

From: Falk, Kathleen [mailto:Falk@co.dane.wi.us]
Sent: Monday, November 04, 2002 3:52 PM
To: 'neighbors@sasyna.org'
Subject: Airport Noise

Mr. Mark McFadden
The Schenk/Atwood/Starkweather/Yahara Neighborhood Association Post
Office Box 683 Madison, Wisconsin 53701

Dear Mr. McFadden:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter of October 5, on behalf of the SASY Neighborhood Association, regarding noise associated with the Dane County Regional Airport.

I have had airport staff review your concerns and suggestions. Both staff and I wish to continue to work with you to find reasonable solutions to your important concerns.

First of all, I invite and encourage you and other neighborhood residents will attend the Dane County Airport Commission's public meeting this Thursday, November 7, at 5:30 p.m. at the airport. This semi-annual public meeting provides a forum for summarizing and discussing recent aircraft noise complaint activity and the airport's abatement and mitigation techniques.

Two years ago, I approved the hiring of a Noise Abatement / Environmental Officer for the Dane County Regional Airport. This position was requested by the airport staff as a way to become more proactive and responsive to the community. The airport has since elevated its proactive stance on noise abatement issues by providing more information to community residents, working more closely with the parties involved (such as the Air Traffic Control Tower Staff and flight crews), listening to and implementing suggestions made by the public and neighborhood groups, and taking into consideration items which may be implemented in the future.

Aircraft found to be operating contrary to the airport's noise abatement procedures, with no apparent, valid reason are contacted to determine if there is any valid reason for the non-compliance, and also to request compliance in the future.

As you suggest, the airport has considered a flight tracking/noise monitoring system, and I hope you'll be pleased to know that it is working towards achieving that goal. I'm told that noise monitoring

systems installed at other airports are fairly recent developments, with O'Hare International Airport's system in Chicago becoming operational in 1997.

Also, just this summer, the airport installed airfield signs designed to notify aircraft taxiing from the terminal of the preferred departure and arrival runways to be used for noise abatement. This step is in addition to noise abatement procedure posters which are installed in all of the airline offices at the airport, noise abatement procedure brochures that are provided to all air crews on a regular basis, and prior notification to air crews of the noise abatement procedures in place at the airport. Airport staff plan to continue to take appropriate steps on noise abatement in order to foster goodwill between the airport and its neighbors.

I thought it might be useful to describe some additional historic factors and efforts - not to suggest we have done enough but to demonstrate our consistent efforts to make progress in noise abatement. For example, in regard to the level of airport traffic, although commercial aircraft flight operations at the Dane County Regional Airport have grown slightly over the last year, this was not always the case. Commercial aircraft operations for 1999 were much the same as for 1986. When you take into account the use of many much noisier and larger aircraft in 1986, the community noise exposure is actually lower today. For the period from January through August 2002, commercial aircraft operations rose approximately 8% versus the same period in 2001. But even though the airport reported increased passenger numbers for the month of August, the number of commercial aircraft operations declined by almost 2% when comparing August 2002 versus August 2001. This increase in passengers with a corresponding decrease in flights can be attributed to higher load factors achieved by the airlines (more passengers per flight).

As far back as 1978, the airport began to work with the surrounding communities to implement noise programs and procedures. The airport conducted a Part 150 Noise and Land Use Compatibility Study that was used to determine aircraft noise levels at and around the airport, and to develop procedures that would limit and reduce noise impacts to the surrounding communities. This study is a voluntary program that U. S. airports may use to determine the best measures to take to mitigate aircraft noise effects. If an airport undertakes a Part 150 study, all of the measures to be implemented must be reviewed and approved by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Due to this study, the airport developed noise abatement procedures for

aircraft, and land use measures for local organizations to institute. Some of the ideas that were implemented include: established visual approach and departure corridors for use by helicopters, encouraged aircraft operators to utilize noise abatement departure procedures, worked with the Air National Guard to develop a "hush-house" to eliminate community noise from military aircraft engine maintenance, built a replacement runway to allow contra-flow noise abatement procedures to be utilized more often, developed a preferential runway use program to limit operations over the more densely populated areas, developed noise abatement departure procedures for specific runways, encouraged cities, towns, and the county to maintain compatible zoning in the airport vicinity, and acquired land surrounding the airport to ensure compatible land uses.

Some issues, such as restricting the hours for airport landings, are more complicated than they might seem to appear. In 1990, the Federal Government enacted the Airport Noise and Capacity Act (ANCA). Under this act, U.S. certificated airports are restricted from instituting bans on commercial aircraft operations. There are currently very few U.S. public-use airports that have curfews for aircraft operations. The airports that have true curfews had these restrictions in place before the ANCA legislation, and they are grand-fathered into the legislation. Some airports have restrictions based on the non-availability of aircraft rescue and firefighting services during certain times of the day or night. For safety reasons, commercial aircraft cannot operate at these airports without these services available. That is not the case at Dane County Regional Airport, which does have rescue and firefighting equipment.

Commercial aircraft that operate at the airport abide by all FAA regulations that pertain to the operations of commercial aircraft. Since 1975, aircraft have continually become quieter through the use of new technology and by removal of older, noisier aircraft. As of January 2000, all commercial air carrier aircraft operating in the U.S. meet Stage III standards for noise emissions. Stage I and Stage II commercial aircraft have been phased out of service. The U.S. Federal Government, along with international organizations and countries, is currently in the process of developing and implementing a Stage IV standard to further reduce noise emissions by aircraft. Many of the aircraft types that operate at the Dane County Regional Airport are utilizing aircraft that already meet this Stage IV standard.

The programs undertaken by the airport are at considerable financial expense. The issues involved in obtaining funds for airport capital improvement projects are very complicated. Funds for these projects are

obtained from not only the airport's operating revenues, but from Federal grants, Passenger Facility Charges (PFC), Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds, and other sources. Most of this money is required by the Federal Government to be strictly controlled for use on projects that are determined years in advance. The money is not "pooled" into a general fund that the airport can then use for any purpose they deem necessary.

In addition, major projects must be approved by many agencies including the Dane County Board. The approval process is accomplished through public meetings, and your input is invited.

Development projects at the airport have included items that have an effect on noise mitigation. With the redesign of the entrance roadway to the airport terminal, landscaping plans include earthen berms that will have a mitigating effect on aircraft noise as aircraft idle, taxi, or depart. Berms were also placed at the south side of the airport, and will have the same effect. The Bridges Golf Course was a major compatible land use project that protects residential areas from the highest noise levels, while also making profitable use of the land.

I have included a fact sheet that I hope will provide you with more information regarding the Noise Abatement Procedures at the airport. This information is also available on the airport's website at www.msnaairport.com <<http://www.msnaairport.com>>.

Again, thank you for expressing the concerns of the neighborhood association. Please be assured that I and the Dane County Regional Airport will continue to listen to and work to address those concerns. Please continue to let me know as we make progress or fall short of your expectations.

Once again, thanks for your thoughtful letter and your efforts.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Falk
Dane County Executive

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