

1977
July

Some of the planes at the Fly-In on Washington Island Sunday. This shot was taken after many had taken off for home. Over 200 planes registered.

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(208 - they say 270) \$53
revised

Cities Decide ^{B11 F11} 1940 Local Issues

Wausau, Kenosha Veto New Bonds; Sheboygan Votes Industry Subsidy

Local issues ranging from subsidy of industry to bond issues were decided in municipal referendums throughout the state Tuesday.

Sheboygan voters approved a proposal to subsidize industrial and commercial development of the city with a sum not to exceed \$3,000 annually.

At Kenosha a proposed \$200,000 bond issue was defeated by a 2 to 1 margin. The funds to be raised by the bonds were to be used in retiring part of the city's debt. As a result of the vote the entire sum of \$200,000 must be placed on the 1941 tax rolls. This may require a three mill increase in the tax rate, according to City Clerk A. E. Axtell.

Bonds Rejected

A \$585,000 bond issue for new school buildings and an athletic field at Wausau was rejected by a vote of 4,611 to 2,683, while Schofield voters approved a new water and sewer system, 441 to 40.

Beloit voters rejected a \$900,000 bond issue for a new high school. Washington Island voted to appropriate \$3,500 for the purchase of its privately owned airport, but the town of Nawawaupee turned down a proposal to buy the site of the privately owned airport that now serves the Door county peninsula.

Rice Lake approved a \$50,000 bond issue for the construction of a new armory, and Sullivan voters approved an \$8,000 combination village hall and fire station.

Whitewater cast the largest vote in its history outside of a mayoralty contest to defeat a proposal to halt construction of a filling station in a residential district. More than 1,700 votes were cast.

B11 F11

Island airport slated for upgrade

10/24/06

The Washington Island airport will get an upgrade with \$76,000 from the Federal Aviation Administration, according to a statement released Oct. 13 by Gov. Jim Doyle.

The money will be added to a town of Washington contribution of \$2,000 to construct a runway extension. The work is scheduled to start in the spring of 2007.

Unpredictable winds can make landing difficult, and the runway extension will help avoid problems, according to Doyle. The plan is to extend the runway from 1,840 feet to 2,250 feet to provide pilots with an additional option for landing a plane.

Currently, the airport includes a 2,240-foot turf runway and facilities to house 16 aircraft.

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Alternate ^{2/1/05} airport plan offered

*Info meeting
on Island gives
residents
opportunity
to voice opinions*

By Paige Funkhouser
Advocate staff reporter

Residents in both the opposing and favoring camps of the Washington Island airport realignment plan were given another opportunity to speak their minds at a special Town Board meeting Thursday night.

No formal action was taken; the meeting was only a forum for the presentation of petitions, written statements, and oral comments by those concerned with the changes the Town Board is proposing to make to the airport.

The Town Board passed a resolution in August outlining the basic steps the runway realignment project will take, including: the realignment of the NE/SW runway 10 degrees to the north, extending it to 2,250 feet from its current length of 1,250 feet; obtaining necessary "avigation easements" over the realignment area; and the installation of lights to improve safety at the airport.

"Avigation easements" is a term for the airspace rights the state plans to buy from private property owners to allow airplanes to fly over their land.

Since the August meeting, a group of concerned Islanders has formulated what they describe as a compromise plan to that of the town and Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The alternative calls for the crosswind runway to be extended to 1,840 feet instead of 2,250; for the runway not to be aligned with the farm museum or town center; for the runway to continue as it is currently being used — only during higher velocity crosswinds — which would reduce the frequency of usage and new impacts of the proposed WDOT plan; and for the runway to dodge the hill at the southwest corner of the airport, which would create a flatter runway than the existing runway.

At the meeting, questions were raised about costs, elevation of the runways, even about birds that might flock to drainage areas the proposed runway realignment could create, causing a potential hazard. However, the board was unable to answer the majority of questions. Town Chairman Gordon Jaeger said the town would not know the answers to most of the questions regarding the design specifications until after engineers had made the necessary studies and calculations.

After audience members voiced their opinions, Jaeger said he would report back to the town as the engineering work progresses, and that he sees no objections to forwarding the proposed compromise plan to the WDOT.

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AIRPORT FACTS!!

