



TWEED
NEW HAVEN
AIRPORT

Tweed New Haven Airport Authority (TNHAA)

Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC)

Minutes of December 19, 2023 via Zoom

Attendance

Members in Attendance: Tom Rafter, Rose Chatterton, Linda Hennessey, Jeremy Nielson, Chuck Licata, Giovanni Zinn, Carlos Eyzaguirre, Kenneth Dagliere, and David Valentino.

Members absent: Michael Jones, and Mike Piscitelli.

Others in Attendance: Malena Zanjani and Felipe Suriel.

Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes from October 17, 2023 Meeting
2. Environmental Assessment Status Update
3. HVN ESC Presentation
 - a. Review Survey Results Spreadsheet
 - b. Prioritizing Future Subtopics
 - c. Review Draft Environmental Policy
4. Next Meeting – Date, Time, Topics

Minutes

Chairman Rafter called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm. The first agenda item was the approval of the minutes from the October 17th meeting. Mr. Dagliere moved to approve the minutes, and Ms. Hennessey seconded the motion. The floor was opened for questions or comments, but there were none.

Mr. Rafter then continued to the Environmental Assessment (EA) update. He summarized the EA's current status, referencing to an email from Ms. Zanjani that included a letter from DHHS and a news clip concerning the EA. He explained that due to the need for a response to the DHHS letter, the FAA's decision on the EA has been postponed. Mr. Rafter clarified that the comments in the DHHS letter didn't necessitate technical modifications to the EA. He mentioned that the DOT Secretary intends to communicate with the DHHS Secretary, while the FAA indicated that a decision is expected soon.

In response to Mr. Dagliere's inquiry about the delay's duration, Mr. Rafter informed that the initial deadline was the end of October, which has now been extended to the end of the year. Mr. Dagliere proposed writing to the three Congressional representatives, urging the FAA to expedite the process. He emphasized not seeking their opinions but merely accelerating the FAA's response. Mr. Rafter appreciated the suggestion and advised Mr. Dagliere to raise it in the next day's Board Meeting. Additionally, Mr. Rafter mentioned exploring regulations related to potential further delays and their implications. Mr. Dagliere pointed out that every federal agency must adhere to specific decision-making timelines, implying that the FAA should be held accountable.

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Lastly, Mr. Rafter brought up an off-agenda item regarding environmental issues. He praised Avports for their excellent management during recent severe weather forecasts, including handling tide gates and stakeholder communication. He addressed social media discussions about water redirection from Lot B to Burr Ave, clarifying that it was part of the planned drainage without causing additional flooding. He acknowledged their good fortune in weather cooperation.

For the following agenda item, Mr. Rafter introduced a presentation prepared by Ms. Zanjani on the Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC). The presentation aimed to outline the committee's purpose, background, and recent survey results. It began with a slide providing an overview of the ESC's history, followed by a detailed explanation of the committee's objectives. Mr. Rafter emphasized that the presentation would highlight the top five priorities identified by the Environmental Stewardship Committee based on a recent survey.

He reminded everyone that these priorities reflect the ESC's viewpoint, and as they delve into various tasks, they might also address issues ranked lower in priority. Ms. Zanjani's report included data on the current status of these priorities, revealing that 35% are already being addressed, while 49% are identified as potential future practices.

Mr. Rafter further explained his approach to prioritizing these future practices. He utilizes a simple matrix to categorize tasks based on cost-benefit analysis: low cost and low benefit as Goal 2, high benefit and low cost as Goal 1, high cost and high benefit as Goal 3, and high cost and low benefit as Goal 4. This method will be applied to the tasks identified as future considerations to determine their feasibility and priority.

The aim is to demonstrate progress and improve performance in achieving these goals. Mr. Rafter announced that for the next meeting, a list of these prioritized tasks would be presented, along with updates on their progress and how they align with the matrix. This will provide insights into the committee's ongoing efforts to address and accomplish these environmental stewardship objectives.

Proceeding to the next slide, Mr. Rafter introduced a draft of the environmental policy statement for the overall environmental policy. He informed the committee that he had developed this draft after reviewing various airport policies and the International Air Transport Association's environmental policy statement. He presented it for the committee's consideration and discussion, emphasizing his intention to refine it with the committee's input before presenting it to the full board. Mr. Rafter then offered to walk the committee through the details of the draft policy statement.

Draft Environmental Policy Statement

- *Applicability: This policy applies to all employees of the Tweed New Haven Airport Authority (TNHAA) working at the Tweed New Haven Airport.*
- *Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to outline the environmental commitments for the Tweed New Haven Airport.*
- *Policy: In an effort to improve the natural environment in and around the airport, and to reduce impacts on our communities, the TNHAA will make every effort to:*
 - *Prevent and reduce environmental impacts, pollution, and waste from airport operations.*

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- *To proactively identify and mitigate all potential impacts to the environment from airport operations.*
- *Consider Climate resiliency, reduction of resource consumption, promotion of energy efficiency and sustainable principles into operations and planning.*
- *Maximize sustainability efforts by ensuring that airport infrastructure costs do not impede airlines' ability to invest in new technology to benefit the environment.*
- *Comply with all environmental regulatory and legal obligations.*
- *Through the Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC), continue to explore and promote sustainability efforts at the airport.*

Mr. Rafter highlighted specific aspects of the draft Environmental Policy Statement. He emphasized the importance of climate resilience, resource consumption reduction, and promoting energy efficiency. He mentioned a recent project by Walsh Construction, which included significant energy-efficient improvements to the existing facility. Due to government restrictions, a tax rebate or credit will be awarded to Walsh Construction for these efforts.

