

Airport Land Use: Procedural error results in stalled plan

Truckee residents will get another chance to voice concerns to FALUC on airport land use plan

Foothill Airport Land Use

Commission:
 Rex Bloomfield
 Charlie Paine
 Peter Van Zant
 Peter Huebner
 Gary Pigg
 Steven Enos
 Milton Gottardi
 Kathy Sands

October 13, 2004
 from Kathleen's notes

More talk, no action, that's one way to summarize the Foothill Airport Land Use Commission (FALUC) meeting held October 13 in the Truckee Town Hall.

Why, after more than 40 meetings, was the commission unable to make real progress on its Truckee airport land use compatibility plan, also known as the compatibility land use plan (CLUP), which it had hoped to approve at this meeting?

The commission hadn't provided adequate public notice of its intention to adopt the plan and to approve the mitigated negative declaration, one of the actions that must be taken to adopt the plan. This notice is strictly governed by the rules of the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA.

The CLUP, a companion document to the Truckee Tahoe Airport District's Master Plan, recommends appropriate land uses, based on safety considerations, for property near the airport and in airport flight paths. It has been a source of controversy and consternation among the Town Council, businesses, special districts and Truckee residents, many of whom are concerned about airport growth, the resulting noise and the impact the CLUP will have on property values and land use near the airport.

The commission has been under fire for some time and what's worse, this commission procedural error was pointed out by Steve Kronick, an attorney representing Tahoe Truckee Sanitation Agency (TTSA). The agency has been in discussions with the commission on how the CLUP might negatively impact current and future TTSA operations.

Inadequate notice period

The commission needed to provide a minimum of 20 days notice of its intention to adopt the plan and to vote on the mitigated negative declaration. After some discussion, commission members, as well as Betty Riley, presi-



dent of the Sierra Economic Development District, acknowledged that the public notice that was placed by the commission in two local newspapers only provided about 10 days notice. Riley and Van Zant admitted they had been working from last year's

C.E.Q.A. guidelines, not this year's.

In fact, after the meeting Van Zant said part of the problem is the commission is lacking adequate funding to retain an attorney to advise it on legal matters, such as public notification rules. After all the commissioners acknowledged the notification problem, they agreed to continue the meeting to December 2, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. at the Truckee Town Hall. At that time, FALUC will again take public comments and then try to adopt the CLUP.

At the end of the meeting, Riley also stated her desire to see the commission move ahead with ratifying the CLUP. She stated, "As of December 31, 2004, I will have six new commissioners on my commission."

All these new people coming in could have a significant impact on the controversial CLUP and the future direction of FALUC.

Comments and criticism

So what did happen at the Oct. 13 meeting? The commission heard more public comment from several different parties on its proposed CLUP. Roughly 40 people attended the meeting.

Following are some of the comments:

Steve Kronick, TTSA attorney, kicked things off. He not only pointed out the procedural error on notification, but also said that although TTSA has met with the commission it feels that it still has concerns about CLUP sideline safety zones and their impact on TTSA operations... "those concerns haven't been addressed in the initial study," he said.

Later in the meeting, Van Zant responded to Kronick's comment, and

said "I don't necessarily agree with that..." And Ken Brody, a consultant who worked on the CLUP, suggested that the TTSA "come forward with suggestions for an exemption to allow specific uses" on the TTSA property in question.

Denny Dickinson, a Truckee resident who has previously spoken out about problems with the CLUP, then put up a map showing the flight plan assumptions used by the commission and his own analysis of actual flight routes. Because the CLUP doesn't take into account where the planes are actually flying, he said, "I believe this plan fails to meet the goals of community safety."

Pilot Tom Meadows said most pilots follow the airport's recommended flight paths and he urged the commission to "approve the CLUP."

Tony Lashbrook, Town of Truckee Community Development Director, then got up and spoke about a letter the Town Council submitted on the day of

the meeting to the commission. In this letter, the council requested that the commission delay adoption of the CLUP. He said the council needs more time to notify residents on East River Street of the impact the CLUP may have on their properties.

Historically, East River Street has been an industrial zone. However, as part of the town's river corridor redevelopment plan, the council has been encouraging residential development in this area. But residential development on East River Street may be incompatible with the CLUP, as currently drafted.

Mr. Lashbrook also said the town is still evaluating the impact the CLUP will have on its incorporation yard site. And he encouraged the commission to "monitor actual airport operations to make sure that what's projected (in the CLUP) matches" actual usage.

Kathleen Doler is a former Silicon Valley and San Francisco business editor. She now writes on community affairs, travel, adventure sports and health from Truckee.

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