

PDK Watch Newsletter, November, 2002

Here are the most recent steps in the MARCH TOWARDS AN EXPANDED PDK AIRPORT, with no comprehensive environmental impact studies, no written airport policies or policy enforcement, and increasing pressure on residents to give up their legal and property rights.

STEP 1: April 2001--August 2002. Airport Compatible Overlay District (ACOD) and Flight Easements. PDK Airport and County Administrators repeatedly tried to get approval for Flight (Avigation) Easements, under which thousands of DeKalb County homeowners would permanently give up rights to sue the Airport for problems due to noise, pollution, etc., in exchange for one-time soundproofing of homes. Vigorous opposition to mandatory easement provisions in the ACOD proposal eventually led to the ACOD's temporary withdrawal. However, the County is preparing to mount a new public relations campaign on this issue. **KEEP ALERT** for these new efforts to gain approval for Flight Easements or for a new ACOD that could remove remaining legal checks on PDK Airport expansion and noise.

STEP 2: June 2002. Questionable Management of Subleases at PDK. At a meeting of the PDK Airport Advisory Board (an oversight group appointed by the County Commissioners and CEO), Airport Director Lee Rimmel indicated that he had not been submitting Airport subleases for prior written approval by the County Commission (even when such approval was legally required by the leases themselves) and that he did not intend to submit subleases for prior County approval in the future. Such secrecy and refusal to abide by legal lease requirements at a time of increased terrorist threat could place all of us in jeopardy and risk catastrophic County legal liability. PDK Watch believes that the County, as owner and overseer of the Airport, must pre-approve and know the names of every individual and group who acquires a sublease at the Airport, particularly during this period of heightened threats to our national security.

STEP 3: July 2002. Airport Policies. At the request of County Commissioners, the PDK Airport Advisory Board (AAB) unanimously recommended written Airport Policies and submitted them to the commissioners. The County Commission, however, has taken no action on this proposal. The result is that Airport Director Lee Rimmel, supervised by County CEO Vernon Jones, is making all airport decisions, with no significant written guidelines or policies. Why does our County Commission ask for policies, do nothing when they are submitted, and leave an airport director operating without any controls?

STEP 4: August 2002. FAA Grant to Rehabilitate the Taxiways. Airport Director Rimmel stated in the August AAB meeting that with the aid of an FAA grant to "rehabilitate" the remaining PDK taxiways, the Airport could routinely accommodate planes weighing 105,000 lbs. (although long-standing County policies normally limit plane weight at PDK Airport to 66,000 lbs.). Despite being informed of the projected dramatic increase in weight of planes that could use the Airport, the County Commission unanimously approved the FAA grant, without attaching any conditions limiting the weight-bearing increase of the upgraded taxiways. With this increase in overall Airport weight-bearing

capacity, PDK Airport will have the basic infrastructure in place to become the Second Atlanta Airport (See attached article).

STEP 5: September 2002. Open Records. A Revised Memorandum of Agreement (requested by the local FAA) between the City of Atlanta, the local FAA, and DeKalb County has been proposed .It would prohibit any release of flight "Raw Data, Filtered/Aged Data, and/or Processed Data" to the public. This is a violation of the public's right of access to information under the United States Freedom of Information Act and the Georgia Open Records Act. Other airports around the United States are providing such information to the public. Why does PDK Airport want to prohibit all public access to even the most basic information on the weight of planes and the noise levels at PDK Airport?

For additional information on these subjects, see "What's New", "Past Features", and "PDK History" also on this website (www.pdkwatch.org).

Faced by these actions and proposals leading toward increased PDK Airport expansion and noise, the only course of action still open to DeKalb citizens is to vigorously pursue a lawsuit to gain access to the information that the County and the public need to make informed decisions on PDK Airport policy!

A legal team is currently in the process of accumulating additional information in order to introduce this major lawsuit. The recent developments discussed above are continuing to raise new issues in this case for citizen rights against PDK Airport and Dekalb County secrecy and airport expansion.

The legal team is developing a case that can be won, BUT YOUR FINANCIAL HELP IS NEEDED TO BE SUCCESSFUL!

IF YOU HAVEN'T YET CONTRIBUTED TO THE LEGAL FUND, PLEASE DO SO NOW! YOUR HELP IS ESSENTIAL TO MOUNT THIS CASE SUCCESSFULLY. MANY THANKS TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE ALREADY GIVEN MONEY TO THE LEGAL FUND. F.O.R. DEKALB, INC. NEEDS YOUR CONTINUING HELP. PLEASE MAKE AN ADDITIONAL DONATION NOW.

SEND YOUR DONATIONS (suggested contribution \$100 per home) to:

F.O.R. DEKALB, Inc.
BOX 29604
ATLANTA, GA 30359

PDK Watch is grateful for your help in maintaining the website and the newsletter. To support this fund, 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.