

Testimony before the Montgomery County Council
June 13, 2023

Good Afternoon,

My name is Nancy Shenk and I wanted to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you regarding passage of Bill 24-23 to create an Airpark Community Advisory Committee. And a special thank you to those members of the Council that voted to bring this bill before the entire County Council for consideration.

I have lived about 3 miles "as the crow flies" from the Montgomery County Airpark for the past 47 years and was an original member of the previous Airpark Liaison Committee.

A bit of background.... Back in the 1940's the Congressional Airport was located on Rt. 355 near the intersection with Twinbrook Pkwy. in Rockville ...basically across the street from where the new Wegman's complex is being built. In the early 1950's the County recognized that development was moving out towards Rockville and decided that the airport needed to be relocated. Property in the upcounty area was mostly farmland and provided an opportunity for the Airpark to be built in its current location. (Just as an aside... Many of us who are natives of Montgomery County, and old enough, remember spending many hours at the roller rink with live organ music that took over one of the abandoned airplane hangers in Rockville.)

The recreational pilots flying out of the new Montgomery County airpark appreciated the wide open spaces over which to fly and had little to no restrictions.

However, over the years, the county approved residential, educational and religious institutions, light industrial, government installations and retail development that now exists around the airpark and literally up to the end of the runway. Basically taking over all of the wide open spaces over which pilots used to fly.

And the traffic at the Airpark has changed as well. No longer are there only recreational pilots.... The Airpark has become the home to several flight schools, a charter jet service, helicopters, and many other companies serving the metropolitan area.

The incredible increase of flights has disrupted the community with noise, dangerously low flying aircraft and other health and safety risks.

And unfortunately, the community of residents, recreational pilots, businesses and other stakeholders do not have the opportunity to work with each other and the Revenue Authority to openly and productively open up lines of communication... Having the ability to discuss the issues and negotiate changes that would allow all parties to work cooperatively with transparency. I believe that confirmation of Bill 24-23 would allow this to happen.

Many communities across the country have made progress in this area working with the local airport and the FAA....we in Montgomery County can do the same.

I would, however, make a couple of minor recommendations to the original bill, which I have attached to my testimony for your consideration.

It is my belief that it is the local government's responsibility to represent the communities they serve and to take seriously their concerns for their safety, well being and quality of life.

I am more than happy to further discuss these issues with you.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Nancy Shenk, Goshen Estates....

Amendments to Bill 23-24

Bill Specifics:

Voting Members:

-A representative of the **East Village of Montgomery Village** (This community in Montgomery Village is the most impacted by the Airpark and should have a specific seat at the table)

-**4, not 3** community members. Should **not** have to be nominated by homeowner's associations, civic associations or community groups. Many people impacted by the operations at the Airpark do not live in communities represented by homeowner's associations.

- **Delete** representation of the Economic Development Corporation. I don't believe that they should be considered a stakeholder in regards to the concerns of the airpark community.

-Business owners on the committee should **specifically be those involved with the airpark**, Not from the county as a whole