

July 13, 2020

Via E-Mail:

Des Moines City Council Members
City Manager Michael Matthias
Des Moines Ad Hoc Aviation Advisory Committee

Re: Resignation and Recommendations

Friends:

The undersigned tender our resignations from the Des Moines Ad Hoc Aviation Advisory Committee (the "DMAAC"), effective immediately.

We have greatly appreciated the opportunity afforded to us, through this Committee, to work on behalf of the citizens of Des Moines in relation to the significant environmental and public health challenges presented by Sea-Tac Airport operations.

Our aviation committee has played a valuable role for the City in terms of collecting information, monitoring significant developments, formulating policy recommendations, and taking actions. However, our conclusion after observing the July 9, 2020, City Council meeting, is that the City is moving away from placing reliance on citizen input and leadership from this DMACC, and transferring its work to the City Manager and staff.

We recommend that the City continue forward with a strong, and more independent, DMACC. Like the City of Burien, a strong aviation committee can yield significant results. However, our assessment is that our own service on the DMACC has not engendered the Council's confidence to the extent that the Council would have required consultation on matters that are core to the DMACC mission and that are vital to the long-term interests of our City in relation to aviation. This must change if the DMACC is to have value.

At the July 9, 2020, City Council meeting, the decision to rejoin the Seatac Airport Round Table (StART) was briefed to the Council and confirmed by motion. Although the DMACC in collaboration with the Burien aviation committee had jointly created criteria with 13 changes to the StART format before rejoining, it appeared that as the result of negotiations involving City managers and Port personnel (as far as we could surmise), not a single criterion was met.

While we have very limited information (only what we saw at the meeting), we believe this decision is a significant strategic and tactical error. The guiding principal

for the decision appeared to be that enough time had passed and there was value in “being at the table.” This “at the table” notion was previously discussed quite meticulously, over many months and meetings, by your DMACC and by Burien and Federal Way. The conclusion of the three cities that withdrew was that, without specific reforms, the opposite was true – that being at this StART table was in fact producing harm and would hurt the long-term interests of the City.

I’m sure you can appreciate that the Council’s adopting a motion to rejoin, appearing to have no formal agreement with the Port on a single one of the joint criteria, without consultation of your DMACC, based on a hope that being at the table will work when the only historical evidence is that being at the table did not work (and which was predicate to suspending), was discouraging.

Accordingly, we believe it is incumbent upon us to get out of the way, and our sincere hope is that this new approach by the City will be supported by the necessary resources to go toe-to-toe with the Port and industry on StART. Our shared goal remains the same – to protect our environment and the public health of our citizens. We will be the first in line to applaud the outcomes that our City manager and this Council have committed to achieve by rejoining StART.

In the meantime, we plan to continue our advocacy for Des Moines through our other volunteer engagements and projects, including Quiet Skies Puget Sound, the Washington Department of Commerce Aviation Impact Study, the Washington Department of Transportation Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission, and assisting the legislative offices of, among others, Congressman Adam Smith, Senators Karen Keiser and Claire Wilson, and Representatives Tina Orwall and Mike Pellicciotti, whenever and however we can. Of course, we are happy to consult with the City in the future.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve as part of this valuable Committee.

Shelia Brush

Steve Edmiston