

A TALE OF TWO CITIES -- AND TWO STATES

In December, the Maryland state aviation operating authority decided to create an aviation roundtable for the communities around BWI-Thurgood Marshall Airport in Baltimore. It took them three months. No elected official grabbed off the new organization for their own benefit. No internal factions within the airport operating authority obstructed the formation of the roundtable. No communities insisted that they were super-special (by reason of geography or anything else) and thus entitled to more votes and power. They just got it done.

At the very first meeting on March 21, 2017, the members of the BWI Roundtable agreed to send a letter to the FAA, demanding that NextGen flight paths be rolled back until they could be studied. [https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/12545369/BWI/roundtableFAAlet%20\(1\).pdf](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/12545369/BWI/roundtableFAAlet%20(1).pdf)

The Maryland congressional delegation followed up with a letter to the FAA supporting the Roundtable. <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/12545369/BWI/congRoundLet.pdf>

Then the Governor of Maryland did the same.

Here are the minutes of the March 2017 BWI Roundtable meeting. It's an interesting read.

http://www.maacommunityrelations.com/media/client/anznoiseupdate/2017/RT_DC%20Metroplex%20BWI%20Roundtable%203.21.17%20Meeting%20Minutes_approved.pdf

What the BWI roundtable has asked for is exactly what QQS has been asking for, too. NextGen noise is different from aviation noise of the past. It doesn't matter how close you are to the airport anymore. Areas of Nassau County, for example, that are geographically far from airports are getting bombarded by NextGen noise. QQS has asked for independent studies of the effect of NextGen noise on all communities within 50 miles of airports. We are also asking for independent recommendations on a better way to measure aviation noise than the old DNL standard.

Meanwhile, back in New York, the roundtable fiasco drags on. It is 4-1/2 years since the Governor of New York promised us one roundtable for the NY metro area. After all this time, we've ended up with four roundtables for our shared airspace, two in New Jersey and two in New York. The JFK and LGA roundtables have turned out to be dysfunctional, non-representative Queens borough boards. Neither the JFK nor the LGA roundtable has been able to get a quorum. It won't matter anyway. Under the proposed bylaws, the shared airspace decisions (you know, the ones that will affect airplane noise in our communities) will be decided in secret by a small group of besties. But don't worry, the roundtable members can vote on airport parking. This is not the outcome our QQS membership fought so hard for. We are still waiting to see some leadership that will turn it around.

The contrast with Maryland is painful. We have always been supported by our Congressional delegation, from Sens. Schumer and Gillibrand on down. But where is Governor Cuomo? Where is his letter to the FAA? If the Governor of New York wanted a functioning aviation roundtable, don't you think we would have had it a long time ago? And where is our Mayor?

¹ Copied from a QQS email. Highlights added by aiREFORM.

RIKERS ISLAND AND THE GRAND REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

In the summer of 2013, the New York Times published a lengthy article about community reaction to increased aviation noise. Shortly thereafter, the Global Gateway Alliance was formed by Joe Sitt, the owner of a multi-billion-dollar real estate company. The GGA's Board of Directors is composed of many organizations that would benefit from more tourism and air traffic, such as representatives of hotels, teamsters and the building trades. Jared Kushner was a member of the GGA Board of Directors. So is our own taxpayer-funded city agency, the Economic Development Corporation.

The GGA, along with the Regional Plan Association and the Association for a Better New York, were all over the news in 2013 and 2014. Their numerous inaccurate press releases were picked up and printed as real news by quite a few press outlets in NY and other parts of the country. Joe Biden made the national news when he presented the GGA's opinion about LGA, straight out of a GGA press kit.

There is no question that the rich guys have the ear of many of our elected officials in New York, since they make large campaign donations.

We asked ourselves why these real estate billionaires and their sidekicks cared so much about promoting more air traffic in New York. Some of the answers were obvious. For example, as manufacturing jobs were offshored over the past decades, New York City's economy has increasingly relied on catering to tourists. We've seen hotels springing up suddenly in residential neighborhoods in Queens.

Now we may be seeing more pieces of the puzzle. Last month, I told you about a proposal to close the jail complex at Rikers Island and build a LGA annex on the island. Where would the Rikers prisoners go? To a number of new "community jails", coming to your neighborhood, all of which would have to be built. The new LGA would have to be built, too. Recently, we heard that the 7 train and LIRR stations at Willets Point will become a transit hub, with a light rail built to the existing LGA airport and, most likely, out to Rikers Island. The usual suspects among our elected officials are the cheerleaders -- the same ones who prevented you from having a real roundtable.

