

CARSON VALLEY VANGUARD COALITION POSITION PAPER
ON NEW AIRPORT ORDINANCE AND THE AIRPORT MASTER PLAN
OCTOBER 8, 2007

The Board of Directors of the Carson Valley Vanguard Coalition respectfully submits the following as our position paper on the proposed airport ordinance and development of the airport master plan. We are eager to work with all parties to make this happen.

To start with, any ordinance of this kind should contemplate a fresh approach to the entire management structure for the airport and be far reaching in its scope so as to restore voter confidence for the future. Consequently, we will attempt here to offer a more comprehensive revamping proposal, based on our premise that KMEV is considerably off-track regarding where its owners, the citizens of Douglas County, want it to go. Correspondingly, the ongoing Airport Master Plan work will need to be developed in parallel with the new Ordinance since one serves to implement the other. Therefore, the two must support each other and be consistent.

What follows is our overview of what any proposed airport ordinance and master plan effort should consider - realizing that this is "our" airport from the citizen standpoint, that it is our most complex county asset which provides vital aviation infrastructure, and that it should continue to be self supporting. In that regard, some of the following items should be included in the ordinance and some belong in the new Airport Master Plan, or both:

1. Its substance should offer the voters a real - not fictional - assurance that they no longer need to have the old weight ordinance on the books and, further, that this new ordinance, unlike the present weight ordinance - is to be enforced by the District Attorney's Office. It should be simply written and understandable to the voters and yet immune to loopholes.
2. Its substance should be consistent with and carry out the intention of the Resolution passed by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in May, 2007.
3. To emphasize once again, the ordinance should not be incongruous with the new Airport Master Plan and, correspondingly, the development of the new Airport Master Plan shall be consistent both with the Resolution and this proposed airport ordinance.
4. Its substance should not jeopardize previous FAA Grant Assurances, but it should also recognize that the FAA has repeatedly said that, as our

airport, we have the right to define its future consistent with non-discrimination rules.

5. Its substance should be so drafted as to serve primarily the local interest, including tourism, servicing transient aviators, and recognizing the current modest level of legally authorized jets that are based here to serve local aviation needs. However, in doing so, neither the ordinance nor the airport master plan shall cater, infrastructure-wise, to any commercial interests which would alter the rural character of the airport.
6. Its substance should foster, focus on and otherwise preserve the Airport's historical context; that is, all aspects of sports aviation including, but not limited to gliders, light sports aircraft (LSA), sport and homebuilt aircraft, skydiving and hot air balloons and explicitly avoid any action that would harm these elements.
7. Its substance should not serve to create any negative environmental impacts affecting County residents, wild life, plant life or otherwise compromise safety.
8. Its substance should use any and all mechanisms available to control infrastructure development consistent with a balanced general aviation airport. Supporting or otherwise facilitating development of jet centers should be discouraged.
9. Its substance should authorize the creation of an Airport Board of Directors.
10. Its substance should expressly prohibit the creation of AIP grant requests that are inherently inconsistent with the objectives of the airport ordinance and Airport Master Plan.
11. Its substance should eliminate all non-aviation activity from airport property.
12. Its substance should maintain the most restrictive weight limitations consistent with FAA Grant Assurances.
13. Its substance should eliminate the possibility of land speculation in airport land leases.
14. Its substance should continue to provide for local emergency aviation service needs.
15. Its substance should promote the ultimate in safety measures as is practical to install, consistent with desirable airport uses.

At this time, CVVC has no draft ordinance to submit. We envision the ordinance as having the following key elements:

1. Weight Limits

We need an absolute weight limit maximum with built-in flexibility above that to avoid the discrimination issue. We are suggesting the use of a Prior Permission Required (PPR) system as previously advocated by Commissioners Johnson and Baushke for aircraft in excess of the 50,000 lbs (dual wheel) certified maximum gross take-off weight of any aircraft using the primary runway, provided, however, that the weight limitation is to be keyed to the “weakest link” as to any particular taxiway or ramp to be used by such aircraft. For aircraft above 72,000 lbs. the number of such landings per year shall be limited in accordance with a fixed formula developed by airport management and approved by the BCC (or the Airport BOD as the case may be).

2. Airport Infrastructure

- a. As in the present ordinance, the present runway lengths are not to be extended; nor widths expanded. In addition, and aside from allowing old Runway 21 or its taxiway to be used as a runway, no new runways are to be built in excess of a weight bearing strength compatible with and limited to tow aircraft and gliders.
- b. Weight bearing strength of all runways and taxiways are not to be increased; repairs and maintenance to their original design standards are, of course, always allowed.
- c. Infrastructure development shall be consistent with a balanced general aviation airport; supporting or otherwise facilitating development of jet centers should be discouraged. FAA grant funding applications shall be limited to projects consistent with this.
- d. With the exception of a temporary control tower for fire fighting purposes, there shall be no control tower, precision landing system of any kind or passenger terminal built as these would be antithetical to the airport’s character for our rural community.
- e. As a safety item, an internal perimeter road should be built for the purpose of connecting the East and West sides of the airport for vehicular traffic rather than crossing active runways. Bliss Road is not a practical solution for all users of Eastside operations.

