



**CALTRAIN CENTRALIZED EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE  
AND OPERATIONS FACILITY  
MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING  
AGENDA**

San Jose City Hall  
200 E. Santa Clara, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rm. T-847

**Wednesday, October 22, 2008**

**6:00 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of July 23, 2008
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
5. STAFF REPORT
6. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT
7. COMMITTEE REPORT
9. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Improvements at Stockton Avenue Grade Crossing Closure M. Bouchard
  - b. 2009 Meeting Schedule N. McKenna
8. OLD BUSINESS
  - a. Screeching Tracks/Lubricator Maintenance M. Bouchard
  - b. Approval of Revised Bylaws M. Smith
  - c. Neighborhood Outreach/Online Survey C. Dunn
10. ANNOUNCEMENTS
11. ADJOURN

Members: Michael Smith, *Chair*-Shasta-Hanchett Park; Chris Escher-Arena, Sally Logothetti-Garden Alameda, Elizabeth Monley-College Park, Pierluigi Oliverio-San Jose City Council



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**Caltrain Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility (CEMOF)  
Monitoring Committee  
San Jose City Hall, 200 E. Santa Clara, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, San Jose, CA**

**August 12, 2008  
Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chris Escher (Arena), Elizabeth Monley (College Park), Sally Logothetti (Garden Alameda), Mike Smith (Shasta/Hanchett Park)

**Members Absent:** Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio (San Jose City Council)

**Staff Present:** Michelle Bouchard, Christine Dunn, Martha Martinez, Rona Rios

**Attendees:** Ben Tripousis (City of San Jose), Francis Reyes (City of San Jose), Mike Riepe

Chair Mike Smith called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of April 23, 2008 were approved (Escher/Logothetti).

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**STAFF REPORT**

There was no report. The updated membership roster was distributed.

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

There was no report.

**EVALUATION OF HOTLINE CALLS**

Chair Smith thought it would be a good idea for the committee to go back and take a look at the calls received on the hotline telephone number. Each month the committee receives a report that outlines the calls received but not the findings.

Rona Rios, Customer Service Manager, handed out the overview assessment requested by the committee.

The one page overview outlines the calls and the underlying issues received from December 2007 through June 2008, broken down by quarter. There were 19 communications – one received through the hotline call number and 18

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through the website. The common themes were squeaking tracks, bell noise, bell lights and idling noise.

In regards to the findings and follow up, Sally Logothetti asked if the callers asked for follow up or they just wanted to report it or is it Ms. Rios' determination. Ms. Rios responded that the callers did not ask for follow up.

Mr. Escher asked what would require a response to the caller. Ms. Rios responded if the finding requires action back to the caller.

Chair Smith mentioned that bells are not necessarily a follow up for customer service. Christine Dunn, Public Information Officer responded that Ms. Rios does call or email the person back acknowledging their communication.

Michelle Bouchard, Director, Rail Operations said that bell ringing is an actionable item.

Ms. Rios believes the system is working. She receives daily contact from hotline support staff even if there is no calls/emails received from center one.

Mr. Escher was surprised at the number of complaints. He thought they might have gone up. He suggested that this may not be the best way to get information. People are still unhappy and there continues to be grumbings from other neighbors.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH**

Mr. Escher stated that the current information system works but is it doing what we want it to do? He believes that what the committee is aiming for is a system that gives a meaningful view into the scope, nature, and specifics of neighbors' issues.

Mr. Escher worries that the hotline technique, while it does do something; it leaves him with more questions than answers. There are no useful metrics from it. The hotline does not show in total what the neighborhood thinks.

As a result he would like to suggest another way of getting neighborhood input in addition to the hotline.

The hotline system (as others) may not be a specifically useful device, it does tend to give extra credence to cranky people, who can be overrepresented. It also dis-empowers people who don't get around to calling or don't believe that the hotline will do anything.

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Mr. Escher would like to ask the affected neighbor what they experience, when they experience it, and what it's like, not just have the neighbor call when he has a problem. On-line surveys are now an easy and simple way of reaching out to an identified group of people.

