



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

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November 15, 2007

VIA FACSIMILE (203) 385-4108

Mr. Gary Lorentson
Planning and Zoning Administrator
Town of Stratford
Stratford Town Hall
2725 Main Street
Stratford, CT 06615

Dear Mr. Lorentson:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 414,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including 4,765 of our members in the state of Connecticut. On behalf of our membership, AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability, utility and development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a national transportation system.

We are extremely concerned about the request for amendment to the zoning regulations for the Stratford Land Development Co. rezoning 42 acres off of Lordship Boulevard to allow construction of 634 condominiums less than one-half mile from the departure end of Runway 29 at Igor I. Sikorsky Memorial Airport (BDR). It is particularly distressing that such a high concentration of residences would be under the flight path of a busy airport. We believe very strongly that the Stratford Planning Commission erred when it recommended approval of this proposed amendment.

It is our understanding that the city Zoning Commission is scheduled to hear this request on Tuesday, November 20th as agenda item 8. We urge the Commission to deny the request.

AOPA believes that residential development does not belong in such close proximity to the airport. In our 68 years of experience in working to protect and maintain America's general aviation airports, we see time and time again that close-in residential encroachment of airport operational areas can be the first step toward local residents calling for the ultimate closure of an airport. Once a developer completes his project and moves on to the next development site, it is the local municipality that must deal with potential noise and over flight debates by its citizens.

Further, AOPA strongly believes that it is poor public policy to simply look at short-term financial gains without fully considering the potential to put the citizens of Stratford and aircraft operators at risk. Allowing residential development directly under the approach

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and departure path of the airport is promoting of incompatible land use within the town and not in the best interest of the airport or new residents to the area. We believe that a much more positive application of public policy to avoid non-compatible land uses near a publicly funded and public use airport is to maintain the current light industrial zoning.

Whether or not a required Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) obstruction evaluation determines that the height of the proposed condominium buildings would not impact airport operations, such a determination does not mean that residential development is compatible with an airport. They have certainly not indicated any support for this project and if pressed would explain their reasons for not wanting to see it happen.

For these reasons, AOPA respectfully requests the Zoning Commission deny zoning amendment and that they only consider airport compatible projects for this area within the traffic pattern.

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

Sincerely,



John L. Collins
Senior Liaison
Airports

cc:

John Ricci, Manager, Igor I. Sikorsky Memorial Field
Richard Jaworski, Bureau Chief, Connecticut Bureau of Aviation and Ports
LaVerne F. Reid, Manager, FAA New England Region Airports Division
Craig Dotlo, AOPA Northeast Regional Representative
David Faile, AOPA Airport Support Network Representative BDR