- f. As to spatial layout, allocate desirable space (e.g. easy access and served by utilities) for defined local needs such as County-built T hangars and small aviation business facilities. This will satisfy the hangar needs of local aviators and enhance the County's long term revenue stream. Planning should make room for landing and departing helicopters by establishing a helipad facility, especially for medi-vac purposes.
- g. Relocate the County yard, and other non-aviation facilities or uses off airport property to make space available for growth needs of aviation. All represent non-aviation uses of airport property.
- h. Relocate the airport office and its maintenance facility as well as the Civil Air Patrol facility to make prime space available on the west side for small general aviation expansion.
- i. Establish an enhanced buffer zone around the airport through appropriate zoning and planning to protect and separate residential, commercial, and aviation space needs, reduce negative environmental impacts and to mitigate safety exposures.

3. Airport Governance

Given its location and the variety of uses, this airport is one of the most complex county airports in the country. Additionally, citizen sensitivity is extremely high as to environmental impacts to our sensitive valley and rural heritage. It is also a given that the BCC neither have the time nor the qualifications to properly govern this huge, complex resource on behalf of its owners, the residents of Douglas County - nor does the County Manager and his staff. This has resulted in a vacuum of oversight and effective accountability of Airport management, staff and the Airport Advisory Committee (AAC). The visible result is that the airport has lost its way relative to the desires of its owners, the residents of Douglas County.

Thus, the present system of airport management needs structural change. Personality based issues – real or imagined - aside, the airport should not be run by any one person. The present Airport Advisory committee is just that – advisory, and, as some have witnessed, easily falls under the dominating influence of the Airport Manager's direction. In a Board of Director system, the Board is the management system with a manager and airport staff operating under the direction of the Board who, in turn, would be fully accountable to the County government as well as to the owners (citizens) and users of the airport.

The use of an Airport Board of Directors is not novel. It is authorized by state law and is in use at the Carson City and Battle Mountain airports. Keep in mind that its use does not add another layer of bureaucracy with associated added costs. It simply transfers the airport's administration from the present system to a totally new and dedicated governing body with far more time and expertise and allows the BCC, already overworked and underpaid, to be more effective in other pressing areas of local government where they have more expertise.

Here, for a start, is an outline of how an airport BOD would function:

- a. The BOD would consist of 5 members, with staggered terms, appointed by the County Commissioners and serving at their pleasure and without compensation except for expenses. Term of office should be limited to 3 years plus re-appointment for one or two further terms.
- b. This Board would consist of two citizen-at-large members, one member from the business community, and two members from the general aviation user community. All must be expected to develop higher levels of expertise as they serve. The airport manager must have at least a current private pilot's license. All meetings of the Board would have to comply with Nevada's Open Meeting Law.
- c. This Board would take direct responsibility and authority for all airport performance parameters such as setting airport policy and rules, determining fiscal matters, the nature and extent of aviation services, staffing, and personnel matters, overseeing airport land leases and developing yearly AIP applications consistent with the Resolution, Airport Master Plan, and the Airport Ordinance. The Board would also have the power to appoint committees to assist in its function. In this setting the airport manager would report to this Board rather than county management. The current AAC would be disbanded.
- d. A yearly annual report to the BCC is to be prepared and submitted by the airport BOD. Its content would include operational performance, big picture direction and projection, and fiscal matters as a minimum.
- e. Matters of discipline as to alleged violations of the rules by airport users would be subject to an administrative review hearing by the Board or its designee, and thereafter by appeal to the BCC and then by way of court review. A stay of disciplinary measures operates until the finality of the process.

No airport rule or regulation shall operate so as to permanently ban any user from the airport except upon conviction of a felony related to airport usage.

- f. At first, semi- annually for the first year and then annually thereafter, the Board shall conduct a published survey directed to the public and airport users seeking an evaluation of its performance and the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction therewith. The results of that survey are to be directed to the BCC and made available to the public at large.

It should be patently obvious that the outcome of this project will be far better if we can build on this foundation to reach some level of consensus where possible. Remember, one of the most important objectives of this ordinance and the Airport Master Plan is to convince voters that this package of new measures will indeed effectively serve to replace the current weight ordinance.

In the final analysis and failing consensus, if CVVC can not support the ultimate county-sponsored ordinance proposal then CVVC will vigorously oppose that proposal and may go so far as to offer the voters a different proposed ordinance.

Any interested party can contact the entire CVVC Board at CVVCBoard@ourairport.org. or call me directly. We are aware of the time constraints on these projects and will respond quickly.

Respectfully,

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Carson Valley Vanguard Coalition
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