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El Paso County
Kari Parsons - Planner
2880 International Circle, Ste. 110
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

RE: File Number VA247
Watts Variance of Use

Dear Kari,

I own two properties at Meadow Lake Airport. 7911 Delta Wing Point and 8256 Cessna Drive. I wish to oppose the proposed Variance to allow a Commercial Vehicle Repair Garage. Throughout Colorado Springs and El Paso County, there are literally hundreds of locations that allow vehicle repair garages under current zoning. The Meadow Lake Airport is a special place for aviators. We can go nowhere else. To allow vehicle repairs shops in an area, initially designed for General Aviation, is incongruent with what the Airport is. This Vehicle Repair Garage can go and open their garage/business in specifically designated zoning areas without the need for any variance. Pilots only have one place to go, Meadow Lake Airport.

First: Allowing a Vehicle Repair shop will create potential issues. As you know, all the roads within the airport are considered active taxiways. Everyone that owns a plane or flies in and out of Meadow Lake Airport knows this. The Vehicle Repair customers coming to the airport, for the first time, have no idea how an airport works, nor do they know that the roads are active taxiways.

Secondly: Additional traffic. Pilots are not flying every day. So, traffic in and around the airport is reasonable. A repair garage will have daily traffic as customers come in to visit the shop. This defeats the special nature of what Meadow Lake Airport is and what it means to the pilots that fly here. Again, the vehicle repair customers do not understand the rules of the road and the increased traffic means additional possible incursions with Aircraft taxing around Meadow Lake Airport.

Third: Variance: Section 5.3.4 Variance of Use asks several questions concerning a Variance of Use.

1. **Applicability:** The codes states that the “*Power to grant variances shall be exercised sparingly.*” I agree. El Paso County should take a hard look to see if a variance is really needed here. There are many places where a business of this type can be placed. It should not be placed in an aviation community.

2. Criteria:

- The code asks if the “*strict application of any of the provisions of this Code would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties or undue hardship.*” This area/community was set up for aviation, not for general business and certainly not for vehicle repair shops. There is no hardship here. This type of business may be opened in any number of places where zoning permits. You have to ask yourself, why is the applicant asking for a variance and why are they trying to open this type of business at the Meadow Lake Airport. I can only guess, but I would say “Price”. The applicant has found that renting or buying a hanger at the airport is cheaper than renting or buying in an approved zoning location. This does not create a hardship.
- The codes asks if the “*proposed use is compatible with the surrounding area, harmonious with the character of the neighborhood, not detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the inhabitants of the area.*” The proposed use is not compatible with the surrounding area nor is it harmonious with the character of the neighborhood. This is an aviation community where pilots fly, hanger and work on their aircraft. Businesses that work on aircraft would be harmonious. General vehicle repair shops, are not. As stated earlier, the average customer, for a repair shop will not understand that all the roads are active taxi ways. The daily trips by people looking to get their vehicle repaired is detrimental to the health and safety of the pilots taxing their aircraft to and from the runway.

Forth: Colorado Springs is a growing community. As Colorado Springs grows, the need for hanger space for airplanes will increase. More and more pilots will be coming to this special place to fly and hanger their aircraft. Is this an airport or a mixed-use community? It was designed as a single use; Pilots and aircraft. The aviation community has nowhere else to go. This is where the airport is and therefore, all pilots that live in El Paso County that want to own a plane and hanger it, must go to Meadow Lake Airport. It’s wholly unfair to now make us compete for space in the only place available to us. The vehicle repair shop can set up their business in hundreds of places, we only have this one location. Please don’t turn Meadow Lake into a mixed-use area.

Fifth: The slippery slope. If this is approved, then it will be extremely difficult to say “No” when the next business comes in and asks for a variance. Eventually, the special nature of Meadow Lake Airport as a community airfield will be damaged. Airplanes are expensive, heck, everything about aviation is expensive. Businesses can afford to pay more as they are “for profit”. Therefore, the costs of hanger space and land will go up. Businesses can afford to pay. Aviation is expensive enough already without us now having to complete for space with the business community.

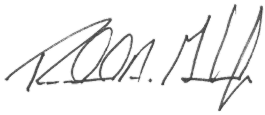
Summary;

- There is no hardship that would necessitate a variance.

- This type of business is not compatible with the community at Meadow Lake Airport.
- Safety could become a real issue with increased traffic and the general public not understanding that roads are taxiways.
- This business will decrease safety and increase the possibilities of airplane/vehicle incursions.

Meadow Lake is the only place where aviators can go to fly. This type of business can go anywhere throughout El Paso County and open their business. Pilots only have one location. I respectfully ask that you do not allow the only General Aviation Airport to be turned into something it was not intended to be. Please deny this variance request.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. A. Graham, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Richard A. Graham, Jr.