Our airspace cannot tolerate more air traffic. Our highways cannot absorb more vehicular traffic to the airports, the inevitable result of airport expansion no matter how many light rails are built. Who will be making money from these deals? My friends, I think we're being played.

The other day I received a copy of a letter to Gov. Cuomo from AM Ed Braunstein about the Rikers proposal.² It was also signed by State Senators Michael Gianaris and Toby Stavisky, as well as Assembly Members Nily Rozic, Vivian Cook, Alicia Hyndman, Ron Kim, Brian Barnwell, Ed Ra, Michael Simanowitz, Aravella Simotas, Michael DenDekker, Stacy Pheffer-Amato, Michele Titus, Michaelle Solages, Clyde Vanel, Andrew Hevesi, Francisco Moya and Catherine Nolan. I have attached a copy of the letter to this email.

When I first told you about the Rikers Island proposal, I said we expect our communities to have a seat at the table when these decisions are being made. We mean it.

² Click [here](#) to view PDF copy.

Here's something else I've said before: those billionaires may have lots of money to make campaign contributions, but each one of them has only one vote, the same as each one of us. And we vote.

REP. GRACE MENG REINTRODUCES THE QUIET COMMUNITIES ACT

In 2015, Rep. Grace Meng introduced the Quiet Communities Act. The idea behind the legislation was that aviation noise and pollution are environmental and public health problems. They should be under the jurisdiction of the EPA, not the FAA.

Years ago, the EPA had an Office of Noise Abatement and Control. Funding was taken away from the ONAC during the Reagan administration. QQS agrees with Rep. Meng that public health and the environment are not appropriate jobs for the FAA. Sen. Schumer agrees, too, because he introduced a version of the Quiet Communities Act in the Senate.

Last week, Rep. Meng reintroduced the Quiet Communities Act into the House of Representatives. I am attaching a copy of the bill.³ It calls for the Office of Noise Abatement and Control to be funded again at the EPA.

Current co-sponsors of Rep. Meng's bill include Reps. Karen Bass (D-CA), Michael Capuano (D-MA), Joe Crowley (D-NY), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Mike Quigley (D-IL), Kathleen Rice (D-NY), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Adam Smith (D-WA), Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Tom Suozzi (D-NY).

Thanks to Reps Meng, Crowley and Suozzi. The other Congressional co-sponsors represent many of our sister community advocacy organizations in the Quiet Skies Coalition.

WELCOME TO QQS, FRESH MEADOWS NORTH

In 2015, residents of northern Fresh Meadows began to get unprecedented aviation noise from LGA arrivals and departures. Several of them started an organization called Clear Sky Fresh Meadows/Bayside. They have gone door to door to talk to their neighbors and have attended many public meetings to get information. Clear Sky now has 95 very active members in Fresh Meadows.

I am happy to tell you that Clear Sky is joining forces with QQS. All Clear Sky members have joined Queens Quiet Skies. We will work together from now on. Welcome!! We are glad to have you with us.

A NEW ARTICLE ABOUT THE IMPACT OF NOISE

³ Click [here](#) for the 5/22/2017 Press Release; click [here](#) for a PDF copy of the bill.

Prof. Arline Bronzaft is one of the country's most respected and influential thinkers and teachers about noise in our environment. She's also one of our NYC colleagues in this movement. Dr. Bronzaft has written a new article about the impact of noise on our environment and people. Here is a link to the article:

[Impact of Noise on Health: The Divide between Policy and Science⁴](#)

=====

PLANE SENSE AND 60 MINUTES

Plane Sense 4 LI is campaigning to have the 60 Minutes TV news show do a national story about increased aviation noise. They've asked their members to contact the 60 Minutes staff to make that suggestion. We can support them by doing the same. Here's the information from Plane Sense:

The phone # 212-975-2006. The email is <mailto:60m@cbsnews.com>

=====

I will write again soon to give you notice of some public meetings that will take place in June and July, as well as other news. Thanks for everything you do to support our fight for quieter skies.

Janet

⁴ ai-RCHIVE copy at: <http://aireform.com/resources/ai-rchive-2017-05-12-impact-of-noise-on-health-the-divide-between-policy-and-science-14p/>