

FINAL

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
AVIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 14, 2024**



MEETING CALLED: Vice Chair Keith McMahon called the hybrid meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

PRESENT: **Eric Meinbress**, Member At-Large 2
Emily Barnett, Member At-Large 3
Vincent Salimi, District 1
Elizabeth Leddy, District 2
Gareth Ashley, District 4
Keith McMahon, **Vice-Chair**, City of Concord
Richard Celestre, **Secretary**, City of Pleasant Hill
Peter Baker, Airport Neighbor – Pacheco

ABSENT: **Shawn Stappen**, **Chair**, Member At-Large 1
Christopher Baker, District 5
Dean Hickman-Smith, Airport Neighbor – Byron
Michael Bruno, Airport Business Association

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Baer, Director of Airports
Judith Evans, Administrative Services Assistant II
Steve Kowalewski, Deputy Director, Public Works Department (PWD)
Stephen Griswold, Deputy Chief of Staff, District 3
Will Nelson, Principal Planner-Department of Conservation and Development (DCD)
Daniel Barrios, Senior Planner-Department of Conservation and Development (DCD)
Salvador Morales, Economic Development, Department of Conservation and Development (DCD)

**OPENING COMMENTS
BY CHAIR:** Vice Chair Keith McMahon welcomed attendees and asked for roll call.

**PUBLIC COMMENT
PERIOD:** None

**APPROVAL OF
9/12/24 MINUTES:** **Moved by Emily Barnett to approve; seconded by Elizabeth Leddy. Yes: Eric Meinbress, Emily Barnett, Vincent Salimi, Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, and Peter Baker. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Shawn Stappen, Christopher Baker, Dean Hickman Smith and Michael Bruno.**

Motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF
CONSENT ITEMS**

STAFF REPORTS: Moved by Vincent Salimi to approve; seconded by Emily Barnett. Yes: Eric Meinbress, Emily Barnett, Vincent Salimi, Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, and Peter Baker. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Shawn Stappen, Christopher Baker, Dean Hickman Smith and Michael Bruno.

Motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF
CONSENT ITEMS
NOISE STATISTICS:**

Moved by Vincent Salimi to approve; seconded by Emily Barnett. Yes: Eric Meinbress, Emily Barnett, Vincent Salimi, Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, and Peter Baker. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Shawn Stappen, Christopher Baker, Dean Hickman Smith and Michael Bruno.

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

a. Standing Subcommittees Proposal – Maintain Status Quo

This item is in reference to a concept that Chair Stappen proposed at the last AAC meeting to create two standing subcommittees, one focused on Viability and the other focused on Community. There was concern about whether or not this would be a violation of the Brown Act. Director of Airports, Greg Baer reported that the County Handbook that governs committees and commissions does not allow for standing subcommittees, and there is very little guidance on subcommittees, he advised continuing in the same manner as the committee has in the past. No further action is required.

b. Frequency of AAC Meetings – No proposed change to Bylaws

Mr. Baer clarified that about 18 months ago the AAC Bylaws were changed to have the AAC meet at a minimum of every other month, giving the Chair the opportunity to call a meeting in the off months if deemed necessary. He suggested maintaining the bylaws and if a special meeting needs to be called, then the Chair can schedule an additional meeting. The point was made that when the committee met monthly, there were problems meeting quorum. It was also an effort to alleviate staff time as it requires over 20-30 hours per meeting.

A suggestion was made to track items related to economic development that have been discussed to avoid repetition and track goals. The response was that the AAC annual report and the AAC Chair's quarterly report to the Airport Committee tracks AAC discussion items. The suggestion was made to have the AAC Chair provide the quarterly updates to the AAC.

c. Buchanan Noise Program – Continued Education and Outreach Efforts

Noise abatement efforts were discussed at the last AAC meeting and since then a meeting was scheduled with Allison Picard, some of her neighbors, and the flight schools. Unfortunately, due to a participant illness, the meeting was postponed. This is one example of outreach and there are continued efforts by Airport staff to meet with flying clubs as well as the student and pilot communities and the tower to provide education and outreach.

d. Unleaded Fuel Transition – Staff Update

Mr. Baer has been having discussions with the FBOs about offering UL 94 at Buchanan Field. Nothing has changed legislatively since the AAC last met and the FAA's mandate remains January 1, 2031, and SB-1193 now aligns with the FAA's mandate of 2031. However, Airports would like to start the transition to

unleaded fuel to the extent possible and in a safe manner.

