

Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date: January 21, 2019
To: Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilmembers
From: Councilmember Sarah Gurney
Subject: Letter to Sonoma County Airport Regarding Noise from Current Flight Patterns
Recommendation : That the City Council Approve Authorization for the Mayor to Sign Letter to Sonoma County Airport Regarding Noise from Current Flight Patterns
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No XX N/A
Net General Fund Cost: N/A

Amount: \$0

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) N/A  (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION: This item is to request that the City Council Approve Authorization for the Mayor to Sign Letter to Sonoma County Airport Regarding Noise from Current Flight Patterns.

BACKGROUND:

At the City Council Meeting of January 7, 2020, the City Council discussed concerns from the public regarding the noise from aircraft that have a flight pattern over the City of Sebastopol. The City Council suggested the Agenda Review Committee prepare a letter to the Sonoma County Airport expressing the City’s concerns over noise created from current flight patterns.

Per the Sonoma County Airport web site, the following background information is provided:

“In 1941 the County purchased 339 acres of agricultural land and began constructing a runway using grant funds from the Civil Aeronautics Authority (predecessor to the Federal Aviation Administration). The U.S. Army took over in 1942 and added 826 acres, extended the original runway, built a second runway, added taxiways, apron areas, and other facilities. Two of the hangars constructed by the Army remain in use today. Between February 1943 and January 1946, the U.S. Fourth Air Corps operated the Sonoma County Airport. At that time, it was known as the Santa Rosa Army Airfield and was used primarily to train fighter groups and squadrons. At its peak, some 300 to 500 aircraft and 10,000 personnel were based on the army field.

The County resumed operation of the Airport in July 1946 and continues its operation as an Enterprise Fund within the Department of Transportation and Public Works. STS is designed to be self-supporting through user fees and does not rely on general fund contributions. Although the County operates STS, it is done so under the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Throughout most of its history, STS has been both a general aviation facility serving private planes and business jets, and a commercial airline facility with scheduled air service.

In March of 2000, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors voted to change the Sonoma County Airport’s name to Charles M. Schulz – Sonoma County Airport. “

DISCUSSION:

The item tonight is to address the aircraft noise that seems to be increasing from flights over the City of Sebastopol and our surrounding neighbors. The noise concern has been voiced by members of the community as well as from this elected body.

At the Jan 7th Council meeting, a letter was suggested to be sent from the Mayor to voice our concerns. The City found that the "Airport has a Noise Management Program that offers noise management procedures and Airport noise limits. Pilots are requested to ensure that their aircraft comply with these limits prior to operating at the Airport. There are daytime noise limits and much stricter nighttime noise limits. In addition, pilots are asked to avoid overflying residential areas to the extent traffic and safety permits. Also, per the Airport's web site, Aircraft are directed by the ATCT within a 5-mile radius of the Airport based on safety, prevailing winds, and the amount of traffic at the time. Aircraft arrive from all directions; for safe operations, they must take off and land into the wind. Wind direction changes by season and time of day. This may often place aircraft over residential areas. " although this is important information, the City would like to meet with the County to address these concerns and better understand the many factors that are relevant to airport operations and impacts such as pertinent provisions of Federal law, the policies and objectives of the FAA air transportation demand and capacity so that we are better informed to provide this information to our constituents.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has the statutory responsibility to promote, safety, efficiency, and provide for the safe use of airspace. The FAA has the sole authority to control air traffic. It is our understanding that neither the City of Sebastopol, County of Sonoma nor the State of California can regulate the altitude, speed, direction, or location of aircraft in flight. However, our citizens do have a right to be protected from noise created from the flight patterns.

The Mayor has prepared a letter to the Sonoma County Airport, Jon Stout, Airport Manager, with a copy furnished to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors listing the City's concerns.

A copy of that letter is attached.

Fiscal Analysis

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended action tonight.

Public Notice:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to scheduled meeting date.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the City Council prove Authorization for the Mayor to Sign Letter to Sonoma County Airport Regarding Noise from Current Flight Patterns.

Attachment:

Letter to Sonoma County Airport

City Council

Mayor Patrick Slayter
Vice Mayor Una Glass
Michael Carnacchi
Sarah Glade Gurney
Neysa Hinton



City Manager

Larry McLaughlin
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Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC
Mary Gourley
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City of Sebastopol

January 22, 2020

Sonoma County Airport
Jon Stout
Airport Manager
2290 Airport Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Noise Complaints

Dear Mr. Stout:

This letter is to submit the City of Sebastopol's concern regarding increased noise from the air traffic pattern of flights over the City of Sebastopol.

With the understanding the FAA has the sole authority to control air traffic, the City would like to meet with the County of Sonoma and the Sonoma County Airport to collaborate and discuss the community's concerns with increased noise levels and work together to protect Sebastopol residents, as well as residents in rural West County, from the impacts of increased commercial aircraft activity.

The City requests information in order that we may better understand the many factors that are relevant to airport operations; pertinent provisions of Federal law, the policies and objectives of the FAA regarding air transportation demand and capacity, and, future planning and expansions.

The City is requesting to meet with the Board of Supervisors to identify transportation improvements and alternatives that could reduce adverse airport impacts on City of Sebastopol residents as well as the entire West Sonoma County region.

We know our residents desire and deserve as much ongoing protection from aircraft noise impacts as possible and look forward to working with you to continue protecting our residents.

Sincerely,

Patrick Slayter
Mayor

Copy Furnished: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors