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Mayor Smith:

I am writing in regards to the North Little Rock Airport. As you know my family has been involved in real estate development in the North Little Rock area with six shopping centers in North Little Rock, as well as numerous other single tenant properties in the city. Those are in addition to the six shopping centers we have in Little Rock, plus other centers in Jacksonville, Pine Bluff, Magnolia, and centers outside this state. Our properties in North Little Rock alone contribute approximately \$933,363.24 in property taxes which support our schools. Our tenants generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales taxes benefitting the city and employing hundreds of residents who contribute to the North Little Rock economy.

In 2001 I made the decision to purchase an airplane. The next step was to decide whether to hanger it in North Little Rock or Little Rock. I made the decision to hanger in North Little Rock since it's where our home office is located. The decision was difficult because the facilities were very substandard compared to Little Rock. I was one of the first corporate owners to make that decision and since that time I have encouraged others to hanger their corporate aircraft there because of the excellent service I have received from the FBO in maintaining and servicing the airplane.

The other airplane owners and I who use the North Little Rock facility were under the impression if we would support the airport the city would bring the facilities up to standard FBO facilities seen across the country, not only in major metropolitan areas, but cities smaller than North Little Rock which provide FBO facilities superior to the North Little Rock FBO. I also served on the airport commission and was heavily involved in promoting the airport and trying to help it grow. During my time on the commission we made multiple attempts to bring the FBO facilities up to better standards, but got little or no interest from the city as to the needs of the airport. In speaking with other corporate aircraft tenants, we are in unanimous agreement that it is past time for the city to show an interest in the airport and bring the facilities up to standards comparable to other FBO's of similar size communities across the country. We are the largest general aviation airport in the state and have the worst facilities in the state. I personally know of several other owners who would consider moving their airplanes from Little Rock to North Little Rock if the airport would upgrade the facilities.

The current state of our FBO is unacceptable to me and in my opinion, it should be unacceptable to the city. The North Little Rock Airport can't expect FBO operators or tenants to continue to support the airport with substandard facilities and lack of infrastructure. The airport can't attract aviation businesses that create jobs to come to the North Little Rock Airport under the current conditions. The airport is a major city asset and should be recognized as one. If the current tenant

base frowns on the lack of support, then you can imagine why an aircraft operator traveling across the country doesn't even consider landing in North Little Rock. If they choose to land in Little Rock, then they will most likely not support the restaurants and hotels in North Little Rock; a loss of economic benefit which could be brought to North Little Rock.

I have always been proud of how the citizens supported North Little Rock when we were competing for things such as Verizon Arena, Dickey Stephens Park, and most recently the Downtown Plaza. The airport should be no different. It is past time to bring our airport facilities up to date and have something to be proud of. I would encourage the City Council to consider investing its resources to improve the FBO. I believe it is an investment that will generate great rewards for the city of North Little Rock.

Sincerely,


Rick Ashley
The Ashley Group

FILED 9:44 A.M. _____ P.M.
BY via email
DATE 9-28-18
Dime Whitby, City Clerk and Collector
North Little Rock, Arkansas
RECEIVED by V. Thomas