

Memorandum

To: Sean Scanlon, Tweed Airport

Date: December 18, 2019

From: Shawn Callaghan, FHI

Subject: **December 12, 2019 East Haven public meeting for Tweed Master Plan Update**

The second public meeting for the Tweed-New Haven Airport Master Plan Update was conducted from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the East Haven Senior Center at 91 Taylor Avenue in East Haven on December 12, 2019. The consultant team set up five informational stations to educate attendees from the surrounding community about the Master Plan process, its components, requirements, and methodology. The team also provided mapping to ascertain where attendees were coming from.

The Public Meeting was attended by approximately 75 members of the community along with several members of the project team and Tweed Airport staff.

The public meeting began with an introduction of the project team and the newly appointed Executive Director of Tweed Airport, Sean Scanlon. Mr. Scanlon said that he has only been director for three weeks and is eager to meet with airport neighbors one-on-one to discuss issues and respond to questions residents may have with the airport. Mr. Scanlon also provided his cell phone number (203-800-6331) for anyone that wanted to talk with him directly.

Jeff Wood of McFarland Johnson, the project manager for the Master Plan Update, made a 20-minute presentation on the planning project recently initiated by Tweed Airport. Mr. Wood explained what an airport Master Plan is, the need for the Master Plan, the Master Planning process, and the project schedule. He talked about elements from the last Master Plan that had been instituted. He explained the public outreach plan for the project, welcomed comments, and encouraged participation from the public as the team releases more information. The attendees were informed of several methods to provide input into the Master Planning process, including speaking with the project team at the public meetings, the comment form on the project website (www.tweedmasterplan.com), paper comment forms at the meetings, and Facebook/Twitter pages.

After the presentation was completed, the attendees were asked to provide comments and input for consideration at this early stage of the planning process. Comments by the public included the history of the airport and its relationship with neighborhood residents, specific concerns about the impact of airport noise and fumes on nearby residents, and airport expansion. The following is a summary of the issues and comments raised by various community members during the course of the meeting. Please note that the attendees mostly live in East Haven close to the airport.



Verbal comments heard during the meeting:

- Several residents said they were surprised when the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was revoked by the New Haven mayor. There is a trust issue now, and people believe the airport has a credibility problem. They asked, will the airport have a bigger runway and bigger planes? Mr. Scanlon assured people that no decisions have been made and this is the start of the conversation. All factors, including all public comments, will be taken into account when developing the Master Plan.
- One nearby resident stated that he has lived by the airport for years and it was a small, commuter airport. In 2009, the City of New Haven and Town of East Haven promised that the runway would not be expanded. Now in 2019, the community is concerned that the runway will be expanded. He stated that he has a new house, with good doors and windows, but can still hear planes at 6:10am. He said the airport should not be able to go back on the 2009 agreement.
- One resident added that six houses were removed in East Haven as part of previous airport work, but no homes from New Haven were taken. He stated that New Haven was getting the benefits while East Haven was burdened with the concessions, such as road relocations. He expressed the concern that East Haven is asked to subsidize New Haven.
- One resident said that her grandmother's house was taken in the past and she believes that more houses will be taken by the airport. Mr. Scanlon answered that eminent domain and the taking of houses/properties has never been discussed.
- One attendee stated he owned property near the airport and expressed his fear that the airport expansion is coming. He stated that the East Haven roads have been seen increased use and traffic was directed up Dodge Avenue. The traffic influx needs to be looked at and improved.
- One commenter asked about the sound insulation program and claimed that sound insulation does not work. He said he wanted to know how those homes were selected and what went into the houses.
- One resident claimed that the benefits of expanding the airport are not going to be to the residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. He said neighbors will not realize the economic benefits, only get the impacts. He said there would be benefits to New Haven, but none to East Haven.
- A newer homeowner added that her property values have decreased. She feels dizzy and nauseous when outside her home. She also has experienced anxiety from the larger planes flying overhead. She said she doesn't want this in the neighborhood.
- One attendee said that a drainage ditch installed as part of previous airport work in East Haven was supposed to be maintained, but it has not been. He asked if the airport would start to maintain it since the land was given to the airport and a fence erected around the ditch.
- One New Haven resident said that Yale and others want to expand the airport for economic development, but we are experiencing a climate catastrophe. She asked if it is responsible to expand. She claimed Mayor Harp was voted out partly because of her stance on the MOA and runway expansion.
- One neighbor stated that in 2009 his family lost 35 trees on their property that resulted in the loss of wildlife and birds. Recently, he received a letter that the airport would like to remove more trees

He asked when and why this tree cutting must occur. Jeff Wood said airports remove obstructions, such as trees, for safety reasons; Mr. Scanlon said he would look into this specific case further. The attendee also stated that he lived nearby where the fatality occurred. He added that the airport is a factor in the poor water quality on his property and his roof and siding are discolored.

- One attendee added that he owned a house near the crash in 2013 that killed the pilot, his son, and two children living in the home. There have been 33 deaths since the airport opened in 1931. He lives with his family, including grandkids now, and he is scared of the commercial planes. If expansion is approved, he suggested establishing a fund so people can sell their homes at fair market value.
- Several attendees asked Mr. Scanlon to learn the airport's history to truly understand residents' concerns. There is a lack of trust that can only be mended by understanding the community's concerns and talking with people directly. There is a need to see if property values can actually increase from any airport work. They suggested that economic and health assessments need to be completed.
- Some of the negative effects linked to the airport that attendees raised included: vibrations, noise, jet fumes, jet fuel spilling on properties, being woken up by airplane sounds, and traffic and speeding on adjacent roadways.
- One attendee said that reviewing the last Master Plan was important to understand what did not work last time. Learning from those past projections and determining if the forecasts were accurate is important to this Master Planning process. He asked if the economic development benefits described in the previous Master Plan have been realized.
- One resident stated that if you want to be a good neighbor, you have to listen to the neighbors. She stated she was worried about three flights per day going to 30 per day. She added that Japanese knotweed is spreading through the neighborhood and she wants to keep it off of her property. She said these little things matter.
- When asked how long Tweed wants the runway to be, and how big planes will be in the future, Mr. Scanlon noted Tweed is at the beginning of the Master Planning process. Mr. Scanlon stated that he was talking with several carriers, who need different runway lengths to operate. No decisions have been made yet, and this Master Plan process will help to understand the future needs.