

Town to host Aug. 25 forum on airport expansion

J. R. Logan

The Taos News, 8/14/2014

The town of Taos plans to hold an informational forum Aug. 25 on the expansion of the Taos Regional Airport. The forum will start 6 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers on Civic Plaza Drive.

A small group opposing the expansion has inundated the council during public comment portions of public meetings. They contend the project will only benefit the wealthy while costing local taxpayers more than \$1 million to secure a federal grant.

Proponents of the project counter the project will improve public safety — both for private pilots, and medical and fire suppression aircraft. They also note that the project has been more than 30 years in the making, having overcome decades of opposition from Taos Pueblo in 2012.

The town has approved more than \$500,000 in funding so far to complete the first phase of the construction project. That phase is currently out to bid.

Councilor Fritz Hahn asked for the forum, and said in an emailed announcement the meeting is meant to “promote dialogue and disseminate objective information.” Hahn stressed it would not be a “debate.”

However, town councilors Fred Peralta and Andrew Gonzáles said at a meeting Tuesday (Aug. 13) enough time had been spent considering the value of the project and hearing public comment. They both suggested a separate forum would make no difference on the ground.

“It’s going to be an exchange of information, but it’s not going to change the project,” Peralta said.

— *J.R. Logan*