

Solano County Airport Land Use Commission

Thomas Randall
Chairman



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**MINUTES OF THE
SOLANO COUNTY AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION
MEETING OF February 6, 2020**

The meeting of the Solano County Airport Land Use Commission was held in the Solano County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers (1st floor), 675 Texas Street, Fairfield, CA.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Vancil, DuClair, Sagun, Cook, Sarna, and Chairman Randall

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner(s): Meyer and Seiden

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Leland, Principal Planner, Resource Management,
Bill Emlen Director of Resource Management;
Lori Mazzella, Deputy County Counsel;
Jamielynne Harrison and Teresa Schow, Resource Management.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chairman Randall called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as prepared.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Sarna and seconded by Commissioner DuClair to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 9, 2020 as corrected.

Reports from Commissioners and/or Staff

Commissioners Vancil, Cook, Sarna, Chairman Randall and Planner Leland visited Travis AFB leadership on January 14, 2020, with the goal of providing an update of ALUC's role and limitations, how it operates with the governing agencies such as the Board of Supervisors and city councils. There was discussion regarding the last Travis Update Plan (2015), the wind turbine issue, maneuverable and tactical runways and more specifically that a solar analysis be done for any future projects. There was also discussion of habitat reconstruction. The Chairman requested a report to memorialize the visit.

Commissioners Cook and Sagun provided a report of the visit to Travis AFB RAPCON along with an informational report on Wind Turbine Radar Interference Mitigation. There was also discussion regarding the anticipated increase of windmills in the area and the possible impact. [Travis AFB RAPCON WTRIM](#)

Chairman Randall provided information from the meeting with the Delta Stewardship Council. Bill Emlen, Resource Management Director, added that they met with a consultant to begin discussing the potential bird strike issues.

Items from the Public

There was no one from the public wishing to speak.

Consent Calendar

Chairman Randall opened the public hearing for public comment. Since there was no one from the public wishing to speak on the consent calendar, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Vancil and seconded by Commissioner Sagun to approve the consent calendar. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

2. Public hearing ALUC 1918 Benicia Solar Project to consider a Consistency Determination for the Benicia Solar Project with the Travis Air Force Base and Nut Tree Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans. This project came before the commission on January 9, 2020. The applicant requested a continuance which resulted in the February 6, 2020 special meeting.

Mr. Leland indicated there are two parts to the project:

- a. The first part is a zoning text amendment which the City of Benicia proposed would allow commercial solar projects within their open-space zoning districts.
- b. The second part is the first project of commercial solar in an open-space district located on Lake Herman Road, which was described in the staff report.

The Commission approved the zoning text amendment with language recommended by the staff. Subsequent to the approval, the Benicia City Attorney reviewed the language and provided agreed-upon language which is more general in nature and provides greater protection for the ALUC. The language should read:

“Solar facilities shall comply with the applicable provisions of the Travis Air Force Base (Travis AFB) Land Use Compatibility Plan.”

Before, the language was only requiring the submission of a solar glare hazard study. This language includes all the provisions that relate to renewable energy and solar projects.

We recommend the reaffirmation of the zoning text amendment with the conditional language and that the project be approved.

Commissioner Sagun asked if the Solar Glare Analysis was received. Travis AFB received the Solar Glare Analysis and had no issues with the study, the project or the location as proposed.

Commissioner Cook referred to the Solar Glare Analysis and indicated that the “pass/false” notations were conflicted as reported. She also inquired as to how reliable the glare software is for this study. Mr. Leland indicated that Travis AFB provided the technical expertise to review the studies on behalf of the commission. Solano County specified in the Travis Plan that software must be used that is compliant with Sandia Labs Solar Glare Analysis Tool. Travis AFB had no issue with their consultant’s report. They had no reason to suspect that it would be incoherent. We have never had a solar PV project referred to Travis that created glare concern to Travis.

Andrew J. Nelson, representative from Travis AFB, requested a brief delay until the consultant from Travis AFB could arrive to address the questions of the commission.

Commissioner Sagun asked how close the proposed project is to the final approach course. What is the glare potential?

