

Local

✓CF Airports RP 12/12/90 p. 13

Pilots uneasy with city-county accord on airport

By BOB SMITH and
CHELA ZABIN
STAFF WRITERS

In a deal that left leaders of the Watsonville Pilots Association uneasy, Santa Cruz County supervisors voted yesterday afternoon to set up an Airport Land Use Advisory Committee. The Watsonville City Council approved the committee at its meeting last night.

The committee, whose membership will be heavily weighted with representatives of the county's aviation community, will serve as an advisory group to the county supervisors and the Watsonville City Council on land use around the city airport.

State law mandates that counties like Santa Cruz either form Airport Land Use Commissions that can approve or disapprove de-

velopments around community airports, or seek exemptions.

The Airport Land Use Commissions are supposed to prevent land-use conflicts, such as building homes and shopping centers under the flight paths leading to airports. Such a conflict now exists at San Jose's Reid-Hillview Airport and county supervisors are being pressured to close the general aviation airport, one of the busiest in the nation.

Pilots' groups pressed for formation of the commission with authority to act, rather than just as an advisory body. But county supervisors, leery of being cast in the role of having a county-controlled commission dictate land-use policy to a city like Watsonville, and after negotiations with city staff, opted for an advisory

committee with seven members, four of which will be appointed by Watsonville.

One member will be appointed by the City Council to represent the city's interest as airport opera-

and one by the City Council. Three members will have expertise in aviation, one to be appointed by the board, one by the airport manager and one by the City Council.

Pilots and plane owners at the

'We are not trying to get builders to go elsewhere. We just want to keep the airport a viable enterprise.'

—Mike McIntyre, pilots' spokesman

tor. One member will be appointed by the City Selection Committee to represent local government. Two members will be selected to represent the general public, one selected by the Board of Supervisors

airport wanted just the opposite, supervisors were told yesterday.

Watsonville Pilots Association president Mike McIntyre told supervisors that the association "has a genuine concern about how wa-

tered-down the committee will become."

"We are concerned about what recourse we will have to see that clear zones and safety zones are enforced," he said. "We are fooling ourselves if we think that there are no safety or noise concerns at the airport. There's not a day that goes by that the airport manager doesn't receive some sort of complaint."

McIntyre said pilots aren't trying to dictate zoning around the airport. What they want is to keep the designated safety zones clear, he said.

"We are not trying to get builders to go elsewhere," he added. "We just want to keep the airport a viable enterprise."

Board Chairman Robley Levy

told McIntyre that supervisors in Santa Cruz County take the advice of their advisory committees "very seriously."

City Councilman Lowell Hurst said the committee was "an example of a compromise worked out for the betterment of the city of Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley and it bridges a gap in trust that has existed between the city and the county."

He added that he hoped such cooperative efforts would continue. He also said he wanted to make sure that the people of District 3, which contains the airport, are adequately represented on the committee.

Appointments to the committee are to be made by the end of January, Watsonville City Attorney Luis Hernandez said.

X