Mr. Rafter also discussed the policy statement's section on ensuring that airport infrastructure costs do not hinder airlines' ability to invest in environmentally beneficial technology. This concept was inspired by the International Air Transport Association's policy, which recognizes that airplanes and airlines are major contributors to air quality issues. The association advocates for enabling airlines to invest in new technology without being burdened by excessive costs. Mr. Rafter included this statement to prompt consideration and discussion, clarifying that it's not about controlling airline operations but providing thought-provoking content for the committee. He invited the committee members to share their thoughts, comments, or suggestions on how to proceed with the policy.

Ms. Hennessey raised questions regarding the airlines' ability to invest in environmentally friendly technologies, specifically asking about the progression of such investments and using Avelo Airlines as an example. She inquired about the initial steps airlines take to enhance their operational efficiency and reduce environmental impact.

Mr. Rafter acknowledged the broad nature of this topic, emphasizing that it's not just about individual airlines but involves industry-wide and FAA-led efforts in adopting new technologies. He mentioned Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and advancements in aircraft design, such as improved composite materials and winglets, which contribute significantly to economic and environmental savings by reducing fuel consumption.

He clarified that while he couldn't speak for any particular airline, the inclusion of this topic in the policy was to reflect the broader industry perspective, acknowledging the challenges and opportunities in environmental innovation for airlines. Mr. Rafter pointed out that introducing new technology, particularly to smaller carriers like Avelo, is a gradual process.

Ms. Hennessey noted that prioritizing fuel efficiency is crucial for environmental impact, as it directly affects emissions. She observed that it's more feasible to focus on fuel improvements rather than retrofitting individual aircraft engines. Mr. Rafter concurred, highlighting the time-intensive nature of integrating new technologies into the aviation industry, especially for smaller carriers.

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Ms. Chatterton remarked on the absence of fuel and fumes from the top five priority topics, especially considering recent discussions about asthma and related health concerns. She suggested revisiting and potentially revising this priority list. Mr. Dagliere and Mr. Licata supported her point, with Mr. Licata specifically mentioning the significant concern of fuel odors for nearby residents.

Ms. Chatterton proposed replacing one of the lesser-priority items with concerns about fuel and fumes, noting the noticeable presence of heavy fumes in areas like Morris Cove, East Haven, and Lighthouse Point whenever planes take off.

Mr. Rafter agreed to review the items related to air quality and investigate why they did not make the top five. He expressed openness to adding a sixth item to the priority list if necessary.

Mr. Dagliere raised the possibility of the airport's expanded terminal leading to a potential doubling of fuel output pollution. Ms. Chatterton concurred, noting that increased flights and expanded facilities could escalate fuel emissions. Mr. Rafter acknowledged the likelihood of an increase but clarified that it would not be proportional; a lengthened runway would allow more passengers per flight, potentially mitigating some impacts.

Mr. Licata suggested that the original survey might not have included enough options regarding fuel and air quality concerns, which Mr. Rafter agreed to revisit. He emphasized that the policy statement was drafted with a global perspective, covering various aspects of environmental impact, including air quality. He invited input on refining the language to address these specific concerns more directly.

Mr. Dagliere highlighted the importance of addressing air quality as a major health-related issue, citing reports from Yale and UCONN Schools of Medicine. Mr. Licata proposed adding air quality as a standalone item due to its significance and community concern.

Mr. Rafter committed to developing a revised statement addressing air quality and fuel concerns and promised to circulate it among the committee members before the next meeting. He reiterated the committee's commitment to considering all future practice items, not just the top five priorities, and focusing on achievable goals in the short term.

Before concluding the meeting, Mr. Rafter invited any final comments or questions from the committee members. Mr. Dagliere inquired about the possibility of public input or comments during ESC meetings, recalling that such a provision might have been added. Mr. Rafter clarified that, although the public is welcome to attend, there is no formal structure for public commentary in the meetings.

Mr. Rafter then mentioned he would be reporting on the Greater New Haven Water Pollution Authority in a subsequent meeting, acknowledging Mr. Dagliere for providing the contact and thanking him for the introduction.

He also announced that the next ESC Meeting is scheduled for February 20th, 2024, at 2 pm. By that time, he aims to present revised language for the environmental policy statement and update the committee on the progress of various items under consideration.

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Concluding the meeting, Mr. Rafter extended Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays wishes to the committee. Mr. Dagliere moved to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Hennessey seconded the motion. The meeting was officially adjourned at approximately 2:30 PM.

Action Items

- ***Action Item – Mr. Rafter to update the environmental policy statement to address air quality and fuel concerns.***
- ***Action Item – Mr. Rafter to present the revised policy statement and progress on various items at the next meeting.***
- ***Action Item – Mr. Rafter to reevaluate top environmental concerns, considering the inclusion of fuel and fumes.***