

OMMERCE

Wednesday, June 15, 2005

Port, Des Moines work together on business park plan

By **MARC STILES**
Journal Staff Reporter

Officials from the Port of Seattle and the city of Des Moines — formerly bitter adversaries in the third-runway fight — now are working together and may hire a developer to build a 75-acre business park south of Sea-Tac Airport.

Yesterday, the port Commission approved the first in a series of agreements that could lead to building the park for industrial and other uses. That vote followed a similar one Thursday by the City Council. Both were unanimous.

“It is a new day,” said Diane Summerhays, the port’s director of Aviation Community Development. “It’s a pretty big deal for that city, and it’s a huge deal for the relationship” between the port and Des Moines.

The site stretches northwest from the intersection of 24th Avenue South and South 216th Street. It was a residential neighborhood until the late 1980s when port officials, who operate Sea-Tac, began buying and removing homes in the flight path as part of a noise mitigation program.

Several years later the port and

city sought to develop a technology campus on the property. But that proposal floundered in part because the two sides were locked in a protracted legal fight over the port’s plans to build the third runway.

Last summer, Des Moines and other airport-area cities dropped their lawsuits to block construction of the runway, which began an era of cooperation.

Now Des Moines and the port plan to hire a consultant to write a conceptual master plan for Des Moines Creek Business Park.

Studies indicate the best use of the park is for aviation-related industry or general industry, according to Summerhays. But there’s range of potential uses, including manufacturing, distribution and home offices for aviation-related businesses, she added. Retail also has been discussed.

The schedule calls for negotiations to continue in early 2006, when the conceptual plan comes up for a vote. If the plan is approved, the port will hire a developer to write a master plan, according to Des Moines Community Development Director Judith Kilgore. “If everything works out well, you could see construction in early 2007,” she said.