

## **PDK Watch Newsletter, May, 2003**

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

Three months ago, PDK Watch was approached by Christian Cherniak, President of the PDK Airport Association, which represents over 800 general aviation pilots. Mr. Cherniak shared the PDK Airport Association's interest in preserving the present character of PDK Airport as a general aviation reliever airport that provides strong support for recreational flying and use of smaller aircraft. Toward this end, he expressed an interest in exploring whether the PDK Airport Association and PDK Watch could join together in supporting the common goal of insuring that PDK Airport never become a commercial airport with regularly scheduled passenger, cargo, or freight services.

PDK Watch also has long been concerned with insuring that PDK Airport not expand to become a commercial airport with regularly scheduled passenger, cargo, or freight services. We are convinced that such a transformation of PDK Airport would contribute to a variety of negative environmental impacts, including increased noise, disruption, fumes, and safety problems. Although PDK Watch's greatest long-term concerns relate to the possibility that PDK might become a commercial airport with more and more larger, heavier aircraft, we also feel that more work can and must be done to decrease the aircraft disruption by smaller planes and jets that are currently using PDK Airport. The legal issues involving the increasing number of larger aircraft using PDK airport also is a key focus of the Lawsuit (see the discussion at the end of this Newsletter).

During several productive work sessions with Mr. Cherniak, long-standing members of PDK Watch were able to explain important community concerns about PDK Airport, while he, in turn shared some of the concerns of the PDK Airport Association. A major focus of PDK Watch's discussions revolved around assessing airport related problems and the impact of noise on our neighborhoods.

As we compiled and categorized the problems that most

concern the PDK Airport Association and PDK Watch, we realized that we share many common goals. We realized that we could accomplish more by working together, rather than by allowing ourselves to be played off against each other by those who support PDK Airport expansion. Growing out of these discussions, we jointly developed a set of principles and action plans that we feel we can jointly support. We believe that these proposals, if adopted and implemented, would have a positive impact on the relationship between PDK Airport and the surrounding neighborhoods.

During the course of these discussions, we have been impressed by Mr. Cherniak's personal commitment to working together with us to try to solve these problems. As a result of his experiences as a pilot and an aviation instructor in Van Nuys, California--where there was a more cooperative rather than confrontational approach to relations between the airport and the surrounding community--Mr. Cherniak feels that many steps can be taken to decrease noise and aircraft disruption in the areas surrounding PDK Airport. He is currently working in conjunction with Mike Principino, a Drew Valley resident, and the PDK Tower to evaluate what specific changes might be made in flight patterns and altitudes of the non instrument (VFR) aircraft using PDK Airport.

Over the course of several work sessions involving Mr. Cherniak and PDK Watch leaders, we formulated, reviewed, and edited the Joint Statement that follows. We are in agreement that the proposals in this Statement are very positive ones and that if we can work act jointly we can have greater political influence and be more likely to achieve our key joint goal of seeing that PDK Airport does not expand into a full-scale commercial airport.

Your input and reaction to this proposed Joint Statement are very important. Please review it closely as soon as possible and e-mail your comments or questions to: [pdkwatch@yahoo.com](mailto:pdkwatch@yahoo.com), or send your comments via regular mail by June 20, 2003, at the latest to: David Green or Mickey Feltus, c/o PDK Watch, P. O. Box 49325, Atlanta, Ga. 30359.

If you support this joint statement, Please send or

email a brief statement of approval to the above addresses. Be sure to include your name and the neighborhood you live in or represent.

The following is text of the proposed Joint Statement:

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Joint Statement by the PDK Airport Association and PDK Watch on Future Policies for DeKalb Peachtree (PDK) Airport

**PREAMBLE:** The PDK Airport Association, whose members support the general aviation use of PDK Airport, and PDK Watch, whose members are committed to protecting and assuring the future of established residential neighborhoods and quality of life in the area affected by PDK Airport, agree that it is in our mutual interest to maintain PDK Airport STRICTLY as a general aviation reliever airport, which we define as an airport that primarily services small, light aircraft, and that prohibits regularly scheduled passenger, cargo, or freight services, as in Fed Ex, Delta Connection, UPS, DHL, or any feeder services.

The goal of the statement that follows is to highlight and promote points of common concern among general aviation and community interests relating to PDK Airport. Our mutual goal of avoiding airport expansion that would be detrimental to our common interests has brought our two organizations together in the conviction that positive means can be found to accomplish these shared objectives. Toward this end, we urge the adoption and implementation of certain principles, procedures, and ordinances by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, including, but not limited to, the following:

I. General Aviation Concerns:

1. We are committed to insuring that PDK Airport remain STRICTLY a general reliever airport that supports and sustains infrastructure necessary to service and accommodate small light aircraft. In this regard, we are opposed to any types of activity or expansion that might force out small, light aircraft.