The problem in doing it in a situation like this is getting a group identified. Mr. Escher believes the Shasta Hanchett and College Park Neighborhood Associations lists are a good and easy way to start on this. While it is not perfect, it would be a better solution than those calling since it would be more representative.

Mr. Escher's recommendation would be to use the neighborhood associations email lists from their websites.

Ms. Logothetti likes Mr. Escher's idea of approaching the data from a different point is interesting but she isn't sure what the objective is. She said that if the survey is successful and more data is obtained, it is still in a vacuum unless there is a defined parameter for the data. There should be a benchmark used as a starting point. Also understand if it represents a concern or if it represents a bigger blip on the chart. She thinks what happens after the data is collected is almost as important as the process of collecting it.

Mr. Escher sees this as moving from one blunt tool to less blunt tool. He does not want to suggest that things are bad and we are not hearing about it.

Mr. Mike Riepe, public member, said that the idea of the survey is interesting for a number of reasons. He said having data is helpful but having more data is better, but it is also not necessarily true that the data has to be proveably quantitative. The data used now is antidotal and useful for this committee. If the caller is getting back the answer that no action is required, it would be more helpful if they were told that the call numbers would be presented to a committee for discussion. There is enough data to keep the committee to conform to the larger pictures that the committee is working on. The most useful data to obtain from a survey would be geographic information. It would be good to know what is the boundary of the problem area that is bothering people. The people who are calling are disgruntled because it is affecting them the most.

Elizabeth Monley said that there is still a very large portion of the neighborhood that does not have a computer. She has personally gone around and spoken to people. Having a survey is good for the information that we will get but there are questions that can ask the person what they would rate on a scale. She

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would also like to see a survey that can be printed and distributed at a general meeting.

Chair Smith asked if Caltrain has an issue with them doing a survey or perhaps review the survey.

Ms. Dunn responded that staff can review the questions asked.

Mr. Escher said it would be better if the questions are designed by the provider. Chair Smith added that staff would likely be more bias.

Ms. Dunn mentioned that the last slide in the handout shows the survey being done before the next meeting.

Chair Smith said they can create a subcommittee to create the survey to make the approval.

Ms. Dunn asked how the survey would be distributed. Mr. Escher said the simplest would be to send an email to Shasta Hanchett Park and College Park Neighborhood group directing them to go to the website.

Ms. Logothetti asked who would be responsible for the data received. Mr. Escher responded that the survey application automatically provides the results.

Ms. Logothetti would like to see what happens but she is cautionary to being wedded to any of the results. The results may be totally obvious. If it generates something different then we will have to think about what we want to do with it.

Chair Smith said that there wouldn't be any commitments made up front to those taking the survey.

Chair Smith would like to have the survey to review at the next committee meeting.

Ms. Bouchard said that there should be a point of contact designated for this project

Ms. Logothetti would like this item to go back to the committee.

Mr. Escher volunteered to be the point of contact.

Ms. Monley asked how the questions are going to be developed on the survey.

Mr. Escher said that Caltrain has staff that may know since they have experience.

Ms. Bouchard said that they will have to work collaboratively. She knows what operations feel the issues are but there may be other issues based geographically.

Ms. Dunn will find out what resources are available and will contact Mr. Escher to develop the survey.

Ms. Bouchard is concerned with the timing of the resources available. Mr. Escher is okay with delaying this to make sure that the survey is done right.

This item will be continued at the next committee meeting.

#### **IMPACT OF TRUCK BOLSTER REPAIR**

Ms. Bouchard reported that on May 29, 2008 defects were discovered in some rail cars that caused an inspection of the entire fleet of 110 cars.

This was accomplished overnight and discovered 19 cars that had defective bolsters in the truck of the car. Fifteen cars were taken out of service and five cars are now returned to service.

