

PDK Watch Newsletter, September, 2000

Hotel Lease in Default, Notification Takes Sixteen Months

On September 1, 1997, a lease between DeKalb County and PDK Properties, Inc., went into effect. Airport management negotiated this contract without competition. For \$250.00 per month PDK Properties, Inc., leased about 2 acres of airport land with the stated intention of building a hotel with options to include a travel agency and car rental. Phase One of the lease was set to end no later than February 28, 1999, to give PDK Properties, Inc., time to complete pre-construction requirements. Construction would begin under Phase II.

On February 22, 1999, CEO Liane Levetan granted a two-month extension allowing Phase I to end on April 30, 1999, even though, only the Board of Commissioners is empowered to change leases. By the way, CEO Levetan's letter granting the extension did not indicate copies to the commissioners.

In a letter to Airport Director Lee Remmel dated April 22, 1999, Mr. Beverly Lance, an official of PDK Properties, Inc., stated, "DeKalb County delivered to this firm all required permits to begin construction on April 30, 1999." He further stated that as required by the lease he was notifying Mr. Remmel in writing that "Phase II of the contract shall commence on May 1, 1999."

In a September 8, 1999, letter to Mr. Remmel, the chief financial officer of flightserv.com* asked the airport director to confirm that Phase II of the hotel lease had begun on May 1, 1999. Mr. Remmel confirmed this by signing and returning this letter.

When there was no evidence of hotel construction on the airport property, concerned citizens made inquiries and discovered:

No construction permits had been granted for building, plumbing, electrical, or heating as of May 3, 2000

Development plans call for use of airport property NOT included in the lease

Airport Master Plan calls for an aeronautical operation on the property under lease

The FAA was unaware that airport property was being leased for non-aviation purposes

An adjacent airport tenant was interested in using the leased property

The latest action was a September 1, 2000, notification of default letter from Mr. Remmel to PDK Properties, Inc., sixteen months after the lease went into default. This letter gives PDK Properties, Inc., one month to get into compliance or termination of the lease will be considered.

*In January 1999 flightserv.com purchased PDK Properties, Inc

Greenspace Update

Local FAA official Scott Seritt threatened to withhold \$3.5 million in buyout funds if DeKalb County did not adopt a plan to compensate the FAA for the 20-acre greenspace between Clairmont Road and the airport. Mr. Seritt's argument that the land must be valued at its highest and best compatible use is a clear attempt to dictate local land use.

The Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution at their September 12, 2000, meeting in an attempt to work with the FAA to reach an agreement on reimbursement. Thanks go to our commissioners for their efforts to resolve this issue.

Keep in mind that as the FAA has funded expansion at PDK Airport, it has not required the purchase or sound proofing of impacted nearby residences or businesses. It is the DeKalb County commissioners who have made this a priority. The FAA is willing again to let people live in an area deemed uninhabitable by a study that they help to fund.

Vision Statement and Airport Advisory Board

Airport Advisory Board (AAB) member Charles Feltus motioned that the AAB initiate the development of a Vision Statement as proposed by the Board of Commissioners (BOC) in the Comprehensive Plan. The BOC envisioned the Planning Department and the affected Community joining them in creating this statement about the land use of property adjacent to and 2000' beyond the airport boundary.

Further action on this motion will be taken at the next AAB meeting on October 11 at 6:30 PM in the airport administration building. Please make plans to attend.

Noise Specialist Position Vacant

Jim Duguay is no longer working at PDK Airport. However, the airport continues to take intrusive noise reports. Call 770-936-5442 to report your complaints. Airport management plans to follow up on these reports after a new noise specialist is hired.

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.

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