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April 30, 2008

The Honorable Sally Mackay
City of New Smyrna Beach
210 Sams Avenue
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168

Dear Mayor Mackay:

On behalf of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and our 414,000 members, more than 32,000 of whom live in Florida, we would like to thank you for the recent opportunity to visit with you to discuss the citizen concerns regarding the New Smyrna Beach Municipal Airport (EVB). AOPA appreciates your commitment to have an open dialogue with the interested parties and is pleased to hear that the first meeting on April 23 went well and we wish you continued success with the May 3 meeting.

Noise a recurring theme at airports nationwide

As we mentioned during our visit on April 8, AOPA is very interested in being part of the solution in helping you and the local community and airport users work through the airport noise concerns. Based on our experience in working airport issues nationwide, airport noise is one of the most common and contentious issues that must be addressed.

Education and collaboration are steps in the right direction

Pilot and community education will be a key factor in achieving a successful outcome in noise mitigation. To that end, AOPA reiterates the need for a collaborative effort by all interested parties – including the Friends of New Smyrna Beach Airport (FONSBA), New Smyrna Beach Citizens Against Noise (NSBCAN), local community residents, representatives of airport businesses and regional flight training providers – to come together to develop recommendations that would help resolve the citizen concerns and ensure future viability of the airport.

Establishing a community-working group made up of representatives of all concerned parties to address noise concerns has made a difference at many other airports. As an example, Scottsdale, AZ established an ad hoc group as part of their 1997 Part 150 Noise Study program that provided information on aircraft noise abatement, flight paths and community dialogue. This information is available at http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/airport/noisesub_farpart150study.asp.

Another successful group that evolved out of the Scottsdale Airport Community Working Group was the AZ Flight Training Working group. That organization was formed to specifically address flight training issues in Phoenix and the surrounding area by gathering flight training schools together to discuss issues such as practice areas, over flight of noise sensitive areas and communications. As a result of their efforts, the group put together a comprehensive plan for flight training operations diminishing many of the noise complaints in the Phoenix area. For more information on their efforts go to <http://www.aftw.org/>.

The Honorable Sally Mackay
Page 2
April 30, 2008

Another key component of reducing airport and aircraft noise impacts is to ensure compatible land uses around the airport to the maximum extent possible. It is obvious that over the years the City has grown around the airport resulting in an increase in noise concerns. While it is nearly impossible to reverse prior planning decisions, it is not too late to properly protect the airport for the future. AOPA suggests taking steps to ensure that airport staff has an opportunity to review proposed projects within a determined radius of the airport for incompatibility and safety concerns. At the April 8 City Commission meeting, Commissioner Grasty suggested that the airport manager be involved in all planning meetings for projects within 3 miles of the airport. AOPA supports that recommendation and encourages you to implement that process as soon as possible.

Getting the word out to pilots and airport users about the voluntary noise abatement procedures is an important part of educating the community as a whole about airport noise. Many airports make use of a brochure that shows a large-scale overhead view of the airport with noise sensitive areas and suggested traffic patterns. A brochure allows pilots to clearly understand where noise sensitive areas exist and how to safely avoid those areas as practicable. Enclosed you will find a copy of the brochure for Frederick Municipal Airport where AOPA is based as a sample. AOPA encourages the wide dissemination of voluntary noise abatement procedures and recommends that the City develop such a brochure.

AOPA stands ready to provide further assistance and appreciates your collaborative approach to finding reasonable recommendations to address community concerns. We look forward to continuing to work with you and please contact me at 301-695-2119 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



John L. Collins
Senior Liaison
Airports

Enclosure

cc: Randy Richenburg, Vice Mayor, City of New Smyrna Beach
Jack Stevenson Grasty, Commissioner, City of New Smyrna Beach
James Hathaway, Commissioner, City of New Smyrna Beach
Lynne Plaskett, Commissioner, City of New Smyrna Beach
John Hagood, Manager, City of New Smyrna Beach
Robert Perry, Chairman, City of New Smyrna Beach Airport Advisory Board
Rhonda Walker, Manager, New Smyrna Beach Airport