

City of Foster City
Council Corner by Vice Mayor John Kiramis

GOT NOISE? YOU CAN TELL ME

If a noisy aircraft flies over Foster City and no one bothers to report it, does it still make noise? Sorry, but I could not pass up the analogy. The reason is I am beginning to wonder whether aircraft have suddenly become quiet. Perhaps most Foster City residents have simply gotten used to aircraft noise or complacent regarding the issue. Another thought that comes to mind is whether the complaint handlers at SFO are not recording the complaints properly. The past month brought a small yet significant rise in aircraft noise complaints from some concerned residents. This is why the Noise Abatement Committee called for a special meeting July 10th to discuss the issue of aircraft noise and the inconsistency of noise complaints. What seemed odd to us was that the first quarterly noise complaint report of 2008 prepared by SFO reflects eight callers who complained of aircraft noise 32 times from Jan-08 through Apr-08. Two callers made 23 of the 32 calls in February. I should add this is an increase over the same period in 2007 when only six complaints were made by five callers although a sharp decrease from 2006 when 84 complaints were made by 11 complainants.

So my question is, is there really an issue with aircraft noise? At least eight complainants seem to think so, so far this year. The bigger question is what do you think? Have you complained, but have not been counted? Have you wanted to complain about aircraft noise but did not know who to call?

Our Noise Abatement Committee has five committed and dedicated members who have taken it upon themselves to become educated and well versed on the matter of aircraft noise from SFO and its relationship to Foster City. They have done this, I might add, on their time and at their expense. What this advisory committee relies on most in order to serve Foster City and to advise the City Council are the quarterly noise complaint statistics we receive from SFO. If the complaints are few, then the empirical evidence suggests the problem has been mitigated. If there are many noise complaints, then our Committee can examine the times and runways used and use this data to take up the problem with the management of SFO.

I know many of us feel it is futile to complain due to a mistaken belief that nothing can be done. This is not correct, at least not altogether correct. Unbelievably, SFO and most airline carriers want to be good neighbors with Foster City and do act to make adjustments to ease the problem of aircraft noise. Some do not, particularly the foreign carriers who fly in late at night and often take a straight approach over Foster City because they have been in the air for ten plus hours and can

only think of landing the aircraft and getting off. However, the complaints do matter and are what is needed if the City is to take on the issue of aircraft noise.

I do want to stress the point it is not my intention to generate complaints where they do not exist. That is not the function of the City. I do feel it is the City's job to inform the public they have avenues available to them regarding their concerns of aircraft noise. I urge you to call or e-mail SFO by means of using the following venues:

821-4736 SFO Direct

877-206-8290 SFO Toll-Free or e-mail them at

Sfo.noise@flysfo.com

Make certain you give them your address and the approximate date and time of the aircraft that caused you to complain. This is critical information because the complaint handler will not register a complaint without an address or time of offense. Additionally, avoid saying anything the complaint handler might deem abusive, as they will probably not register the complaint. I know this might be difficult particularly when you have been awakened for the second night in a row, but try nonetheless.

The Noise Abatement Committee will be looking at FCTV, the marquee and other venues to educate the community on how to go about making aircraft noise concerns known.

On a side note, our effort for 94404 postal recognition seems to be working. A resident informed me he registered at a motel in the State of Oregon and when he gave his zip code the clerk remarked, "You live in Foster City". I love it!

Once again, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you. I can be reached at home at 650-349-2316 or jkiramis@fostercity.org.
