

From: Michael Knight knightmail98@yahoo.com
Subject: Fwd: Telephone discussion on Parahcute Operations
Date: February 6, 2015 at 10:38 AM
To: rick.beach@amazingpossibilities.org



Hello Rick,

Here is the copy of the FAA letter. Thank you for the advice after the meeting.

Michael Knight
Skydive Golden Gate
knightmail98@yahoo.com
209-747-6008

Begin forwarded message:

From: <Robert.Y.Lee@faa.gov>
Date: February 5, 2015 at 3:41:55 PM PST
To: <knightmail98@yahoo.com>
Cc: <djensen@marincounty.org>
Subject: Telephone discussion on Parahcute Operations

Mr. Knight,

As requested this morning, here is a recap/status of the Part 13.1 Informal Complaint that you had submitted against Marin County, the sponsor of Gness Field Airport (Airport). Hopefully, the contents of this email will help you and the airport sponsor to move forward in your discussions on the proposed parachute operations at Gness Field. I will go over ongoing as well as recent discussions that I or our office had with you and the airport sponsor regarding your informal complaint that was received on August 27, 2014. I will refer to Mr. Knight as the proponent for the parachute operations.

Although the Sponsor's October 3, 2014 response letter to our office's September 19, 2014, notification letter did not deny parachute operations from taking place at the Airport, the two requirements specified in the letter may restrict or impede the proponent from implementing the proposed activity. As of today, there is no written draft business/operation agreement between the proponent and the Airport sponsor. In past discussions with both parties, our office has recommended to the proponent and the Airport sponsor to discuss and work together towards an agreement for parachute operations to take place at Gness Field. As discussed, we had conveyed to the Sponsor the offsite landing and retrieval plan may be requested but it would be an unreasonable requirement for the proponent to obtain an access agreement with the adjacent land owners. However, we conveyed to the Sponsor that it has a propriety right as the owner of the airport to protect itself from liability and this may include putting conditions into future agreements to protect itself from certain liabilities.

The Sponsor's response letter and subsequent discussions with our office mentioned safety concerns including the location of the parachute landing zone, high wind speed, nearby tower structures, small foot print of the airport, and the parachute operations that would occur inside the Airport traffic pattern.

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The sponsor said that a certain FAA Flight Standards staff had once visited the airport regarding parachute operations and said that there may be some safety risks regarding the proposed location of the parachute landing zone. We had requested the airport sponsor to obtain from Flight Standards a documented safety review or safety evaluation on the proposed parachute operation. Aside from what Flight Standards needs to evaluate for its review, it should also include factoring in the safety concerns expressed by the Airport sponsor and the proponent's business plan for parachute operations at the Airport. For example, will the LPZ be encroaching on the helicopter flight path. We expect that the Airport sponsor will obtain this review from Flight Standards within one to two weeks. I indicated if that if there is a problem in obtaining such a review from Flight standards, to notify our office so we can coordinate with Flight Standards to conduct such a review.

As an argument to the sponsor's view from Flight Standards, the proponent has indicated to our office that he also had also explained the proposed parachute operation to another FAA Flight Standards staff and that staff member conveyed to the proponent that parachute operations can safely occur at Gness Field. As there are mixed messages, it is essential that we get something in written form from Flight Standards regarding its review.

We conveyed to the airport sponsor that it may limit or prohibit certain aeronautical activities if such action is necessary for the safe operation of the Airport. This includes skydiving. However, we also mentioned the Airport sponsor would need a solid and specific justification for prohibiting or restricting parachute operations at the Airport because it is an aeronautical activity. Also, FAA makes the final decision if Parachute operations can be conducted safely and efficiently at the Airport. We have also conveyed to the Airport sponsor to develop minimum standards and policies for skydiving at the Airport depending on the review by Flight Standards.

Regards,
Robert Lee
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