

PDK Watch Newsletter, May, 2000

BOC to Vote May 9 on Expired Hangar Lease Extension

In September 1996 DeKalb County and Aviation Properties, Inc., (API) entered into a lease agreement in which API would lease approximately 3 acres of airport property for construction of a hangar for its corporate aircraft department. The airport's Master Plan did not include this hangar and no environmental analysis was done.

In August 1997 API's Beverly Lance sent a letter as PDK Projects Manager to people on PDK Airport's T-Hangar waiting list offering space in his firm's hangar facility. API's lease specifically said it could not sell or provide tie downs to the public.

Airport Director Lee Rimmel wrote DeKalb County's Public Works Director in September 1998 requesting permission to grade property outside the 1968 fence to allow for construction of API's hangar. This property was purchased through the noise abatement program and is currently designated as greenspace.

Last summer PDK Airport announced the sale of airport property to the IRS for more than \$402,000 per acre. This means that API's \$250 monthly lease payment on 3.43 acres yields DeKalb County a 0.22% per annum return on a \$1.37million property.

The Board of Commissioners (BOC) voted to rezone land at PDK Airport to allow the construction of a hangar in September 1999. Hundreds of residents attending the rezoning hearing were told that the lease obligated a "Yes" vote for rezoning and outside the 1968 fence land would not be used. By the way, in a meeting prior to the hearing a member of the county's law department acknowledged the lease was poorly written.

The lease expired October 1, 1999, when the lessee, API, did not begin construction.

Last month the Airport Advisory Board was asked by Mr. Rimmel to recommend to the BOC approval of a three-year retroactive extension on the lease. The vote was tied when in a clear conflict of interest Chairman Mercer Dye, the hangar's designer and developer, voted to recommend the extension.

Recall that last month Beverly Lance's flightserv.com started offering passenger service out of PDK Airport without the airport director's knowledge or any approval from the BOC.

Now the BOC has an opportunity to say "NO" to a bad lease, to say "NO" to a sweetheart deal, and to say "NO" to airport expansion. Let them hear from you before they vote. Their address is 1300 Commerce Drive, Decatur GA 30030.

PDK Watch Rally Educates the Neighbors

More than 175 concerned citizens gathered downwind of the airport at Clairmont and West Hardee to protest PDK Airport noise and expansion on April 22, 2000. Citizens

carried homemade signs urging the airport staff to reduce night noise, stop airport expansion and stop writing sweetheart leases. Dr. Larry Foster, president of Hawthorne Civic Association, urged the citizens to get involved. He spoke of the grass roots effort to improve and preserve the quality of life and property values of our neighborhoods. The crowd responded favorably to his proposal of enacting a night noise restriction. Many in the crowd registered surprise to learn the airport director flatly refused to make the flight data available to the public. This seemed particularly disturbing since the county recently purchased a \$500,000 noise monitoring system. Larry also spoke in favor of passing an ordinance to prohibit regularly scheduled passenger or cargo service. He urged the neighbors to support turning the land bought for noise abatement purposes into a permanent green space noise buffer. One concerned citizen in the community spoke of the county failing to abide by the Georgia Sunshine (open records) law when he requested information about airport operations. (If you have had this problem, please contact PDK Watch. See e-mail address below.) Commissioner Judy Yates and State House Representative Sally Harrell also spoke to the enthusiastic crowd.

Greenspace

In April 2000 the BOC passed a resolution to designate the buyout property between Clairmont Road and the airport as greenspace. PDK Watch applauds their action.

Flight Data on Internet

PDK Airport has a monitoring system (ANOMS) that records information about flights in and out of PDK. If you would like this information available on the Internet, please contact PDK Watch (see e-mail address below).

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

PDK Watch Via E-mail

PDK Watch can be contacted by e-mail. The address: <pdkwatch@yahoo.com>.

If you want to receive information by e-mail, please e-mail your address.

PDK Watch Needs Your Support

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P.O. Box 49325

Atlanta GA 30359