wildlife management from about 16,000 in 2005/06 to about 9,500 in 2006/07 and about 2,600 in 2007/08. The tools used to manage the area were addressed; landscaping, trash pickup, weed abatement, egg/nest removal and flood control to discouraging insect habitats as well as efforts to prevent bird feeding in Town Lake areas. A safe-harbor agreement was implemented in 2008 not to penalize Tempe if endangered species move in to the management area.

Questions were asked about run-off control to the west of the Town Lake. Members expressed the need for addressing the area west of Priest Drive.

Follow up: Make a copy of the wildlife management plan accessible to the members for review.

Agenda Item 4 – Bird Strike and riparian river issues

Staff presented a copy of the new wildlife hazard management plan provided by the Phoenix Aviation Department. The members discussed establishing a group to examine the plan, but agreed that that might not be necessary after having heard that a low flow channel west of Priest Drive with Phoenix, added to the one made by US Army Corps in the Second Phase Habitat, could be beneficial to make storm water run-off in that area of the riverbed more efficient to prevent further expansion of vegetation. Run-off since the 2005 flood has been above levels originally anticipated. It was emphasized that the members could not directly address the strike hazard, but indirectly any increases in the hazard to aviation in Tempe wildlife management areas could result in more flights being diverted to Tempe neighborhoods.

The members discussed motion alternatives and amendments that were withdrawn before Duane moved to recommend the Mayor and Council; “to begin monthly discussions with City of Phoenix and Sky Harbor. The purpose is to mitigate issues with bird strikes and develop and enhance low flow channels for diversion of water from the west end of the dam to the west border of Tempe”. The motion was seconded by Dick. Barbara suggested to include; “low flow channels and other appropriate measures”, which was accepted by Duane and Dick. Tara suggested an amendment to remove the mentioning of “for diversion of water” from the motion. Barbara seconded the motion.

Connie left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

The members voted 2 for 5 against and with 1 abstention against the amendment proposed by Tara. Sally suggested including January 2010 as a deadline in the recommendation. The motion to include this amendment was not seconded. Duane’s motion was accepted as proposed with the addition from Barbara by a unanimous vote.

The members proceeded by discussing how to convey the recommendation; if inclusion in the minutes was enough or a letter was needed. Dick moved to send the recommendation in a letter. Dave seconded the motion. Duane suggested the chair or one of the members present the recommendation to the Transportation Council Committee instead of in a letter to the Mayor and Council. The members voted to accept the motion with 5 for, 1 against and 2 members abstaining. Barbara moved to have the TAVCO Chair or a representative present the letter to the Transportation Council Committee. Dave seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item 5 – Revised proposal for the Tempe history with Sky Harbor

A history account worked on some years ago by the Commission had been revised by staff upon suggestions from Barbara. Barbara expressed the importance of having input from other members and having it as a living document. How to verify that the history accounts are correct was discussed, and it was suggested to add an approval date by the Commission when periodic updates of the document were finalized.

Follow up: The members would review the draft with Barbara’s amendments and return at the next meeting to discuss any suggestions for changes or additions they might have.

Agenda Item 6 – Tempe monthly noise monitoring reports

Staff received questions and comments about graphs in the report showing distribution of nighttime- and daytime noise and also total noise measurements. Considering the time it takes for staff to process data that go onto the report, staff was recommended to reduce the content of the monthly report focusing on compliance and complaints, and address noise impact issues in quarterly or annual trend reports. Also include information in the utility bill on how to make complaints.

Follow up: Staff was asked to forward both the Tempe and the Phoenix monthly noise report for members to review and discuss at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 7 – Commissioners’ Business (topics for future discussion)

The following items were suggested:

- Continue the discussion of strategies and priorities
- Review the Commission’s charge and discuss whether the Commission should recommend that its scope be expanded beyond noise and related matters to include:
 - flight safety under the Sky Harbor flight paths in Tempe, and
 - public outreach to inform Tempe neighborhoods about its work.
- To discuss a reduction in agenda items for each meeting, and set up a system to get shorter/more efficient meetings

Agenda Item 8 – Schedule Next TAVCO Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for October 13, 2009.

Agenda Item 9 – Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Prepared by: Oddvar Tveit

Reviewed by: Don Hawkes

Authorized Signature
Water Utilities Department Manager