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DeKalb County News: Residents Air Concerns About Weight Violations At DeKalb Airport

Wednesday, June 28 2006 @ 12:48 PM EDT
Contributed by: [Editor](#)

by Daniel Jacobs

For members of PDK Watch, a citizens group that monitors the DeKalb- Peachtree airport, winning the open-records lawsuit Feltus v. DeKalb last year was only the start. In a meeting last Thursday the group discussed the information gained as a result of the lawsuit.

“Now we have ammunition,” said Susan Gouinlock, a member of the legal team that argued to have the information released. “We are not an ignorant populace any more, because we have information. If you have an airplane flying over your head and waking you up at three in the morning, now you can go out and find out who owns it and how often they fly that path.”

Because of the lawsuit, members of PDK Watch now have access to the airport’s flight records and information regarding the airport’s weight limit.

“We know on average 200 airplane operations in excess of the 66,000 lb weight limit have operated out of PDK in a month,” said Gouinlock. “The weight limit is out the window.”

Gouinlock said that the legal team has contacted the Federal Aviation Administration about the weight limit violations, but that so far the FAA has failed to take action.

“If they do not [enforce the weight limit], we will sue,” said Gouinlock.

At the meeting members of PDK Watch announced that on March 31, the organization officially became PDK Watch, Inc. According to Ron Dennis, the new

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chairman of PDK Watch, Inc., the move came in order to increase the "credibility, durability, and visibility," of PDK Watch.

The non-profit corporation currently has a seven-member board, but it will eventually expand to 12 members.

Larry Foster, a member of PDK Watch, spoke at the meeting about the work on PDK's new master plan. A master plan is intended to forecast an airport's future needs, and the FAA requires it in order for an airport to be eligible for federal grants. The DeKalb Board of Commissioners has required public participation in the creation of the master plan, but Foster said that residents are having a hard time gaining a voice in the process.

"We need to press to get our legitimate rights as citizens and be involved in the planning of the airport," said Foster.

Mickey Feltus, who initially filed the Feltus v. DeKalb lawsuit, also spoke at the meeting. Feltus is moving out of the area affected by PDK airport, but he plans to stay involved in PDK Watch.

"From day one our biggest fear is that PDK will turn into Hartsfield North," said Feltus. "Ask your county commissioners, 'What have you done to prevent this from being Hartsfield North,' and see what they say. Because if it turns into Hartsfield North we can all go home."

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