It was brought up that Reid-Hillview County Airport made the transition to unleaded fuel in October.. Mr. Baer responded that Reid-Hillview has the GAMI G100UL product. There are currently three unleaded products including GAMI. Swift is producing UL 94 and has been granted a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) by the FAA for two models of the Cessna 172 to use its 100R product. Swift is going through the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) testing protocols, which is the same standard for auto fuels. The most contentious and concerning difference between GAMI fuel and the other two fuel producers is that GAMI has not and will not go through the ASTM Certification process. As such, some aircraft companies, e.g., Cirrus will not warranty any components of an aircraft if it has used GAMI fuel. This is the reason there is hesitation in the marketplace regarding GAMI fuel. Liability is a significant factor in these discussions and the lack of an ASTM adds to the concerns. These are some of the considerations and decisions that the FBOs and other fuel providers will have to make.

A comment was made that Buchanan Field is in close proximity to Marathon Petroleum Corporation, who has converted to being a green fuel refinery. The recommendation was made to have Airport staff reach out to Marathon in a fact-finding effort. Vice Chair McMahon reminded the committee that the AAC has a subcommittee for fuel and could provide assistance.

A schedule of the transition process was requested, but since the fuel industry, and not the Airports, will be driving this process, there are too many unknown factors for the Airports to be able to set targets and goals. Factors including liability, ASTM testing, and what happens when fuels are mixed together (i.e., GAMI fuel mixed with Swift fuel) are questions that have yet to be answered.

A request was made for Mr. Baer to provide the committee with a current status of the implementation of unleaded fuel from local and industry perspectives. This will help committee members respond to questions and concerns from the neighboring community.

e. **Set 2025 Meeting Calendar and Select Byron Airport Meeting Date**

Vice Chair McMahon expressed disappointment with the decision not to meet at Byron Airport this year. He reminded the committee of the work that former AAC Chair Ron Reagan did for Byron Airport and wants to make sure that it continues. The suggestion was made to meet in May 2025 and to pair it with an activity, for example a tour. If the Patriots Jet Team has time, it may be possible to schedule something with them on a meeting date at Byron.

Vice Chair McMahon requested a motion to adopt the 2025 AAC meeting schedule with an amendment to correct the dates on the meeting schedule attachment to reflect 2025.

Moved by Emily Barnett to adopt the 2025 AAC meeting schedule with changes; seconded by Elizabeth Leddy. Yes: Eric Meinbress, Emily Barnett, Vincent Salimi, Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, and Peter Baker. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Shawn Stappen, Christopher Baker, Dean Hickman Smith and Michael Bruno.

Motion passed.

Vice Chair McMahon requested a motion to select the AAC meeting date at Byron Airport in 2025.

Moved by Richard Celestre to tentatively hold the May 8, 2025, AAC meeting at Byron Airport; seconded by Peter Baker. Yes: Eric Meinbress, Emily Barnett, Vincent Salimi, Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, and Peter Baker. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Shawn Stappen, Christopher Baker, Dean Hickman Smith and Michael Bruno.

Motion passed.

f. **AAC Seats Expiring in 2025**

i. Member at Large 3 Seat and City of Concord Seat

This agenda item is a reminder that the Member at Large 3 seat and the City of Concord seat are expiring, and staff has already initiated the process to have those seats filled in early 2025.

ii. Initiate Efforts to Define Business Association Seat

Vice Chair, McMahon reminded the committee that it was brought up at the last meeting that the Business Association seat needs to be clearly defined. In the past, this seat was held only by representatives from the FBOs. Any entity that has an agreement with the County Airports is an Airport business. Airport staff was directed to find out 1) who has the ability to make the appointments to the AAC for this seat on behalf of the businesses and 2) is it within the authority of the AAC to determine which type of business qualifies for the seat i.e., aviation, non-aviation or both.

