



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

421 Aviation Way • Frederick, MD 21701-4798
Telephone (301) 695-2000 • FAX (301) 695-2375
www.aopa.org

December 14, 2004

Mrs. Deborah Hartwick
Planning Commission Chair
Municipality of Monroeville
2700 Monroeville Boulevard
Monroeville, PA 15146-2388

Dear Mrs. Hartwick:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of more than 403,000 members, over two-thirds of the nation's pilots. More than 13,600 of our members live in the state of Pennsylvania. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a national transportation system.

The Association is aware of a request that will be heard before the Municipality's Planning Commission from the A. R. Building Company to change the zoning of the Pittsburgh-Monroeville Airport (4G0) from residential and special use to residential (R2T) in order to close the airport and build houses. AOPA is strongly opposed to this request and asks that the committee not grant the change.

Much like the interstate highway system, an airport is a community's "on and off ramp" to a national transportation system. A mile of road takes you one mile, but a mile of runway takes you anywhere. In this regard, airports are tremendous community assets. Once gone, they are lost forever as is the economic benefit that comes from having an airport in the community.

4G0 is important as a destination as well. Less than one mile from the airport is the ExpoMart Convention Complex that hosts a large number of trade shows every year, forty-two in the first five months of 2005. Many of the trade show organizers use 4G0 to arrive by airplane due to its proximity to ExpoMart. In addition, several tenants at ExpoMart also use the airport and would be willing to continue their use if the airport remains and is promoted better.

The Pittsburgh-Monroeville airport is also important for public safety and welfare. The Pennsylvania State Police utilize the airport for training their pilots and indicate that 4G0 is an excellent staging area for any disaster that would occur on the eastern side of the city of Pittsburgh. The Monroeville Cadet Squadron of the Pennsylvania Wing, Civil Air Patrol, is active on the airport and the Wing uses 4G0 as a staging area for disaster preparedness training missions.

Mrs. Deborah Hartwick
Page 2
December 14, 2004

The airport is close to major transportation arteries and other services; it is less than one mile from a major interchange on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Forbes Regional Hospital is located a mile and a half from the airport and uses it to fly out and receive life saving items. WTAE television's traffic and weather helicopter utilize the Monroeville Airport because of its close proximity to the television station.

In an area of Pennsylvania that is rapidly developing, the Monroeville Airport represents an area of green space that is attractive to residents. Closing the airport and building more housing will place strain on existing infrastructure and municipal services in the area.

AOPA urges the Municipality to work with the current owner of the airport and the Federal Aviation Administration to keep 4G0 open as an airport and an important asset to the community.

Thank you for your consideration of the Association's views on this issue. If we can be of further assistance, please contact our staff at 301-695-2200.

Sincerely,



John L. Collins
Government Technical Specialist
AOPA Airport Support Network

CC:

Mr. James Lomeo, Mayor, Monroeville, PA
Mr. Abe Comunale, Council Member Ward #1, Monroeville Municipal Council
Mr. Dave Kucherer, Council Member Ward #2, Monroeville Municipal Council
Mr. Richard Buxter, Council Member Ward #3, Monroeville Municipal Council
Mr. John Danzilli, Jr. Council Member Ward #4, Monroeville Municipal Council
Mr. Mark Dale, Council Member Ward #5, Monroeville Municipal Council
Mrs. Carol McDevitt, Council Member Ward #6, Monroeville Municipal Council
Mr. Harold Katofsky, Council Member Ward #7, Monroeville Municipal Council
Mr. Ray Weible, Manager, Pittsburgh-Monroeville Airport
Mr. Wayne Heibeck, Manager, FAA Harrisburg Airports District Office
Mr. Rick Harner, Director, Pennsylvania Bureau of Aviation
Mr. Bill Leavens, AOPA Eastern Regional Representative
Mr. Peter Polen, AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer 4G0