

Solano County Airport Land Use Commission



SOLANO COUNTY

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Bruce DuClair
Vice-Chairman

MINUTES OF THE SOLANO COUNTY AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 12, 2015

The meeting of the Solano County Airport Land Use Commission was held in the Solano County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers (1st floor), 675 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA 94533

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Potter, Baldwin, Vancil, Randall and Vice-Chairman DuClair

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioners Cavanagh and Baumler

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Leland, Resource Management; Lee Axelrad, County Counsel; Kristine Letterman, Resource Management

Call To Order & Roll Call

Vice-Chairman DuClair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved with no changes or deletions.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of September 10, 2015 were approved with a correction to page 3, paragraph 3, to add the word foot after the figure 14,500; and a word correction to change the spelling of sight, to site on page 4, paragraph 2. The minutes of October 8, 2015 were approved as prepared.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Items from the Public

There was no one from the public wishing to speak.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

- a. Public Hearing to consider the consistency of ALUC-2015-18 (**Sunset Center Sign District**) with the Travis AFB Land Use Compatibility Plan. Sponsor: City of Suisun City

Jim Leland introduced the item and gave a brief presentation of the staff report. The Sunset Center Sign District establishes standards and procedures for the permitting of signs within a specified area of the City of Suisun City, located on the northeast corner of Highway 12 and Sunset Avenue. The District would permit an illuminated sign up to 60 feet tall near the northeast corner of Highway 12 and Sunset Avenue. The site is located within Zone D of the Travis AFB Land Use Compatibility Plan. The report described the compatibility criterion with the plan. Staff recommended approval of the project.

Commissioner Potter inquired about the alignment of the sign with the runway. Mr. Leland explained that it is off-centerline and it is approximately 3.6 miles from the edge of the pavement. Commissioner Vancil commented that it appears to him to be 30 to 40 degrees off-centerline.

John Kearns, Suisun City Planning Department, 701 Civic Center Blvd., Suisun, spoke on behalf of the City. He stated that the existing sign is the original sign from the early 80's and is very dilapidated. He said that they are excited the owner of the new shopping center is looking to rehabilitate the sign. He said that this is something the city has been looking to get done for a long time. Mr. Kearns said that they concur with the staff recommendation including the proposed condition regarding glint and glare.

Vice-Chairman DuClair spoke with regard to the brightness of the sign. He wanted to make sure that there was an understanding that the brilliance of the sign would be adjusted if brightness were to become an issue. Mr. Kearns said city staff understand and are in agreement with that arrangement.

Vice-Chairman DuClair opened the public hearing. Since there was no one from the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter and seconded by Commissioner Randall that the Commission does find and determine that the Project is consistent with the provisions of the Travis Air Force Base Land Use Compatibility Plan, subject to the following condition: The sign shall be illuminated in such a way as to not cause glint or glare detectable by overflying aircraft. The motion passed unanimously. (Resolution No. 15-18).

- b. Receive an update from the staff on the implementation of the Travis AFB Land Use Compatibility Plan (LUCP) and the initiation of the Rio Vista Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (LUCP)

Mr. Leland spoke with regard to the implementation of the Travis Plan. He said that one item that staff was directed to do as part of that implementation was to study some alternative ways of analyzing the repowering of existing wind projects in the Montezuma Hills wind resource area. The idea of a subcommittee or task force was decided upon. Staff felt that there should be a representative from the industry on that task force and noted that SMUD provided a letter to the commission expressing an interest in being a part of that task force. Mr. Leland asked if any of the commissioners would also like to be a part of that subcommittee. Commissioners Vancil, DuClair and Randall volunteered to participate on the panel.

Mr. Leland spoke in regard to the update of the Rio Vista LUCP. He stated that staff has received several proposals that are being evaluated and the county should have a contractor on board sometime later this year to start the update of the plan.

Mr. Leland informed the commission that staff has had some preliminary conversations with Caltrans about the subject of drones. He said Caltrans is not presently looking into regulation of

drones but they are encouraging the county to continue to look into it and to keep them apprised of what, if anything the county is developing in terms of policy. Mr. Leland noted that staff will likely schedule a study session sometime early next year to discuss this matter with the commission, and to see what interest there is on the part of the commission to pursue this in terms of a regulatory item.

Commissioner Vancil commented that he believed this is an airspace issue and that most likely the FAA has first choice on what regulations would be set. Although the county may be able to give some advice, he believed instead of land use the county would be looking more at local ordinances on drone operations. As a pure airport land use plan he believed that the county would be somewhat limited on what they could do.

Mr. Leland stated that what staff has been discussing internally is where the regulatory window for the phenomenon of drones lies. He said the reason for this pursuit is that there is an air safety issue inherent in selling drones to the public and the spot from which a drone is launched or recovered is a land use. Airports and heliports that are proposed privately have to come before cities or counties for land use permits on their location and those are brought before the ALUC for comment. Whether there can be a claim that a hobbyist launching from their backyard is creating an airport or not is a question to be researched. It may be possible that it would be declared as a nuisance and the commission could recommend as a policy matter that local cities adopt public nuisance ordinances. Mr. Leland shared with the commission that the manager of the Nut Tree Airport relayed the message to him that drones are the single biggest threat to aircraft safety.

Commissioner Potter said that federal regulations are going to set the standard for how the county addresses safety and regulation of these drones. It is far too complex to address at a county level when it is being addressed at the federal level. Mr. Potter commented that it appears the county would not be achieving much by having staff spend a lot of time at this point on that topic until federal regulations are set.

Mr. Leland said that the regulations have a fair amount of shape to them already. The FAA distinguishes between commercial and hobbyist and they are going to regulate the commercial side. Mr. Leland noted that the reason staff is bringing up this issue is because the state has designated the ALUC as the regional body to coordinate planning around aircraft safety issues.

Commissioner Potter inquired about regulation on radio controlled aircraft. Mr. Leland stated that specific activity is not regulated although sometimes the hobbyist will get together and create a facility for joint use and he believed those type of activities have in the past come before the ALUC for siting.

Mr. Leland said that staff is not proposing to bring this before the ALUC until after the FAA publishes its initial rule and the county has time to read and analyze the material.

Vice-Chairman DuClair commented that while he did not feel staff should spend a lot of time on this subject he voiced concern that the county should start now in staying on top of the issues with regard to this so that the issue of drones can be addressed in the future

Mr. Leland stated that staff has been looking into this and plan to bring some information forward to the commission in early 2016. He said that the information will provide an understanding of how the FAA regulates it and also provide the areas that are unregulated where the ALUC has jurisdiction.

Commissioner Potter raised the subject of meeting attendance with regard to ALUC commissioners. He pointed out that the commissioner representing the City of Vallejo has been absent 3 times in a row, and according to the Commission's By-laws, that commissioner will receive written notification on the matter as well as the sponsoring agency. Mr. Potter requested that the commission receive a copy of that letter. Mr. Potter commented that this becomes an important issue because it interferes with the supermajority rule. He also commented that the seat for District 1 has gone unfilled for a long period of time. Commissioner Potter asked staff to inquire with the Board member for that district of their intention of filling that position.

Mr. Leland stated that the commission can authorize the Vice-Chairman to write a letter on their behalf addressed to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors pointing out that there are currently two vacancies of county appointees and that there will be another vacancy after the first of the year. Mr. Leland stated that in light of the change to the ordinance it now gives each supervisor more flexibility, and maybe this correspondence can expedite some of these appointments by noting the commission's concern about the quorum issue.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter and seconded by Commissioner Vancil to direct staff to prepare a letter for the Chair's signature that encourages the filling of vacant seats on the Airport Land Use Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned.