



Airport buying at least one home

By Nichole Hacha-Thomas nthomas@kpcnews.net
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AUBURN — The DeKalb County Airport Authority approved the future purchase of at least one home on C.R. 31 and discussed buying another at its meeting Friday.

The board voted to make an offer to purchase the home of Harold Norris on C.R. 31 as part of the airport's runway extension project. The Norris home — and five others — would need to be purchased if the airport extends its runway from 5,000 feet to a proposed 7,000 feet.

The airport received appraisals approved by the Federal Aviation Administration for \$145,000 for the Norris home and \$150,000 for the home of Doug Trovinger last month. The appraisals cover the cost of the homes, but airport manager Russ Couchman said the airport will incur the cost of providing the homeowners with a federally mandated relocation agent.

"The relocation agent comes at no cost to the Norrises and will work with them to come up with the amount it will cost them to move," Couchman said at the meeting.

Relocation agents are paid by the airport, but work to make sure homeowners aren't abused by any government entity.

Couchman said the airport will put down \$110,000 cash on the Norris home, while financing the balance. The remainder will be paid when the airport receives its spring tax payment, Couchman said.

The entire purchase amount and subsequent relocation costs likely will be reimbursed by the FAA as part of several runway extension grants.

In addition, the board discussed purchasing the Trovinger home, but ultimately decided there is plenty of time to make an offer. While the runway extension is a few years from completion, the board is exploring the purchase of the Trovinger home now at the homeowner's request.

"We want to work with (the Trovingers). If they want to have certainty and lock in a price, OK. If not, we can wait," board member Jeff Turner said at the meeting. "We want to do this in a cooperative way. If that means we wait — we wait."

Couchman said he hopes to have enough cash on hand by the end of 2012 to make an offer to the Trovingers.

The board decided to demolish a home it has owned for more than a decade. The home on C.R. 60 had been used as a rental property before the tenant moved at the end of October.

When Couchman assessed the condition of the home, it was determined to the home had fallen into disrepair that include problems with the septic system, crawlspace and more.

"I don't think we want to spend any money to fix it up, now," Couchman said. "Why tie ourselves into a five- or eight-year payback if we think our best use is to use it for aviation?"

Couchman said the home wouldn't need to be demolished for the runway extension, but its site can be used to expand other aspects of the airport in the future.

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Couchman will secure at least two quotes on demolishing the property. Before he does that, though, Couchman said he would like to offer the contents to organizations such as Habitat for Humanity before seeing if the structure could be used by the police or fire departments for forced-entry practices or a controlled burn.

"After all that, we'd hire a contractor to come in and finish it up," Couchman said.

The final cost for demolition will fall between \$10,000 and \$15,000, he estimated.

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