

(This is a copy & paste of an email sent on November 17, 2014)

November 17, 2014

Pierce County Council Chair Dan Roach
Council Members Jim McCune and Stan Flemming

Gentlemen;

This letter is in two parts. The first is to remind you of my email to you dated October 25, 2014. Other than an initial trade of a few emails with Tammi Lewis, assistant to Dan Roach, I have heard nothing that my concern is being taken seriously. The second part is intended to dispute claims that were asserted by Airport and Ferry Administrator Deb Wallace's briefing paper to you with first page dated October 28, and subsequent pages dated November 10, 2014.

Part 1.

On October 7, 2014, I sent a letter to the Director of Public Works and Utilities, Brian Ziegler, expressing my displeasure with the 24-hour security concept at the Pierce County Airports. I received his response, dated October 13, 2014. Both of these documents are attached. I would like to compare my inquiries with the responses.

Limitation of business access: No response on the subject from Mr. Ziegler

Business / Quality Control interruptions for the gate interphone system: No response on the subject from Mr. Ziegler

Poor implementation of said security measure: Canned answer concerning 'improvements to come'.

Existing defects in the 'security fencing': canned answer per above

Prosecution and punishment to those who break the code as opposed to persecution of the users (read: taxpayers) of the airport(s): No response on the subject from Mr. Ziegler

How can a gate keep folks from cutting holes in the fences: No response on the subject from Mr. Ziegler.

I requested to Mr. Ziegler that he pass along a copy of my letter to Executive Pat McCarthy; in an email sent to me 10/7 at 8:29 pm, he indicated he would. However, I note his letter of response did not include her listed as a carbon-copied recipient.

When I read Mr. Ziegler's letter, it was rather apparent that it was written by the skilled hand of Deb Wallace; skilled in the respect there were NO direct responses, and the 'let's try to work together' paragraph.

That is exactly what I am trying to do, gentlemen!

Thus far, the county's position has been 'This is the way it is'. Not working together. We can imagine there is all sorts of evil lurking in the world; stepping on the rights of law-abiding users (read: taxpayers) of the airports does nothing to dissuade said evil.

I asked for your intervention to help find a form of normalcy, and have not seen your activity or request for additional information on the subject. Yes, it is true there are other facets of running Pierce County that are more important to your daily resources. Please stop and consider for a few moments, how this security insanity is directly infecting these assets of the county (airports).

As a side note to this issue, several years back we had a different airport administrator that was directly opposite of Ms Wallace in the respect he flatly told me that, as a public airport, the general public was allowed access to the entire airport, going as far as saying if they wanted to picnic on the runway, that was acceptable. I wrote my concerns to Mr. Ziegler on that one also. I think there is middle ground in this area.

Part 2, Deb Wallace airport security brief

Ms Wallace's brief not only had many inaccuracies, but also raised several questions to the motives of the measures. My comments about her brief are as follows:

Her assertion that said security is being made, in part, by requests from airport tenants is blatantly false. There may be a few folks that have made this request; the statement would indicate it is 100%. For those that like the false security these gates offer, I submit there are many more that don't like the concept of government dictating what is good for us.

Thun Field does not operate with 24-hour security; only those portions that suit the fancy of the administration are secured. This is inclusive to limiting public access to several businesses on the airport at the whim of said administrator.

To state that the staff 'coordinated the implementation of security measures with airport tenants' would be stretching the truth. We were told this was the way it was going to be. Period. There was no discussion with all tenants; there were no open meetings with the express purpose of discussing the concept of this program.

The statement regarding an intoxicated person running their vehicle down the runway brings up a few questions: Apparently they were apprehended, and it was confirmed they were intoxicated (Ms Wallace did not say allegedly). Were they prosecuted and penalized? What would be the difference if they were racing down Meridian Avenue; would the outcome of no one being hurt remained? Perhaps we should consider a breathalyzer at every stop light: Blow to get a one-car green light. Can you imagine how many of your constituents would be writing you on that one? Yet, airport tenants are required to stop every time they enter the airport, and according to the gate rules, one car per cycle, and we are supposed to wait until the gate closes behind us before proceeding. Also of note; if I need to drive round-trip to the north end of the airport, this requires four separate gate openings as well as four closings. To alleviate this, I could, as others

are doing, drive down the ramp in front of Spencer's, the restaurant, and Spanaflight, through the aircraft fueling area. Doesn't seem safe to me, but we see folks doing it.

Of the 28 cited incidents over the last 5 years – a combined number for both airports and a rate equal to one event every 5.5 months at Thun Field and one every 2.25 months at Tacoma Narrows – how many of them occurred at night when the gates were already closed due to the previous 12-hour security measures? How does the remainder of the county rank compared to these allegedly intolerable crime rates that the airports experience? Just a few moments research on the Pierce County website shows that in the 10 months ending October 2014, there were 379 incidents within ½ mile of 16709 103rd Ave Ct E (official airport address), with two of those looking to be within the airport boundary and in an area that is not 'inside the fence', noting no incidents 'inside the fence'..

The TSA general aviation security assessment for Pierce County airports raises as many questions as are answered. In fact, nothing is answered; there is no information given as to the weighting of the system (how it is scored), or whether it is even a valid tool, being it is purported to be 10 years old.

However, if we are to believe the TSA's recommendations, perimeter control comes first. Once again, it is a fact that has not occurred here. Three airport businesses (at Thun Field) have walk-through access from parking lot to the ramp area at center field, let alone the short fence with an unsecured walk-through gate between the airport office building and the Spanaflight building, not to mention many defects in the fence. Additionally, there are no obvious signs of protective lighting systems; I believe having a light at the drive through gates hardly qualifies as 'protective'. What personnel and vehicle identification systems are in place? Accosting the users (read: taxpayers) of this airport for their personal information to allow their access (gate card issuance) hardly qualifies as a professional environment. Community watch program? Less than 10% (by a very liberal count) of folks pay attention to the 'rule' in place to wait for the gates to close before driving along. The cooperation level for participating in a community watch, I suspect, will be lower yet.

Summation:

Please read the undercurrent in Mr. Ziegler's letter dated October 12 and Ms Wallace's brief dated (best two out of three times) November 10, 2014. We are being told by appointed county personnel to conform to their mold. I see that unfair competition is being promoted by said county personnel, and I submit that something needs to be done.

I, as well as other business owners at both airports, have made considerable investments in our businesses, in the form of improvement to our buildings located on property that is owned by the county. I picked this airport for that investment based upon 20-years working here and the feeling of community exuded by this airport; I can't just pack up my investment and move to another airport

I would like believe that elected county officials would have an understanding of what it takes to run a business, would show a level of respect to the business owners (read: taxpayers), and maintain a certain fear of their constituents.

If I am wrong in this, please let me know. I'll be sure and help you pass the word to the remainder of the taxpayers (read: voters) in the county.

Respectfully,

Michael E Thompson