This is partially a response to the unsigned boxholder mailing sent during the week of August 2, 2004, which was inaccurate and negative. These are also responses to subsequent comments published by persons against airport improvement. These dissenters keep bringing up the matter that five years ago a referendum defeated the proposed realignment. The main reason the referendum was defeated was the wording which caused taxpayers to believe that their tax dollars would be required. The community was misled, as it was when the \$800,000 Jackson Harbor project was flushed down the drain and went to Baileys Harbor.

The reason this issue of bringing up airport runway realignment has come up again, in spite of the referendum vote five years ago, is because the problem did not just go away. It was and is an issue of safety and it will always exist until the public recognizes the problem and fixes it. The four runway incidents that have occurred on the short runway have not resulted in any deaths, thank goodness.

Lengthening the short runway approximately 1,000 feet will not attract larger aircraft. It will still be shorter than the main runway. We're talking about the same approximate runway length for the proposed enhancement, without the benefit of 1,000 feet plus of overrun available on the main runway.

The EAA Chapter has never had a Flight School, nor does it plan to establish one. There's no flight school at Escanaba, but if there were it would not recommend a student flying over water.

There are no immediate plans to pave the runways. We hope that might happen at some time in the future, just as our roads have been paved. The safety enhancement of a longer grass runway is all that's being proposed.

Regarding concerns about traffic over the Farm Museum or Downtown, aircraft are currently requested to fly a heading to avoid populated areas of the Island. Correspondingly, signs could be posted at the departure ends of the realigned runway to fly headings avoiding the Downtown and Farm Museum areas.

There is no reason to believe there will be cost overruns for the project. Recent experience with local projects such as the State Dock in Jackson Harbor and the Airport Maintenance Building indicate otherwise. As to the cost to taxpayers, the Town has adequate grants and credit with the DOT to fund the project.

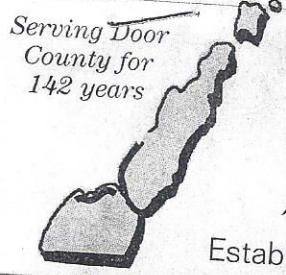
All in all, we have an opportunity to enhance the Island's attractions and safety. We can and should do it! Be sure to attend the meeting on Wednesday the 25th of August.

Wayne Boshka, Win Jones, Ed Graf, Walt Nehlsen, Rich Moeller, Don Lockhart, Bob Swanston, Mike Berger, Steve Kieffer, Bruce McClaren, Sam Myers, Phil Murphy and Larry Harvell.

FOUR SECTIONS

Vol. 142, No. 120

Press run: 10,130



Door County

Established in 1862

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Jan 2005

...ered the town to hold a public hearing after...
...n't given proper public n...
...the first hearing.
...hat second public hearin...
...w been scheduled for 7...
...ursday Jan. 27.
...Officials said the imp...
...ents are to be funded a...
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...governments, with the town...
...ing in only 2.5 percent. This...
...able funding is a deal-clinch...
...some.

Island airport plan divides residents

Board rejects referendum proposal

By Deb Fitzgerald
Advocate staff reporter

The latest developments in the conflict over the Washington Island airport improvement issue have not moved opposing sides of the issue any closer together.

In fact, "gut-wrenching," "crazy," "divisive," "nasty" and "frustrating" are still some of the words the residents are using to describe the controversial project dividing the small community.

At issue is a proposed plan to improve the Island's 77-year-old, town-owned airport. The proposal, developed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT), calls for a realignment of the northeast/southwest runway 10 degrees to the north; an

extension of the runway to 2,250 feet from its current length of 1,250 feet; acquisition of aviation easements over the realignment area; and the installation of lights to improve airport safety.

Town Chairman Gordon Jaeger crafted a referendum question and put the issue on the board's Tuesday night agenda. The idea was to have the question appear on the April ballot, but the measure failed 3-2.

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"We haven't improved the port in over 70 years, but I've improved other (public) things," Gunnlaugsson said. "That is costing the town sweetener pot."

Some of those who support the project say they need to be made for safety reasons. In fact, Bill Bassett, supervisor, didn't support the referendum because he said safety should trump opinion.

"I don't think it's appropriate to put it out to the public as a safety issue," Bassett said.

But the opposition hasn't been convinced that the airport is unsafe, because if it was, it would have been closed down or pilots wouldn't use it.

Jaeger will...

Island board asked to revoke its July 12 decision

By Deb Fitzgerald
Advocate staff reporter

Washington Town Chairman Gordon Jaeger has pleaded no contest to charges he violated Wisconsin's open meetings law.

