

PDK Watch Newsletter, August, 1999

Community Prevails in August Hearing, Renewed Effort Needed in September

Thanks to the efforts of citizens who filled the auditorium at the August 2 rezoning hearing, who wrote letters to the Board of Commissioners (BOC), and who worked hard to get the message out, the BOC voted to defer the decision on the land use change and rezoning of airport property for an airplane hangar until the September cycle of hearings. The Commissioners heard the argument about the inaccurate and incomplete applications, and they want more information concerning the issue and assurance that the property is identified properly.

The applications included a legal description of the property that did not match the maps used at the three public hearings for the Community Council, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Commissioners. In fact, the legal description is for a larger piece of property than shown on the accompanying maps. There is fear the development encroaches into the adjacent buy out area, especially since the applications identified the land as being purchased through the 150 Noise Compatibility Program. The Commissioners want the buy out property used as greenspace not airport development.

Another major problem involved the land use designation for the property. The Planning Department recommended withdrawal for the application for a land use change since the map in their department showed the land having the land use designation being sought. However, the land use maps adopted with the Comprehensive Plan in 1996 and locked securely in the vault in the Finance Department show a land use of low density residential. This means a land use change is required prior to a zoning change.

Other problems: The applications did not contain the proper authorizations signed by the owner of the property for any change in land use or zoning. The applications stated the property is in a runway protection zone (RPZ), but no building is allowed in the RPZ for safety reasons.

We must continue to write letters, attend hearings, and inform neighbors.

§ See the enclosed list of names and addresses.

§ Mark your calendars for the Planning Commission hearing Tuesday, September 7, at 7:00 P.M. and the BOC hearing Tuesday, September 28, at 7:00 P.M.

§ Get your neighbors to join you in the opposition to airport expansion.

Law Department Does Not Write Requested Ordinance

While the community was awaiting a promised ordinance prohibiting regularly scheduled passenger and cargo service at PDK, DeKalb County's law department, with guidance from the FAA, was instead writing an ordinance that would gut the

longstanding 1976 county ordinance prohibiting planes of over 75,000 pounds from using the airport (except with special prior permission). The proposed new ordinance would give the Airport Director free reign to allow any planes he wants, with no effective controls over such actions.

No new weight limit ordinance is needed at PDK. Rather, Airport Director Lee Remmel needs to enforce the existing ordinance (as previous airport directors have done). Toward that end, the County Commissioners should pass a procedural clarification, stipulating the special circumstances under which the Airport Director may allow planes of over 75,000 pounds to use the airport -- on an exceptional basis only.

The larger issue of passing an ordinance prohibiting regularly scheduled passenger and cargo service was addressed by the law department in one inadequate and unenforceable sentence in its proposed new weight limit ordinance. The time has come for the commissioners to revisit the carefully drafted 1996 "compromise" ordinance proposal prohibiting regularly scheduled service. This proposal was never substantively critiqued by the county law department.

Write your commissioners urging them to pass an ordinance, with effective enforcement provisions, that clearly states that there will be no scheduled passenger or cargo service at PDK.

County's Staff Justifies PDK Watch's Position on Land Value at PDK

Less than 18 months ago at a March 5 public hearing the results of the Cost/Benefit study for DeKalb-Peachtree Airport were presented. CEO Liane Levetan supported the \$60,000 per acre that the consultant, RKG, Inc., used in their analysis as the value of airport property. PDK Watch challenged that land value since just a few years prior the county had purchased land adjacent to the airport for a health clinic at \$200,000 per acre.

Recently it was disclosed that the airport staff has reached an agreement with the United States government on the value of some airport property that the federal government (IRS) will purchase. The agreed upon appraisal value is \$594,000 for 1.4774 acres. That is \$402,057.67 per acre -- an incredible 570% increase in less than two years!

Ask CEO Levetan What She Has Done to Keep Her Promise

CEO Liane Levetan says the county will not expand the airport and will not allow regularly scheduled passenger or cargo service at PDK. Write and request her to specify the steps she has taken to make sure this promise is kept. Her address is 1300 Commerce Drive, Decatur GA, 30030.

Reminder: Call 770-936-5442 to report intrusive noise from PDK Airport.

PDK Watch Needs Your Support More Than Ever!

Due to a number of recent issues and concerns about the operation of DeKalb-Peachtree Airport, PDK Watch has incurred more costs for mailings and fliers. One way to fight airport expansion is to make a check payable to Sven O. Lovegren and note that it is for PDK Watch. Then please mail to:

Sven O. Lovegren
Attn.: PDK Watch
2331 Annapolis Court
Atlanta GA 30345