

## **PDK Watch Newsletter, June, 1999**

Developers filed a request in DeKalb County to change the land use and the zoning on residential property to build an airplane hangar. If the request is granted, airport operations would expand into an area bought out with funding from the FAA's Noise Abatement Program. Not only would this expansion result in more planes, more noise, and more pollution, it would also extend the airport farther into the community.

The property, located between West Hardee Avenue and Young Road just off Clairmont near the new health center, is a lovely greenspace with many beautiful, large hardwoods. The proposed development would diminish this natural buffer and reduce its effectiveness against pollution. Visit the site, see the old growth trees, and note the nearby residences.

It is time to be heard. Say "NO" to the expansion of the airport. To protect our community here is what we must do.

ØWrite the Planning Commissioners (addresses enclosed) before they meet asking them to deny this request.

ØAttend their meeting Wednesday, July 14, at 7:00 P.M. at the Maloof Auditorium in Decatur to show your opposition to expansion of the airport onto land purchased for noise abatement.

The Board of Commissioners will make the final decision at their August 2 hearing.

### **66,000-Pound Weight Limit is the Policy**

It is appalling that CEO Liane Levetan continues to ignore a long standing DeKalb County policy that sets a weight limit of 66,000 pounds on aircraft using PDK Airport. This weight limit was the basis for several PDK studies, it has been approved by the Board of Commissioners on several occasions, it was explicitly confirmed by the FAA when it funded the runway extension and, it was made part of an 11th Circuit Court ruling.

In 1987 DeKalb County submitted an environmental assessment to the FAA as part of their request to extend the main runway at PDK. This assessment stated, "The runway's weight bearing capacity is sufficient for the operation of this aircraft [Gulfstream II/III] at gross weight (65,000 lbs.)." The FAA funded a runway extension with full awareness of this weight limitation. In its review the FAA stated, "The runway extension is neither designed nor intended to accommodate operations by aircraft larger than the ones presently using the airport . . . The runway would not be strengthened and aircraft would not be allowed to depart with a gross takeoff weight above the current limitation of 66,000 pounds."

At that point a citizens group sued the FAA. In justifying its decision against the plaintiffs the 11th Circuit Court said, "Furthermore, the proposal expressly maintains the current weight limitation of 66,000 pounds. The proposed runway extension is not designed to accommodate operation by aircraft larger than the ones currently using PDK. Therefore, the petitioners' fear that the runway will cause a significant impact because of the introduction of larger types of aircraft and heavier loads is unjustified." By the way, this extension made the length of the runway the same as the length of the commuter runway proposed for Hartsfield.

In 1991 Chief Executive Officer Manual Maloof confirmed to the Noise Abatement Advisory Committee the Board of Commissioners' policy, "that there shall be no lengthening, increase of weight-bearing capacity or widening of any PDK runway for any reason without an appropriate environmental document."

The 1991 Master Plan inventory says, "[Runway 2R-20L] and parallel taxiway is constructed of concrete with pavement strengths of 45,000 pounds gross single gear load, 66,000 pounds gross dual gear load, . . . "

The Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study completed in 1993 cited PDK's Noise Abatement Procedures. One of these is "Aircraft weighing more than 66,000 pounds are prohibited from normal operation at PDK. In isolated cases, the Airport Director has permitted heavier aircraft to operate on a selective basis . . . " This same procedure is included in the updated Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study of 1996. The updated study was approved by the Board of Commissioners and submitted to the FAA for certification.

As recently as June of 1999 PDK Airport information for pilots continued to use the policy-based 66,000 pounds as the limit.

This long standing policy does not go away just because some aircraft weighing more than 66,000 pounds want to use our Airport. Our CEO has sworn to enforce policies set by the Board of Commissioners, and we expect her to do so in this instance.

Here is what we must do:

- Continue sending the message, "FOLLOW THE WEIGHT LIMIT POLICY - GET THE VIOLATORS OUT OF PDK NOW" to CEO Liane Levetan, 1300 Commerce Drive, Decatur GA 30030. Be sure to send a copy of your letter to your commissioners at the same address.

- Use the 11:00 A.M. comment time at the regular Board of Commissioners meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month to give CEO Levetan the message in person.

- Get your neighbors to write also.

- Write to the newspapers or send them a copy of your letter to the CEO.

If citizens do not act on this matter now, we can rest assured that the airport users will win their fight to bring heavier aircraft to PDK, and this will inevitably lead to passenger and cargo services at PDK.

### **PDK Watch Needs Your Support**

PDK Watch is grateful to those of you who send in a check to help with the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter. To contribute to this fund, please make a check payable to Sven O. Lovegren and note on the check that it is for PDK Watch. Then please mail to:

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