



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET - 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123

KATHLEEN MOLLOY PREVISICH, PLANNING DIRECTOR

Agenda Date: August 1, 2014

Agenda Item #: 1

Time: after 9:00 a.m.

July 18, 2014

Zoning Administrator
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Condition compliance review of Permit 131132

Introduction

On August 2, 2013, following a public hearing, you approved Application 131132, a proposal to allow for the operation of a parachute landing area at 515 Calabasas Road in Watsonville. Condition of approval II.H. required the project to be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator at a public hearing after six months of operation to evaluate condition compliance.

The follow-up hearing was held on April 4, 2014 and staff planner Samantha Haschert presented an evaluation of the status of project compliance pursuant to Conditions I.C. - I.F, as well as Condition II.I. These conditions included requirements for directional signage, signage restricting noise, parking requirements, a revised landing path and providing neighboring parcels with a status update regarding the pursuit of permits to land at Watsonville Airport.

The April 4, 2014 Zoning Administrator Hearing concluded with direction to staff to provide an additional update with respect to condition compliance. Specifically, Code Compliance personnel were asked to make periodic visits to the landing site at Calabasas Road to provide you with concrete information regarding the noise conditions, the number of jumps, the absence of jumps on Tuesdays, and conformance generally with the conditions of approval.

Protocol

I made four unannounced site visits to the landing area at 515 Calabasas Road. The visits were conducted on May 19th, June 3rd, June 29th, and July 19th. On May 19th, June 29th, and July 19th, the landings occurred per the schedule provided by the project applicant. The June 3rd site visit was conducted in order to ensure that no landings were occurring on Tuesdays. The visits were conducted at different times in the afternoon, from 2:30 pm (May 19th), 3:30 pm (June 29th) and 4:20 pm (July 19th).

The landings were viewed from the parking lot adjacent to the landing site.

Observations

During each of the three visits that were conducted during regular operating hours, parachutists were observed following the revised flight path, approaching the landing site from the south-southwest. No landings were observed on Tuesday, June 3rd.

May 19th - No noise was heard from the ground with the exception of brief conversations and the sound of the flapping parachute. The noise was brief and barely noticeable.

June 29th - The noise of the deployed parachutes was again detected, but brief and non-disruptive. Upon landing, the customers let out a quick "whoo-hoo" but, again, the noise was not disruptive and very brief.

July 19th - Similar to the previous observation, the flapping of the chutes was detected and upon landing, brief exclamations were exchanged between the parachutists. Again, the noise was not prolonged, nor did it was it disruptive or otherwise noticeable.

No other spectators were observed during the three site visits.

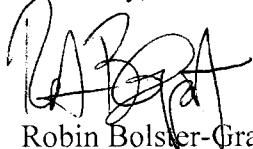
Conclusion

In my opinion, the landing paths observed during all three site visits conformed to the revised, approved flight path. While there was detectable noise attributable to the incoming parachutists, the noise was brief and would not be expected to be noticeable to anyone unaware of the impending landing. The signage was also readily visible at the landing site, indicating to customers and staff, the restrictions on noise levels. Customers are also required to sign declarations attesting to their understanding of the noise restrictions.

The manifest provided by the project applicant indicates that no jumps were scheduled for either Tuesday or Wednesday and my site visit on Tuesday, June 3rd confirmed that no jumps or landings occurred on that day. The overall number of jumps that have occurred during the observation period complies with Conditions II.F, which limits jumps to a maximum of two per run and a maximum of 10 jump runs per day.

All other aspects of the observed jumps and landing area appeared to comply with the required conditions of approval for Development Permit 131132, however, I have not received any updates with respect to the expected approval date from the Watsonville Airport Manager for landing at the airport.

Sincerely,



Robin Bolster-Grant
Code Compliance Administrator