

March 24, 2004

**Subject: Status Report Regarding East and Executive Hangars**

Dear Buchanan Airport Hangar Tenants:

As we previously discussed, from time to time the Airports Division would provide updates regarding East Hangar issues. On Monday, November 3, 2003, the East Hangar Coalition Representatives Dianne Cole, David Long and Dick Rihn met with County staff. Representatives from the County included Carlos Baltodano, Director of Building Inspection Department, John Ross, Assistant Chief for the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, and Airport staff. The meeting discussed flexibility in accepting the current condition of the T-hangars (unauthorized improvements) and the rental agreement terms. The goal was to determine if there was any common ground on the issues and determine if all parties were willing to work together to seek compromises that are mutually beneficial, without compromising safety.

Mr. Baltodano expressed three specific areas of concern on behalf of the County's Building Inspection Department:

1. Electrical Improvements
  - a. The electrical improvements must be safe.
  - b. If the existing improvements were done to code at the time they were constructed, this would be taken into consideration.
  - c. If it is found the improvements are safe and were completed to code, they will be considered for approval.
  - d. The Building Inspection Department is willing to consider waiving all fees and fines for permitting of existing electrical improvements. Work done without a permit is often subject to a double or even triple fee.
  
2. Structures
  - a. The structures must be safe.
  - b. A permit will be required for all mezzanine/loft structures so the County has record of the approved structural improvement.
  - c. Structures will be checked to see if they are structurally sound (could they withstand the movement of an earthquake?). Were they constructed to code at the time the improvements were done? A structural engineer would be required to sign off on the design of the structure.
  
3. Storage

- a. This is an area that will be carefully looked at for compromise. What can the County allow in terms of comfort items (i.e. couches, chairs, etc)?
- b. Is the storage non-hazardous?
- c. Can vehicles, recreation vehicles and motorcycles be allowed?

Mr. Ross of the Fire Protection District also expressed much interest in resolving this matter also. Some of the main points brought up by Mr. Ross were:

1. Safety is the main concern.
2. The Fire District views this as a Joint Review Process with Building Inspection.
3. They are very willing to set up timelines to assist hangar tenants in bringing their hangars to fire code compliance. These timelines will range.
4. There are degrees of code compliance, since there is room for interpretation.
5. It may be possible that some improvements could be “grandfathered” in.
6. The Fire District is aware that there may be some gray areas where particulars of compliance are concerned. They are willing to work with tenants.

All parties agreed that it would be beneficial to everyone involved to develop a “prototype” T-hangar. Depending on the type of activities done in hangars, there should be more than one hangar prototype.

Airport staff brought in a facilitator to assist the parties in defining the terms of the new agreement. The Hangar Coalition Representatives agreed in the selection of Mr. Jerry Bennett as the Facilitator for this project. They felt that his direct experience in a similar process as the former Director of Airports for Santa Clara County would be very helpful. Mr. Bennett will assist all parties involved in coming to an agreement on terms and conditions. We also expressed interest in inviting other hangar tenant groups into the process, i.e. Byron hangar tenants, Buchanan Airport Hangar Company, Buchanan Airport Hangar Association and LCA Hangar Company. The intent of inviting other hangar tenant groups into the process is that, in the end, they will all have to live with what is agreed to regarding hangar use.

Between December 2003 and February 2004, Airport staff held various meetings with Buchanan Field Hangar Coalition Members, Byron and Buchanan Field hangar company owners, Building Inspection Department, Fire Protection District, and Jerry Bennett (the facilitator). The Fire Protection District now has a new checklist that will be used during the inspections (see Enclosure). Additionally, the Building Inspection Department has concurred with the checklist. We have defined the building permit process for those tenants that want to acquire building permits for modifications made inside the hangars, i.e. electrical and lofts.

The County Airports Division has a standing offer to come in and return any hangar back to its original design, at no cost to the hangar tenant. However, those tenants that wish to acquire building permits for any modifications should start by contacting Kim Jeffries in the Director of Airports Office (925)-646-5722. Ms. Jeffries will assist those individuals through the process. We are requesting that all tenants interested in completing the permitting process to contact Ms. Jeffries on or before Friday, April 23, 2004. This will allow us sufficient time to get all interested parties engaged in the permit process. Once the permit process is completed we will schedule the final Fire and Building inspections for each hangar.

Now that the final plan and process has been defined for bringing resolution to the deficiencies noted by the Fire and Building Inspectors, we will begin the discussions on the new hangar rental agreement.

**Finally, we will be holding a meeting at the Buchanan Field Terminal Building (161 John Glenn Drive) on Monday, April 12, 2004 at 6:30 pm.** This will be our opportunity to discuss where we are and answer some of your concerns and or questions.

So where do we go from here? It was very encouraging for all parties to see that we are willing to work together to resolve these issues and find compromises wherever possible. The main goal for all involved is to keep this process moving on the positive course that has now been set. Every one has agreed to remain flexible and keep communication channels open.

Sincerely,

Keith Freitas  
Director of Airports

Enclosure

KF:df

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C: Members - Board of Supervisors  
CAO  
Maurice Shiu, Public Works Director  
Carlos Baltadano, Director of Building Inspection  
Keith Richter, Fire Chief  
Julie Bueren, Deputy Director of Public Works