Commissioner DuClair asked what is the altitude? Commissioner Vancil indicated it could be as high as four thousand feet on the north side coming in and the solar panels would be aimed toward the south.

Chairman Randall recommended tabling AC-20-006, allowing other participants to arrive by 7:00pm.

New Business

3. Public hearing to consider the consistency of ALUC-20-01, Gold Hill Village 3 Project, with the Travis AFB Land Use Compatibility Plan (Travis Plan).

Jim Leland, Principal Planner, provided a brief overview of the staff report. This is a new residential project of 79 dwelling units in the City of Fairfield located off Highway 680 on the frontage road. Staff recommends approval of the project which meets the criteria for Zone D and is consistent with the Travis plan.

Chairman Randall opened the public hearing. Since there were no speakers either for or against this matter, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cook and seconded by Commissioner Sagun to determine that the project is consistent with the provisions of Travis Air Force Base Land Use Compatibility Plan. The motion passed unanimously. (Resolution No. 20-06)

Chairman Randall recommended a 10-minute recess, to reconvene at 7:05 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:08 p.m.

Public hearing ALUC-1918 Benicia Solar Project continued. Mr. Leland stated that the purpose of the hearing is to determine whether or not the project is consistent with the Travis Plan. The Travis Plan requires that the solar project applicants submit a solar glare study and that it be reviewed. Travis AFB has the technical expertise to review the study. Solano County does not have an expert in this field; therefore, a review is unavailable to the commission through county staff. We have complied with the provision of the Travis Plan to submit the study for review and the Travis AFB has cleared it. The study is a hazard analysis which only deals with Travis AFB. The Plan does not require that there be any addressing of issues with Buchanan Field or nearby airports. The Plan could, at a later date if the commission chose during an update cycle, to refine the process regarding solar projects as we learn more about it.

Chairman Randall opened the public hearing. Since there were no speakers either for or against this matter, the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Cook referred to the anomaly in the report. She also recognized the attendance of Andrew Nelson from Travis AFB on behalf of Colonel Watson who is the expert in glare analysis review. Commissioner Cook mentioned that she would like to have reassurance from Travis AFB that this anomaly does not impact any glare hazards.

Mr. Leland indicated that he possess clearance from Travis. He suggested that the commission possibly meet with glare analysis experts from Travis at a future date to discuss their process of reviewing the studies.

Mr. Andrew Nelson from Travis AFB indicated that those experts with the technical knowledge who have generated the report would not have attended the hearing. It would be the decision of the commission if they can accept the overall conclusion that the report has been cleared by Travis. However, he also indicated that he would be able to provide the answers but would not be able to provide a timeline as to when the answers would be available.

Chairman Randall stated that even with the fail in the report, it still passed.

Mr. Nelson indicated that he would not contradict the conclusion of the report. The report concluded that it was acceptable to Travis and it had passed. He would not have been ready with other information to respond to that specific element which was sunrise backtrack simulation which indicates ATCT failure.

Commissioner Vancil stated that the report had one failure regarding the flight path where the control tower failed for one minute. The timing of the failure is related to the tower, not the aircraft on the flight path. Travis experts did not have a concern with this failure.

Commissioner Sagun indicated that it was inconceivable that the tower would be able to see the solar panels. Based on information from staff, the air traffic control at the base has blessed the issue from both the flight path and the control tower perspective. He was reasonably sure that the commission had enough information to make a reasonable determination that the air traffic control facility will not be negatively affected.

Commissioner DuClair asked if an addition can be made to the report that Travis state that there are no problems technically. Mr. Leland indicated that information was in the staff report. It was suggested that the commission schedule a study session with Travis regarding how they review the studies and what response the commission might want in the future.

The Commission requested the scheduling of the meeting with Travis. Mr. Leland indicated that it would take a month to coordinate the meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sagun and seconded by Commissioner DuClair to accept the recommendation as consistent with the Travis Plan. The motion passed unanimously. (Resolution No. 20-05)

County Counsel Lori Mazzella stated that the commission previously wanted to calendar a discussion on the general principles and procedures of how the ALUC operates. Chairman Randall confirmed that the commission wants to calendar this topic for the next meeting.

Adjournment

Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned.