



CHARLOTTE_{SM}

July 8, 2013

Rep. Ruth Samuelson, Conference Leader
N.C. House, District 104
2226 Legislative Building
16 W. Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Rep. Samuelson:

Thank you for your recent phone calls and for your email of June 26th, in which you sent the new proposed “study bill” on the airport, in a “spirit of cooperation.” This has been a period of significant transition in the City of Charlotte as we provided the nation with a new Secretary of Transportation and I was selected by my peers to a new leadership role. We appreciate your understanding during this transition.

The City sincerely appreciates the General Assembly’s shift away from legislation to create an airport authority. Along with the City Council’s June 10th resolution, there is now a potential to reach the right business decisions about the airport and avoid unnecessary conflict; however, we are not convinced that the proposed planning commission is the best vehicle to do so.

I have now had the opportunity to have individual and small group conversations with Council Members and have concluded that there is no consensus on the current version of the draft legislation. This response represents my sense of the Council, but is not an official action of Council.

Among the concerns raised about the proposed planning commission include the following: a strong orientation toward an authority, which suggests a predetermined outcome, and membership that is 2/3 appointed by the General Assembly and only 1/3 appointed by the City.

I can, however, reiterate the previous unanimous action of the City Council requesting that the General Assembly support the City in completing the work mandated in its resolution of June 10th. The evaluation we have initiated is intended to address all of the concerns raised by the City’s consultant and all of the issues identified by the General Assembly in the draft legislation. The City Council is committed to identifying and institutionalizing best practices that support the airport for the long-term. We have previously provided you with the City Manager’s work plan to accomplish these objectives.

As we understand the rules of the General Assembly, the bill would remain alive in the short session, thereby providing a vehicle to take action if the General Assembly saw a need to do so

after reviewing the City's work. Therefore, is there a compelling reason for the General Assembly to take further action at this time? We are confident that the City can address all of the issues raised through the process that we have initiated. If we do not do so, alternative action by the General Assembly has not been precluded.

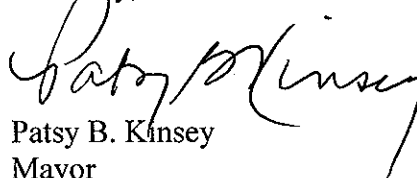
As Mayor, I would personally be willing to meet with leadership from the General Assembly to discuss in detail the work the City has undertaken so that we can be certain that we have not missed any items of concern to the General Assembly.

Finally, there are two points on which I consider important to state for the record. First, the City has been consistently accused of ignoring the recommendations from our airport consultant. This is not true. The Council's resolution was specifically constructed to address the issues raised by the consultant. We recognize that the consultant – without documentation – opined that an authority is “likely” the best structure for the future; however, he also stated – with documentation – that Charlotte's airport is the least likely airport for conversion to an authority. Secondly, it has also been misstated that the City has attempted to misappropriate airport money. The examples cited are misrepresentations. To be clear: the City has not and will not use any airport funds that in any way violate the letter or spirit of the law.

We sincerely hope and expect that the locally driven, collaborative effort that we have undertaken will provide for stability at the airport and implementation of best practices that meet our mutual goals, including an “airport governance structure that best achieves the objectives of keeping the Charlotte Douglas International Airport as one of the best performing and lowest cost major hub airports.”

Again, we appreciate your efforts to keep channels of communication open and to avoid unnecessary conflict that could jeopardize the airport at this important time. We will continue to do the same.

Sincerely,



Patsy B. Kinsey
Mayor