

The expansion of the Flying Cloud Airport has been one of the most important and difficult issues that I have faced as a city leader.

Over the past eight years I have listened carefully to residents express their views, share their daily experiences, and voice their concerns over future airport modifications.

During this same time I have spoken vehemently against any expansion at public hearings of the FAA, the Metropolitan Council and the Metropolitan Airport Commission (MAC). I've relayed the concerns of Eden Prairie's residents and the negative impact an expansion would have on our residents.

What I have learned over time is that the City of Eden Prairie's authority is limited. The hard reality is that other government agencies wield a far greater control and the ultimate decision-making power over whether or not the airport is expanded.

Despite this fact, I, along with other members of the City Council, have worked hard to make certain that the necessary protections of our residents were put into place.

What we have achieved is an agreement between the City and MAC that:

- Limits any change of the fundamental character of the airport
- Provides meaningful noise relief
- Provides a commitment on runway length
- Limits the weight for jet aircraft
- Limits the maximum bearing on the runway
- Provides limits on Stage 2 aircraft

Another concern that I have personally addressed is the overall security of the airport. Working with US District Attorney Tom Heffelfinger, the City of Eden Prairie, and MAC, I helped to institute a plan for greater security at Flying Cloud Airport, which includes fencing of the perimeter, additional lighting, increased police patrols and a safety awareness plan. The City of Eden Prairie volunteered to create the security model for all the reliever airports in the Minnesota system.

I continue to remain committed to Eden Prairie's residents and will maintain a strong voice and watchful eye as changes to the airport are discussed and made. Throughout this process I welcome your feedback, so please keep in touch.

I did not seek a political endorsement as a candidate for local office. City Council races are non-partisan with no party designation on the voting ballot. There is tradition and logic behind this. Statute requires a basic commitment that local government officials must be neutral in their views, and independent in thought and action. City officials must be committed to making decisions based on that which is good for the entire community and not what is required from them as a member of a political party.

Submitted by Sherry Butcher, City Council member
Candidate for re-election to the Eden Prairie City Council