



Northeast Ohio Flight Information Exchange (NEOFIX)

Policy Group Stakeholder Meeting

Thursday, May 25, 2023

Group Lead: Stuart Mendel, PhD, Baldwin Wallace University Project Director

Description: Identify, understand and review relevant policies at the local, state, and Federal level and identify any recommendations or observations for discussion at the regional level.

Outcome(s): An inventory of relevant policies and recommendations for local / regional government to discuss:

- Objective 1: An inventory of policies
- Objective 2: Proposals for regional stakeholders

Meeting Agenda:

- What relevant policies can we identify at the local, state, and federal level (in that order)?
- How are these policies relevant to our region and our stakeholders?
- What policies and policy recommendations do we need to explore?
- When is the next meeting date for the Integration and Planning group?

Meeting Minutes:

Stakeholders exchanged the bulletized ideas during the discussion.

- Wants to identify, understand, and view drone flying policies and rules. Proposes creating a paper for preferred access and addressing the needs of the user community. Observes that the current policies may have been created for prior election events.
- Took time to identify areas within the park system where drones can be flown safely. Allows drone flights over golf courses from November to March 15th. Focuses on conservation and the protection of natural resources. Approaches drone permissions thoughtfully, allowing flights in areas that don't endanger habitat or wildlife. Mentions the City of Cleveland's blanket approach in allowing drone flights.
- Considers discussing drone policies with the NEO Law Directors Association, covering all 65 municipalities.
- Policies are based on Ohio case law and FAA guidance, regulating flights up to 400 feet.

- Reached out to local FAA officials and received no negative feedback about their policy.
- Drone flights can be conducted without a permit in designated areas of the metro parks.
- Safe-to-ditch concept is open for research and consideration.
- Plans to approach planners first before involving law directors.
- Interested in learning from successful cases where drone flight prohibitions were lifted in other cities.
- Concerned about how local public adheres to policies and how law enforcement enforces them.
- Notes that the ban on drone flights in downtown Cleveland is a legislative action and not a temporary measure. There is confusion about the policy on drone use in downtown Cleveland.
- Refers to Chapter 490, which prohibits launching unmanned craft in most of downtown Cleveland.
- Finds the policy confusing and conflicting with FAA rules: https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/cleveland/latest/cleveland_oh/0-0-0-44931
 - Anyone who launches, operates, or causes to be launched or operated, any unmanned aircraft system within the limits of Cleveland, Ohio, must be able to present, immediately upon request by any member of the police or fire force, a current certificate of aircraft registration issued by the Federal Aviation Administration for the unmanned aircraft system.
 - No person shall launch, operate, or cause to be launched or operated, any unmanned aircraft system in any airspace within or over. A five (5) mile radius of Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.
 - A five (5) mile radius of Burke Lakefront Airport.
- Continue working with Mark, Kevin, Dan, and Tom to review the city policy.
- Provide more information about how Fort Worth approaches their policy next month.
- Highlights the issue of conflicting information and varying rules in different jurisdictions.
- Suggests summarizing the policy for all locations to avoid confusion.
- Believes that the restricted areas are determined by the FAA. Proposes going back to the city council to update the ordinance, as it was written in 2016.
- Identifies sticking points regarding data collection and the identification of plants and animals.

Next Meeting. The next group meeting is pending in June. The in-person group meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2023, at Baldwin Wallace University Knowlton Center, Second Floor, from noon – 2:30 PM. Attendees were encouraged to register and invite one additional stakeholder to register via the following site: <https://bw-centers-tech-partnerships.org/event-june-21-2023-uncrewed-aerial-system-uas-operators-and-industry-stakeholder-engagement/>