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NEWLY FORMED NOISE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS

The Noise Advisory Committee, a newly established standing advisory body to the Airport Commission, met for the first time last Thursday, October 17, in the Pilot's Lounge at Nantucket Memorial Airport. In attendance were citizens representing various Nantucket neighborhoods, as well as Joann Norris, Assistant Airport Manager, Jack Wheeler, Airport Environmental Coordinator, Alan Costa, FAA Manager, Nantucket Air Traffic Control Tower, Finn Murphy, Airport Commissioner and representatives from the local commuter airlines.

The Nantucket Airport Commission formally established the group at its regular monthly meeting in September by unanimous vote. In so doing, the Commission stated that [it] "recognizes that many areas and neighborhoods around Nantucket Island are impacted by noise from aircraft operations. The Commission also recognizes the vital role that air transport plays in the Nantucket economy and wishes to find an appropriate balance between air transport activities and the abatement of aircraft noise."

Further, the Commission charged the Advisory Committee "with assisting the Commission in meeting its mission specifically in regard to aviation noise abatement which impacts the preservation and protection of the quality of life and special character of our unique island community."

As stipulated in the Charter establishing the Advisory Committee, the group will be composed of one representative each from neighborhoods who chose to participate. In addition, ex officio members will include the Airport Manager, the Environmental Coordinator, and one representative each from the Airport Commission, Island Airlines, Nantucket/Cape Air and the Nantucket ATCT (Air Traffic Controllers). Members will serve initial terms until June, 2004. The Committee will meet at least on a monthly basis. In addition, ad hoc working groups, who will report to the Committee, may be impaneled.

At the organizational meeting, procedures for designating area representatives were discussed. It was agreed that the group would elect a chair and co chair once the permanent members are designated.

In addition to operational matters, the group reviewed statistics compiled this summer by Wheeler in regard to airport operations, enplanements and noise complaints. [These data are available online at www.nantucketairport.com.] Wheeler also provided an update on the new Passur Radar equipment which will allow tracking of aircraft, considered key to the success of noise-abatement procedures adopted in 1997. Costa briefed the group about the application for Class C Airspace, a federal designation for Nantucket's airport which would upgrade air-traffic control options and enhance safety, according to proponents. The application, which is working its way through the FAA approval process, was originally filed in July, 2001, and it is expected that a decision will not be reached for another year. Other matters discussed included the issue of early-morning noise.

"All in all, it was a positive beginning," stated Robert Landmann, President of the Quidnet Squam Association. "As the next step, our members would like to see an assessment of the work done in 1997 in regard to noise abatement. It's been five years, and the problem has changed. We look forward to moving ahead together to keep Nantucket the special place it is – to live, to work and to visit."

The Noise Advisory Committee will meet again on Wednesday, November 6. For further information, contact Jack Wheeler at the airport.

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