2. In order to allow the Airport Advisory Board to focus its attention on more substantive policy matters, routine renewals of standardized leases for T-hangars of the current size (as of March 2003) at PDK Airport that house small aircraft should not require review by the Airport Advisory Board.
3. No PDK Airport development or activity changes, including the introduction of new fuel depots, should be approved by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners without being openly considered and complying with all environmental requirements of federal, state, and local law. Any such changes must also be in accordance with the DeKalb County Master Plan and the County Land Use Plan, as well as with the PDK Airport Master Plan and the Airport Layout Plan [SPECIFIC DATES NEEDED ON ALL THESE DOCUMENTS], as such plans shall be revised on a regular basis, with full public participation and input from neighborhoods and pilots.
4. DeKalb County should reaffirm its policies prohibiting the establishment of regularly scheduled passenger, cargo, or freight services at PDK Airport. In order to implement those policies in binding contractual agreements, all future leases and lease renewals granted at PDK Airport should include a provision in the lease or lease renewal prohibiting regularly scheduled passenger, cargo, or freight service.
5. If the County should ever consider making changes to the aforementioned policies prohibiting regularly scheduled passenger, cargo, or freight services at PDK Airport, at least three (3) well-advertised evening public meetings at which public comment--both verbal and written--may be presented must be held over a period of at least three months within a six (6) mile radius of the Airport.

## II. Open Records Concerns:

6. In conjunction with the DeKalb Board of Commissioners and representatives of the concerned

public, PDK Airport should develop a clear, written statement of the step-by-step procedures by which application may be made for a lease at PDK Airport and by which leases may be considered and granted. All future lease opportunities at PDK Airport should be publicly announced, and an open application process should be established and consistently followed in applying for such publicly announced lease opportunities.

7. Employees of DeKalb County should be required to provide prompt and accurate information to the PDK Association, PDK Watch, and the concerned public upon request. Such information should, following the Georgia Open Records Act procedures, be made available at reasonable rates, and the least expensive available means of accessing and securing those records should be made available to those seeking such information.

### III. Policy, Land Use, and Noise Concerns:

8. Since a crucial neighborhood concern is reducing airport noise, the PDK Airport Association and PDK Watch should apply their mutual, good faith, and ongoing best efforts to secure the adoption and implementation of the FAR Part 150 noise compatibility recommendation measures that were approved by the FAA and DeKalb County (see attached sheet or <http://pdkwatch.org/AirportNoisePolicy.htm>). In conjunction with the AAB, citizen representatives from both the PDK Association and PDK Watch should work closely and collaboratively so that the end product is a mutually acceptable joint effort.

9. The DeKalb County Board of Commissioners is strongly encouraged to give serious consideration to adopting, as expeditiously as possible, the policy statement that the PDK Airport Advisory Board unanimously approved at its July 2002 meeting as part of an official DeKalb County policy statement for PDK Airport (that policy statement is attached). Adopting a clear set of DeKalb County policy guidelines for the operations of PDK Airport will provide essential guidance and direction to those managing the airport.

10. As part of an effort to systematize flight patterns and reduce noise disruption in residential areas, we recommend that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners create a committee composed of airport administration, pilot, and neighborhood representatives that would work together to determine a set of clear visual flight landmarks that pilots can be encouraged to use as the basis for flight paths in and out of the airport, in order that noise disruption in residential areas can be minimized.

11. The land near Clairmont Road that has been purchased for noise abatement under the Part 150 program and the land near Clairmont Road that has been designated as a runway protection zone (see the attached legal descriptions and plats for the two areas) should be put in a permanent easement as greenspace that is not subject to development for any other purpose.

**CONCLUSION:** It is recognized that in making this joint request, the PDK Airport Association and PDK Watch have established and intend to continue an ongoing relationship with each other to share information and concerns.

#### **DEFEAT OF PROPOSED GLOBE LEASE AMENDMENT**

After the November 2002 approval by the PDK Airport Advisory Board of a proposed amendment to the Globe Lease property, a materially altered version of that lease amendment was brought before the DeKalb Board of Commissioners on January 28, 2003--without any indication that the provisions had been changed. PDK Watch identified a 42% increase in the size of one of the land parcels covered; a new paragraph abrogating the lease restriction on conducting "scheduled operations" from the property if other tenants of the PDK Airport should ever be granted such rights; a provision automatically authorizing approval of subleases unless the Commissioners formally acted to deny such approval within 60 days; and provisions that actually reduced the amount of money the County would make from some parts of the lease.

Decision on the lease amendment was deferred until February 11, 2003, when Commissioner Gale Walldorff

expressed herself satisfied with it but Commissioner Burrell Ellis asked for and secured a deferral. On February 25, 2003, the proposed amendment to the Globe Lease Building property was unanimously rejected by the Commissioners.

#### UPDATE ON THE LAWSUIT

Regarding the lawsuit to which many of you have generously contributed, representatives of the community continue to pursue our legal rights to obtain public records on airport activities from the FAA and DeKalb County. In addition, litigation plans also center on requiring the County and the FAA to fulfill their agreement to limit size of aircraft using PDK Airport to small general aviation planes. Fundraising efforts to support the litigation necessary to protect these vital community interests is ongoing. All contribution should go to: F.O.R. DeKalb, Inc., at P.O. Box 29604, Atlanta, GA 30359. Note that members of PDK Watch strongly support this lawsuit. We believe that the proposed Joint Statement above will strengthen our position, as well, as we work to develop more community-friendly policies at PDK Airport.

PDK Watch is also grateful to those of you who contribute toward the maintenance of our website, [www.pdkwatch.org](http://www.pdkwatch.org), and costs of Newsletter printing and mailing. To support these efforts, please make a check payable to: SVEN O. LOVEGREN and note on the check that it is for PDK WATCH. Mailing address: PDK Watch, P.O. Box 49325, Atlanta, GA 30359.