



Editorial

Airport, Kit Carson Park and Taos Farmers Market: No, not again

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Another year, it's the same old controversies. We're talking about the airport expansion, Kit Carson Memorial Park's name and Taos Farmers Market on the Plaza. First, a diehard coalition continues to oppose the regional airport's expansion, which, by the way, has already started. Opponents — many are fearful the super-rich and military will overtake Taos among other reasons — have fought the project on a number of fronts, taking the town and county to court, and appealing every permit approval.

We do agree with opponents that county zoning should be better, but they have presented no legal basis to halt the project. After being unanimously shot down by the planning commission, we believe it's time to admit defeat and stop wasting taxpayer time and money.

As for Kit Carson Park, the town council abruptly approved changing its name last year — when opponents said the park was a tribute to a man who was a part of the West's unsavory past. Then, the council reversed its vote.

Now it's back again. We put the blame squarely on the council, which tried to quell the furor when it asked that a committee be formed to come up with a new name for the park. That never happened.

Probably, town officials hoped people would just forget about this controversy. But the council's inaction keeps the door open. Now an online petition is asking that the issue be revived. Let's find a way to deal with it and move on.

Then, there is the Taos Farmers Market, which is set to open May 9 for the second year on Taos Plaza. The council voted 3-1 in January to let the market stay on the Plaza. (Councilor Judi Cantu suggested the market remain but said some issues needed to be resolved.) Next, look for the question of the market's location to once again be debated. Several Plaza merchants who claim the market has been deadly for their businesses have the ear of councilors Cantu and Andrew Gonzales (who appears to be stumping for the mayoral race in three years).

We are sympathetic to people who are trying to make their businesses succeed in Taos. The local economy hasn't had the strong rebound we see in other parts of the country.

And yes, on Saturday mornings it is even harder to find parking — another issue the town has yet to solve — and farm vendors are probably a distraction.

But the market is only open three hours on Saturday morning, plus set-up and takedown time. If those few hours for half the year are impacting businesses so badly, then they have a deeper problem. We also wonder if bringing hundreds of people to the Plaza, even if they just came to buy vegetables, can be such a bad thing.

If the council chooses to take up the market's location again, it will be yet another example of town government spinning its wheels. The flip-flopping of local officials shows a real lack of leadership. We'd like to see some decisiveness so the community can move forward and not stay mired in the same old issues.

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