

TACOMA NARROWS AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING NOTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2004

Members Present:

John Howell, Facilitator	Catherine Mitchell, ex-officio
Larry Bielstein	Hugh Morgan
Dennis Cunneen	Ras Nielsen
James DePew, ex-officio (PAC member)	Brad Pattison
Mark Hoppen	Marge Pearson
Terry Lee, ex-officio	Rob White, ex-officio
Andy Markos, ex-officio (PAC member)	

Others Present:

Deena Turmo, Tacoma Narrows Airport Manager
Mike Kruger, Pierce County Staff
Chip Vincent, Pierce County Staff
Cheryl Carlson, City of Tacoma Attorney
Leslie Rowen, City of Tacoma
Catharine Hall, City of Tacoma
Jay Derr, Buck & Gordon
Cynthia Stewart, ADR Options Consulting, Inc.

PUBLIC HEARING

John Howell opened the public hearing by reviewing the purpose of the hearing and the ground rules. A copy of the document provided to the members of the public in attendance is attached.

Twenty-seven (27) people spoke to the Commission. A list of speakers is attached. The following issues were raised by speakers:

Airport Runway Safety Area

- What are the safety considerations?
- Want assurance the safety area project won't lead to a runway extension.
- Support for runway safety project.
- Concern that safety project will become runway extension at a later date.

Zoning of Property Adjacent to Airport

- The Airport is not going away; housing near the Airport should not be allowed.
- Area zoned as Rural Activity Center should be retained without the Airport Overlay.
- Maintain the rural character of the Peninsula.

PUBLIC HEARING

Airport as Essential Public Facility

- How did the Airport get designated as an “Essential Public Facility”?
- What will the Airport’s designation as “Essential Public Facility” do to property values around the Airport?
- What is the difference between an “Essential Public Facility” and “Rural Airport”?
- What is the limit of the Airport’s designation as “Essential Public Facility”? Concerned about the meaning of this designation.

Airport Land Uses

- Concerned that expansion of the Airport will hurt property values and that Airport neighbors will have little say in Airport expansion.
- The Airport should remain the same.
- Don’t hamstring Tacoma from development opportunities at the Airport.
- The Airport is fine as is, though stuck in a residential area; but please consider the rural character of the area.
- Airport should be made profitable as a first step.
- Concerned about expansion to make money with no limits; where would it end? Something reasonable would be OK.
- No expansion to the north of Stone Road.
- Concerned about expansion of the Airport; what are the limits on expansion?
- Airport is a public utility and will have to expand to compete.
- Why can light industrial uses be built across the street from Airport property but not on the Airport?
- Would like opportunity for interim permitting pending resolution of this TNAAC process.
- Where will Pt. Fosdick get water in the future if the Airport expands? The Airport is the water recharge area.

Airport Operations

- Concerned about safety (live in the flight path); planes fly too low.
- Would like quiet from 9:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m.
- Concerned about pollution.
- Concerned about the possibility of freight carriers using the Airport.
- Airport should remain a quality small GA Airport but not expand; no big jets.
- Helicopters making 90 degree turns off the Airport are a problem, but generally Airport operations are OK.
- Small cargo flights might be OK if there are curfews.
- Has there been any discussion of changing the ILS procedure/turn?
- Hours of operation are too long.
- Concern about Airport location near the Narrows Bridge and power lines.
- Concern about use of Airport by visiting aircraft; FAA says they can’t control

PUBLIC HEARING

them.

- Concerned about noise and commercial aviation.
- Concerned about pilots going around and around (flying the pattern) hour after hour.

Airport Ownership and Management

- If Gig Harbor owned the Airport, that would be a big plus.
- Would like to see Airport well developed and well managed.
- Airport needs a good Airport manager.
- History is the best predictor of the future; the Airport buildings have not been well maintained.

Communication

- Not sure of the facts on what's going to happen.
- Not sure of what can/can't be done at the Airport.
- Knew the Airport was here when moved into the neighborhood but hard to get information from anyone about the future plans of the Airport.
- Bothered by disinformation campaign; Tacoma is not considering a runway extension. FAA said this a year ago.
- It is hard to get information about the future of the Airport.
- Found a \$60 charge when went to look for Airport Master Plan.
- Good communication needed to inform the public.
- Recognize the Airport won't go away, but would like to see something in writing that says the Safety Area won't become a runway extension; have not had a good response from the Airport when concerns were expressed.
- There are hard feelings from the dog walkers who were displaced from the Airport.
- There is distrust about what is planned north of Stone Road; any plans should be put in writing.
- Get the master plan out in front of the community.
- Perception that Airport management controls pilot flight path.
- Recognize that good people see things with different eyes.
- Need information exchange to build trust.
- Recorded site plan would provide clarity and predictability.
- TNAAC should do what the State DOT has done on the Narrows Bridge project and provide education about what the plans are for the Airport and what it will become.

Other

- The City of Tacoma should have to go through the same permitting processes as everyone else.
- Airport and homeowners need to co-exist.

PUBLIC HEARING

- The Airport is part of this community and is as essential as Sea-Tac is.
- These issues have been going on for 22 years; take it to court to get a resolution.
- This area should expect to support large regional facilities such as Sea-Tac that we all use by providing reciprocal services; the Airport serves a fine purpose here.

John Howell closed the public hearing by describing the series of meetings that will follow.

COMMISSION DE-BRIEF OF PUBLIC HEARING

Following the public hearing, TNAAC members debriefed about the themes they heard, including the following. The overriding theme was lack of trust, communication and knowledge, and the need to come up with a means of providing better information to the public.

- Make communication recommendations a TNAAC agenda item. Concerns and ideas included:
 - Residents feel in the dark and want certainty.
 - Residents need assurances that Airport expansion isn't going to go crazy.
 - Lack of trust for both Pierce County and City of Tacoma.
 - Better communication methods than either the Gateway or the Airport Master Plan are needed.
 - Answers to questions in a way that no one will miss them.
 - Say over and over that a runway extension is not planned.
 - Put FAQ on the web.
 - Need Q&A for the community.
 - Summarize the issues raised in the meeting and respond with answers to the factual questions.
 - Publish a regular Airport newsletter for the neighbors.
 - Add information to the TNAAC web page; publicize the web page.
 - Contact all adjacent residents; the names and addresses are available
 - Post TNAAC email addresses.
 - Put Airport Manager sign at Airport; have full-time Manager available to answer questions or be able to get answers for the public.
 - Put a sign up where the Safety Area will be and explain there is no expansion planned.
 - Give a sense of ownership; allow the public to throw out ideas about the Airport and what amenities the Airport could provide.
 - Need visual aids and a list of proposed actions at the next public hearing to center people.
- Need to explain the Rural Airport Overlay.
- Need to explain Essential Public Facility; some people have never heard of that

COMMISSION DE-BRIEF OF PUBLIC HEARING

before.

- More homes near the Airport would be a mistake (e.g., Watland proposal). Based on what people said tonight, any other type of development would be better.
- This group needs to resolve these issues.
 - Sense that change is inevitable and this group is balanced and can resolve these issues.
 - Need to keep the energy going.
 - The problem is formidable; will go to litigation unless TNAAC resolves it.
- People use the word “development” in a wide range of different ways; need to clarify what is meant when that word is used.

NEXT MEETING

The next Commission meeting will be held on March 6, 2004, at 9:00 a.m., at the Gig Harbor Civic Center.