Mr. Baer advised that if there is consensus to define the Business Association seat, then a motion should be made to initiate that process.

Moved by Emily Barnett to direct Airport staff to begin the process of investigating who has the authority to make appointments and other facets of the Business Association seat; seconded by Richard Celestre. Yes: Eric Meinbress, Emily Barnett, Vincent Salimi, Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, and Peter Baker. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Shawn Stappen, Christopher Baker, Dean Hickman Smith and Michael Bruno.

Motion passed

During the discussion period, Kimmie Snow with PSA, expressed relief that the Business Association position would not be eliminated, which was one of the prospects discussed at the last AAC meeting. Discussion ensued about this position.

g. Suggestion for Concord Fly-In

Vincent Salimi suggested a Concord Fly-In and to create a subcommittee to organize this event. He recommended a static aircraft display, an airshow, aviation workshops, tables for vendors and local businesses, as this would be good for community engagement and would be an economic booster. The committee was advised to understand the totality of work involved in an event such as this before signing others up for work. There is a large range of what a Fly-In entails as there could be great demand on staff time and expense. Members were cautioned that this is a liability issue and to get a better understanding of what this event would take to put on, the stress on Airport staff, and if this is the priority the AAC wants to take on and when. Mr. Baer is supportive of the concept but emphasized that it must be manageable and there must be a successful plan.

Mr. Salimi requested a motion to create an exploratory subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of hosting a Fly-In.

Moved by Vincent Salimi to create an exploratory subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of hosting a Fly-In; seconded by Emily Barnett. Yes: Eric Meinbress, Emily Barnett, Vincent Salimi, Elizabeth Leddy, Gareth Ashley, Keith McMahon, Richard Celestre, and Peter Baker. No: None. Abstained: None. Absent: Shawn Stappen, Christopher Baker, Dean Hickman Smith and Michael Bruno.

Motion passed

h. Recap of Recent Airports Events

i. Girls in Aviation Day

Elizabeth Leddy reported that this event was very successful and well attended. The C-130, Coast Guard helicopter, and Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) truck and the C-130 flyover were highlights. Organizer Keri Martin was praised for her efforts in the success of this event.

ii. Patriots Jet Team Foundation Gala

Mr. Baer attended the gala and reported that it was a great fund-raising event and great for the youth in attendance.

iii. Buchanan Field Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting/Terminal Building Ribbon-Cutting

Mr. Baer reported that it was a well-attended event with refreshments and JSX had a strong presence with decorations and food. There will be photos and videos posted to the Airport's website.

iv. Airborne Over America (AOA) Camp

Ms. Snow, with PSA, reported that for the last several years PSA has run a program called the Young Falcons, which is separate and distinct from EAA's Young Eagle's program. Due to community confusion, they have since shifted from Kids Fly Free to a free two-day camp for youth ages 13 to 17, sponsored by PSA. To select 10 campers they requested essay submissions, a few of which were shared with the committee. Campers participated in ground school, Q&A with pilots, saw the C-130 (compliments of Girls in Aviation Day), received a tower tour, and watched demos of the fire trucks from Station 9 as well as the Airport's ARFF truck. PSA filed for non-profit status for Airborne Over America (not PSA), due to the costs involved with doing such events.

v. Young Falcons Aviation Camp

Ms. Snow advised this agenda item was covered in agenda item 5.h. iv.

i. Future Airports Events

i. Santa's Jolly Landing

This year's Santa's Jolly Landing will be held on Saturday, December 14, 2024, at the Concord Plaza Hotel. The event will be similar to last year's without the marching band, which had the unintended effect of being overstimulating. Airport staff member Kalynn Larson is organizing this event and will reach out to AAC members for volunteers.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- 1) Fuel Subcommittee
- 2) Concord Fly-In
- 3) Update on current status of hangar waiting list
- 4) Follow up on process for Business Association Seat

ADJOURNMENT: The Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:00 PM.