The neighbors have come to the facility to sight see. There was a large crane at the facility. The major function that has happened at the facility is the truck being taken apart to remove the bolster. This has been done within the shop on the second track between noon and eight.

The defect is in the entire fleet of this vintage, which are 20 cars. There are an additional 21 bolsters that will be fixed but have not shown any stress cracks.

#### **SCREECHING TRACKS/LUBRICATOR MAINTENANCE**

Ms. Bouchard reported that she has reiterated to the Union Pacific (UP) that they are responsible for maintaining the lubricator on Track 1 and they are doing that. We are dependent on the UP to maintain.

A noise expert has been hired to do some analysis. Registering machines are used that register the noise level and type of noise that is emanating. There is about two weeks of data that has been obtained. Each of the trains passing by is a sound file. The microphones are set up to register the train noise. Staff is trying to characterize the noises as ones that that could be mitigated by lubrication and others that are rail squeal.

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The sound files will be categorized to determine what type of lubricant would be appropriate if different to what is being used now. All three tracks are being studied. She is waiting for the study results which just went out and will report back.

**APPROVAL OF REVISED BYLAWS**

Chair Smith said that it has been about two years that the committee approved the change to the bylaws.

Chair Smith said Martha Martinez, JPB Secretary simplified the draft which now allows the appointment of an alternate and also allows the JPB and VTA to make an appointment that does not have to be a board member. The JPB has approved the revised bylaws.

Ms. Martinez said that she has been working with Jim Lawson from VTA who has also been instrumental in having this item move forward to the City of San Jose City Council.

The motion (Logothetti /Escher) to approve the revised bylaws passed unanimously.

**TRAIN WASH OPERATION AT NIGHT  
ENGINE RUN-UP/BELL RINGING BEYOND SOUNDWALL**

Chair Smith reminded everyone that it was discussed at the last meeting to close these two items.

Ms. Bouchard noted that it has been business as usual. The bell ringing procedure was changed. The ringing is done at the beginning of the move and not during the whole process.

The train wash continues to wash at night due to the lack feedback on the blower.

Ms. Monley asked for feedback by sending out a last call email to neighbors and received two responses. One response stated that even though he sleeps with windows open he hasn't been bothered by CEMOF noise but does however hear the rail screeching from slow moving train. This is occurring less frequently than before, about 10 to 20 percent of the time with a short duration. The second response stated that he had not heard train washing noise but engine idling late at night as well as the rail cars screeching and banging which wakes them up. Ms. Monley said the trains colliding noise has been occurring in her neighborhood long before CEMOF opened (close to Linkage Yard).

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These items will be closed. They will show up in this quarterly report but will then be shown as resolved and then disappear on the next quarterly report.

Chair Smith noted that Ms. Rios should add the time on the idling noise complaints.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next meeting will be October 22 at 6 p.m.

Chair Smith said the next meeting is the last of the year so next years meeting calendar will be presented. Also, officers will be elected in January.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.



**CALTRAIN CENTRALIZED EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE  
AND OPERATIONS FACILITY  
MONITORING COMMITTEE**

**MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2009**

Wednesday, January 28	6:00 PM
Wednesday, April 22	6:00 PM
Wednesday, July 22	6:00 PM
Wednesday, October 28	6:00 PM

All meetings are held at San Jose City Hall, 200 E. Santa Clara,  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room T-847.

Additional meetings may be scheduled by the Chair during the  
year.

## CEMOF Customer Contacts – July-September 2008

### CEMOF Customer Contacts for July 2008

Date Received	Time	Consumer Name	Comment summary
07/15/08	12:05am	R. Hagen	Noise.
07/25/08	10:39pm	K. Gutknecht	Noise.

### CEMOF Customer Contacts for August 2008

8/18/08	12:00 PM	B. Gromm	Bad odor in the area.
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### CEMOF Customer Contacts for September 2008

Date Received	Time	Consumer Name	Comment summary
9/03/08	2:49PM	G. Barry	Noise at night.
9/04/08	11:48AM	K. Samatua	Noise at 3AM.