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NEWS Highlights City Edition

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October 29, 2010 *Southwest News-Herald - City*

Midway Noise Commission Gives Updates

By TASHA L. CLOPTON-STUBBS

The Midway Noise Compatibility Commission held the last of its quarterly meetings on Oct. 21 at the Marriott Hotel at Midway.

The Commission, formed in 1996 to oversee noise remediation of residences and schools near Midway Airport, is comprised of representatives from five Chicago wards, the Chicago Department of Aviation, representatives from Cook County Board President Todd Stroger's office and eight suburbs affected by the noise at Midway.

Homes within a noise contour — a curved area determined in 2004 by the Federal Aviation Administration — determined to have a Day/Night Average Sound Level or DNL of 65 or higher qualify to be fitted for noise reduction under the Residential Sound Insulation Program (RSIP) at no charge.

One goal of the meeting was to update the Commission on the progress of work to be completed on previously approved projects.

All 41 schools approved in the noise contour have had sound insulation completed, and though contracts have not been finalized, four will soon be awarded for work on homes that were deemed eligible during the 2009 program year.

Since its 1996 inception through April of this year, work has been completed on 5,750 homes.

The meeting's other purpose was to approve 703 homes for sound insulation in the 2011 project year.

Currently, insulation work is beginning on homes from the 2009 program year. Owners of homes that were approved for the 2010 project year will receive notices for briefings within the next couple of weeks, but can only attend by invitation only.

"We do that because we're very specific about the blocks," noted Aaron Frame, Assistant Commissioner of Noise Abatement with the Chicago Department of Aviation.

While the Commission authorized insulating of some homes that were not technically part of eligible blocks, some residents were troubled to find that their homes were not included in the noise contour. Adding to their discontent was the knowledge that neighbors just a block away were.

One resident complained about the rejection of a petition from the 6700 block of South Kolmar, reminding the Commission that the next block was approved.

Chairman Thomas Baliga noted that trying to change the FAA contour guidelines would literally take an act of Congress. Doing so would affect all states, and that there's "a high probability, if you look at the history of what's happened around Midway Airport, it's going to shrink."

To date, 5,570 homes have been insulated for sound.

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Plans are under way to begin talks with airlines for funding of the 2012 program year.

Proposed 2011 meeting dates of the Commission are Jan. 27, April 28, July 28 and Oct. 27. All meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Marriott, 6520 S. Cicero Ave., in Bedford Park.

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