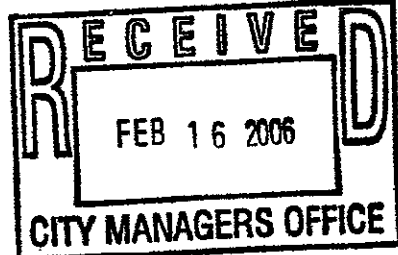


*Register 050915 A*



February 15, 2006

Russ Blackburn  
City Manager, City of Gainesville  
City Hall, Station 6  
Post Office Box 490  
Gainesville, Florida 32602-0490

**Re: Gum Root Park Coordination  
Gainesville-Alachua County Regional Airport Authority**

Mr Blackburn:

This letter is a follow up to our presentation to the City Commission on Monday, February 13 regarding the placement of a conservation easement over portions of the Gum Root Park property, which will resolve two compliance issues raised by the St Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) at Gainesville Regional Airport. As you are aware, the Airport is under considerable pressure to resolve this matter with the Water Management District in order to move several important projects forward. We have been working with City of Gainesville and Water Management District officials for over two years regarding this matter and would like to highlight several important points for your consideration:

- The Gum Root Park was purchased utilizing FDOI Aviation funds, and the Airport was the sponsoring agent for securing those funds. A copy of the original grant, along with the assurances, is attached for your consideration. The primary purpose for acquiring the land was for noise mitigation and airport protection, so operation of a Park is consistent with those goals. However, acceptance of these funds required assurance that the property purchased utilizing FDOI Aviation funds would be used for airport-related purposes. The Gum Root Park property has been shown since that time on the Airport's exhibit "A", or property map, which defines Airport Lands and subjects those Lands to the requirements of Federal grant assurances as well. The City of Gainesville and the Airport Authority, as co-sponsors, are signatory parties on recent federal grants and accountable for meeting the requirements of those federal grant assurances.
- The Airport and our Consulting team have been working with the District to resolve this issue, and we are close to resolution. In January of 2004, a letter written by Wayne Bowers to Allan Badgett at the SJRWMD stated that the Gum Root Park, defined as Airport Lands, was suitable for the placement of the Conservation Easement. A copy of that letter is attached. The Airport and the Consulting team have been working under this premise as stated in the letter, and the District has relied on this letter in determining an acceptable resolution. A very detailed analysis, including the search and review of many historical documents (some over twenty years old), at least twenty meetings, field analysis to quantify wetland areas within the approach to Runway 29, and the preparation of a detailed technical report was produced. This analysis also included a detailed review of the proposed conservation easement, and included several

conversations with your Parks and Recreation Department staff. Analysis of a different location will take several additional months, as well as additional SJRWMD staff time. The Water Management District requires that their staff be reimbursed, and any additional analysis on the part of our consultant is beyond their scope of work. In short, changes at this point have fiscal implications and place several critical development projects in jeopardy.

- The Eclipse Aviation project is an exciting venture for Gainesville Regional Airport and the City of Gainesville. The project will bring as many as 160 high paying jobs to an area of the city that is targeted for additional economic activity. The project has been designed and bid, with bids due March 6, 2006. Without the necessary SJRWMD permits for the project, the Airport cannot meet the Eclipse Aviation construction schedule. The District has informed the Airport that a permit will not be issued until past compliance issues are resolved.
- The draft conservation easement provided to your office to be placed over the Gum Root Park is just that, a draft. We are open to considering any comments or suggestions that the City may have. However, moving the location of the easement will require additional time, effort and money, none of which is available. Additional research has suggested that the District may allow certain passive activities such as a small visitor's center, limited restrooms or hiking and fishing trails as long as they are spelled out in the document. We have been working with your Parks and Recreation staff (Ann Bigelow), which has provided input regarding the location of the conservation easement. Ms Bigelow has met several times with our staff and our Consultants regarding this issue and has provided comments regarding the management plan for the Easement.

The Airport is more than willing to work with the City to quickly resolve any concerns that the City may have, but we need to do so by the end of this month. If you should need any additional documentation regarding this issue or should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Richard Crider, AAE  
Chief Executive Office

Enclosures

cc: Jeff Breeden, RS&H  
Allan Penksa, GACRAA  
Don Stanley, Allen Dell  
File