

PDK Watch Newsletter, June, 1997

Next Meeting

PDK Watch will meet Thursday, June 5, at 7:30 P.M. at Shallowford Presbyterian Church on Shallowford Road between I-85 and Briarcliff Road. Mr. Ray Kemper of the Chamber of Commerce will give a status report on the International Village adjacent to PDK Airport.

Wake Up Call

Several activities are underway that should cause homeowners to pause, reflect and take action now before rezonings and airport expansion impact residential areas.

At the January 1997 airport advisory board meeting CEO Levetan adamantly stated the Commission policy that there will be no expansion of PDK Airport. She further stated that PDK is not a commercial airport. The acting airport director indicated he gets two or three requests a month from people wanting to bring in large charter type airplanes for regional commuters. (This is why PDK Watch has requested the Commission to adopt an ordinance clearly stating that PDK will not become a commercial airport. CEO Levetan and her staff have successfully stalled the request to codify the policy she publicly proclaims.)

A further look at the facts indicates there is reason to be wary. More than three years ago our county officials purchased land next to the airport to build a health facility. The wisdom of building a health facility in the middle of property known to be heavily impacted by the airport noise, which certainly adds to the taxpayer cost in noise proofing, seemed strange, but a health facility was better than more PDK expansion. Construction on this facility has yet to begin.

In Spring 1996 when the Comprehensive Land Use Map was being reviewed prior to its adoption, one citizen noted that residential property along Clairmont Road adjacent to PDK Airport had been given an industrial designation. This change was pointed out to Commissioners Scott and Yates, and the land use designation was restored to residential. This was clearly an attempt to usher in airport expansion without the usual request for land use change and public notice.

A couple of months later some elected and appointed county officials tried to rush a rezoning request through our Board of Commissioners that would have given Beverly Lance, a private developer, use of airport property along Clairmont Road. This land is inside the back yards of a block of existing homes. Chamblee's City Manager and a council member strongly supported this use as good for the community even though the property is outside their city boundary.

In Fall 1996 it became known that Beverly Lance was attempting a buy out of residential property along Clairmont Road adjacent to PDK Airport. This property is also adjacent to the property purchased for the health facility and is the same property on which the attempt to quietly change the land use designation had been made earlier. When one airport advisory board member expressed concern to the airport director that this proposed purchase would result in this land being converted to airport use (expansion) and become a “foot in the door” for commercial airport service, the director indicated he did not think this would happen. He did not say this could not happen.

At the January 1997 airport advisory board meeting when a neighbor asked what Mr. Lance was planning for this property, the acting airport director stated that Mr. Lance is an investor and a developer and what he does within the law is his prerogative, and it is no business of the airport -- he does not have to tell us what he plans to do. He further stated that Mr. Lance could request a through-the-fence operation for airport activity. When asked if this expansion of the airport would be in violation of the long standing policy about airport expansion, the response was to ask the Commissioners.

Subsequently, under the open records act of Georgia, a letter dated July 1996 from DeKalb County’s planning department to the airport director concerning the rezoning of the property was obtained. It stated that Mr. Lance is securing the land for storing, fueling, and maintaining aircraft and indicated that the FAA has already granted access to the airport. Remember that this is the same FAA that pays for airport expansion at PDK in the name of safety.

Ever since the 1988 airport expansion that encouraged more jet traffic at PDK, we have feared commercial passenger and freight service because of what it has done to established communities. All we want to do is protect our investment through honest discussions of airport expansion plans. When the County and the FAA are out to expand, we recall that PDK is already larger than LaGuardia in New York City and think it is wise for neighborhoods to be involved now.

Task List for PDK Watch

PDK Watch is forming a list which identifies its areas of concern. A final task list will be developed and adopted at the June 5 meeting. Please review the following list and bring your comments/suggestions to the June meeting or send them to David Green, 2627 Varner Drive, Atlanta GA 30345.

1. Hold the line on airport expansion.
2. Keep the airport noncommercial.
3. Institute and implement an
 effective noise abatement policy.
4. Institute and implement effective

neighborhood participation in
airport activities.

5. Insure that PDK Airport honors its
mission statement.

Citizen Opportunity

The Airport Advisory Board will meet at 6:30 P.M. Wednesday, May 28, at PDK Airport. Citizens are allowed to make comments at the end of the meeting. On the agenda is the "Good Neighbor Policy," which gives citizens information on airport matters.

Support PDK Watch

To support the printing and mailing of the PDK Watch Newsletter send your check payable to Sven O. Lovegren (indicate it is for PDK Watch) to:

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For information contact David Green, PDK Watch Coordinator, at 770-908-1954.