



CITY OF OXNARD

MEMORANDUM

10 December 1971

To: City Manager *AW*

From: Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Meetings with Federal Officials
Regarding the Oxnard Air Force Base

BRIEFING REPORT
12-12-71

It is suggested that the City Council consider (Tuesday) asking the staff to explore the possibility of getting Camarillo & County support for the proposal outlined. I believe there should be a minimum of discussion until the idea can be explored at the staff level.

Paul Wolke

As has been widely reported in the newspapers, officials of the Department of Defense have held numerous meetings this week with community groups to discuss disposition of the Oxnard Air Force Base property. I have attended two of these meetings. I believe that the Department of Defense officials were trying very hard to be helpful and informative; nevertheless, at times the information seemed to be contradictory and confusing with the result that the information to be presented in this memo must be labeled as my understanding of the information presented rather than actual statements presented by the Defense Department officials. Nevertheless, the information presented here, to the best of my understanding, does represent the pertinent facts related to the disposition of the Oxnard Air Force Base.

A very important factor discussed by the Federal representatives related to priorities which will govern the disposition of the OAFB property. With respect to agencies, it was indicated that priority is given first to the Federal agency originally having control of the property and second, to all other Federal Agencies. The property is then made available to other non-federal public agencies with no priority established among these non-federal agencies; that is, the State does not have priority over the County nor the County over the cities, etc. With respect to priority as to use, the statement was made time and again that Federal law states only one priority as to use and that is for airports. However, in a meeting on Wednesday, clarifying information was provided which changes the implications of this statement considerably. As I recall it, this question was put to the Federal representative: If the priority as to use is for airports and if the County has applied for airport usage, how can we logically continue discussions regarding other potential uses? The answer given, as I understand it,

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was that GSA has the discretion to indicate for what uses the property will be made available. If one of the uses listed is for airports, then among the uses listed the airport use would have priority; however, the GSA can, within their own discretion, indicate the uses for which the property is to be made available and not include airport use as one of the possible uses. In such a case, the airport use would not only not have priority, it would not even receive consideration. Because of the important impact of this information, this question was discussed in some length at the Wednesday meeting with the result that I feel certain that I have correctly understood the information presented.

The Department of Defense representatives reiterated time and again that it is vitally important for the local agencies to resolve their differences and to agree on a joint plan for local public use of the airport if the community is to have the opportunity to make public use of the airport property. The clear implication of the statements made (clear to me, in any case) was that GSA has no desire and no necessity to become involved in a local controversy and it is for this reason that they have continually been telling the local entities to resolve their differences. It was pointed out that GSA cannot much longer afford to maintain the Air Force Base property. It was clearly implied that these two facts taken together must lead to the conclusion that GSA will avoid becoming involved in the local controversy by not approving any local public use and by putting the property up for sale.

In some instances, it appeared that the Defense Department official was actually pleading with the local people to end their squabbling in order that the investment at the Air Force Base would not be lost to local public use. At the Wednesday session, the Federal official indicated that the potential loss to the local public is such that all sides to the issue must be willing to forget their original and present stands regarding use of the OAFB property and must be willing to come together and agree on a use acceptable to all. He suggested that this should be accomplished by a new joint application of all agencies concerned--with the property to be disposed jointly to all of the agencies for common ownership. He offered the specific suggestion that each agency which wishes to be involved should immediately adopt a resolution indicating its willingness to be a co-applicant for the Air Force Base property for public use. He implied that if such resolutions were sent to GSA in the very near future, it would forestall any action which might be impending on the part of that agency. At such point as such resolutions are adopted, he indicated that he or some members of his office would help the local agencies prepare the new application.

Based upon the information presented at the meetings which I attended, I have concluded that it is very unlikely that the County will receive favorable action on their application for acquisition of the Air Force Base. Further, if the respective agencies, including the County and Camarillo, are not able to reach a consensus regarding some public uses, the property will be lost to all local public uses. In discussions with persons close to the official Camarillo family, the following idea has emerged as a possible response to the information provided by the Defense Department officials. It is suggested that the County, Oxnard and Camarillo should become co-applicants for the airport. The present airport operations at 5th Street would be moved to OAFB and accommodated there. The runway would be strictly limited in the deed (transferring title to the co-applicants) to the length necessary to accommodate the 5th Street operations. A deed restriction, imposed by FAA in the GSA disposition of the property, was indicated to be definitely possible, legal and probable if requested by the co-applicants. After moving the 5th Street operation to the OAFB, the County should sell the existing County airport with the funds derived from such sale to be placed in an airport trust fund. The trust fund would be established for the purpose of financing a larger airport in an appropriate location if and when a larger airport ever becomes necessary. Revenues from the continuing operation at OAFB should also be placed in the trust fund for the same use.

We understand that the foregoing plan may have some receptivity among the official family of Camarillo. As you know, such an approach would be consistent with the concept which we have always had in mind--that is, to have the OAFB be used for an interim airport with the ultimate location to be at some other site. Equally important, it would eliminate the Ventura County Airport as a possible future problem to Oxnard.

RECOMMENDATION

Although it is not possible at this point to know whether the program outlined above would be acceptable to Camarillo or to the County, I believe that it would be desirable to take some action to stimulate further discussion. The appropriate action, I believe, would be to follow the advice of the Federal official and to adopt a resolution indicating the City of Oxnard's willingness to become a co-applicant for the Air Force Base property for public use. I believe that it would be premature at this point to discuss publicly the program outlined above; however, if the City Council wishes to pursue this alternative and does adopt the suggested resolution, the matter could be pursued privately with officials of the City of

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Camarillo and the County of Ventura. With respect to the County of Ventura, it is still not known when the staff report will be presented to the Board of Supervisors regarding our proposed airport agreement. However, via the grapevine, we have been advised that it is unlikely that either the County Counsel or the County Executive's office will be able to support the contract as it was presented to them.



Stephen A. Cook
Assistant City Manager

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