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Tuesday, May 24, 2005

\$2 million bond would pay for airport projects

By Bill Gisel

AUBURN — DeKalb County Commissioners Monday approved a resolution supporting a \$2 million bond issue for projects at the county airport south of Auburn.

The Board of Aviation Commissioners last Friday approved the bond, which now goes to the County Council for a public hearing June 6. Final say on whether the bonds can be sold lies with the state Department of Local Government Finance.

The airport uses the bond funds to pay in advance for improvements before receiving state and federal reimbursement. The bonds will be repaid over a five-year period.

The bonds could be used to finance the purchase of the remaining portion of the Dollier farm east of the airport.

The 40-acre tract is under option that is due to expire this year.

According to airport manager Russ Couchman, bond funds also might be used in construction of a ramp and taxiway for a new hangar the Rieke Corp. is building.

Other possible projects are the possible expansion of the hangar next to the airport terminal to make room for a new airport-based engine repair business and an upgrade to the building's electrical system to three-phase.

In other airport-related business, the commissioners received a recommendation from airport officials regarding two proposed subdivisions north and south of the airport.

Diamond Lakes subdivision would see the development of 102 acres into 64 residential home sites south of the airport. The development plans include two artificial lakes and a retention pond.

Silverado Section IV north of the airport also would likely use storm-water retention ponds containing standing water, according to Brad Stump, aviation board treasurer and a former



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county zoning administrator.

The presence of open water is “a significant wildlife attractant ... located in an area where an FAA advisory on wildlife mitigation calls for only dry detention ponds that drain within 48 hours of a storm water event,” according to the aviation board recommendation.

Both proposed subdivisions are located within the traffic pattern that would be subject to noise from aircraft, and there are concerns that “prospective buyers often are not adequately made aware of that fact prior to the purchase of a lot,” the aviation board said.

Also, the report says, the airport was moved once (from north of Auburn) to relocate away from incompatible land use.

The subdivision requests come at the same time that the aviation board is working on land-use compatibility zoning recommendations, which are needed to meet federal grant assurances.

The Diamond Lakes subdivision goes before the county Plan Commission in a meeting at 7 tonight in the courthouse.

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