Jaeger's plea means he'll face a \$150 fine and attendance at an "Open Meetings, Open Record, and Public Access" seminar.

Department of Justice.

"I couldn't see any point in the town paying legal fees for me greater than the fine," Jaeger said about his plea.

Jaeger was charged with the violation by Joan Korb, Door County District Attorney, after Korb investigated a verifiable complaint filed by Washington Island resident Bill Olson.

Olson complained that the Town Board had added three items to the agenda during its July 12 board meeting: to allow the town ballpark to be used July 13 by the Bethel Church Youth Group; to allow a prayer to be said at the beginning of each Town Board meeting; and to

raft and buoys at School House Beach Park.

Town Supervisor Jim VanRamshorst requested the items be added; the full board signified its approval by voice vote; and Jaeger allowed the items to be placed on the agenda, according to Korb's charges.

Adding these items to the agenda during the meeting violated the open meetings law, which requires 24 hours notice prior to public meetings, or, in the event that notice is "impossible or impractical," no less than two hours.

While one of the agenda items affected events that occurred a day after the board meeting, the

minimum two hours according to the charges.

Instead, the items were added to the agenda during the meeting because it was "extremely convenient, and advantageous" to Jaeger, according to Korb's charges.

In an Aug. 13 statement, Jaeger said it "was wrong to allow the items but issues needed 'to be tal of.'"

As part of the penalty, the Town Board was also required to vacate the action authorizing prayer prior

charge

North American Airways of Appleton received high praise from the Advocate for its weekend flights with the Stinson, "City of Appleton," which took many tourists for flights over the orchards. Eddie Merritt was the pilot. One of the West brothers from Appleton took passengers up in a three-place Waco not only on the weekend, but on Monday, and he came back for Memorial Day. The new Cherryland Airport across from the Sevastopol town hall was mobbed by people who wanted to fly, some people reserving the plane for a flight to Washington Island.

Aviation in Door County got a big boost that day. Plans were discussed by the owners of one company for buying a three-passenger plane, since the county now had an airport. The Milwaukee Journal was on the scene on Saturday, May 26, taking photos of the cherry blossoms for the Sunday paper. Bertha Mae and Helen Behringer, daughters of the William Behringers, got their picture in the Journal, with a backdrop of cherry blossoms. Elmer Christiansen won the Advocate's praise for the Cherry Blossom route map he made, which was distributed to large numbers of tourists.

"The fact that none of these maps were thrown away by the road side," said the Advocate writer, "points to the fact they were probably being kept for future use on return trips here or for friends who will also wish to visit the peninsula."

The promotion was considered a big success, with a count of out of state cars indicating visitors from as far away as Pennsylvania, New York and Iowa, as well as numerous visitors from Illinois and Michigan. Washington Island was the turn around point for the Stinson, and, since the pilot thought there was no airport to land there, notes were dropped asking the Island residents to build an airport if they wanted passenger and air mail service. Actually, the pilot might have been able to land. Already, in January of 1928, the Washington Island Airport Company had been organized and capitalized in Madison at \$5000. George O. Mann, Island storekeeper, was president of the group, Bill Jess was secretary, and Dr. Charles Colebaugh was vice president. Tom Goodman and Ted Gudmundsen were directors.

According to a January 2, 1928 Advocate article, a 55-acre plot of land had been purchased by the group in the north-central part of the Island. Tractors and graders had prepared two 2600 foot runways. Four planes had landed and taken off from the Island airport in 1927.

"The purpose is to protect the Islanders from isolation from storms and from shifting ice floes which have frequently delayed mail and prevented sick from getting to hospitals for needed medical or surgical attention," the Advocate writer said.

Farms. Her uncle, John Bertschinger, had talked about building an airstrip for Alpine guests to use about this time, but that never materialized, according to Bill and Dorothy.

So where did this famous aviator land? Very likely at the Murphy Farm, for the Woodruff article in the previous chapter says that Woodruff planned to put on an aircraft demonstration at the Murphy Farm. Other information unearthed the fact that Lt. Maitland in 1948 was the state aeronautics commissioner.

What happened to Maitland? The Internet Social Security file turned up the name of only one Lester Maitland, born February 8, 1899, whose Social Security number, 380-38-4755, was issued in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where Maitland Field was located. He died on March 27, 1990, and his last zip code was 96080, Red Bluff, California. He lived almost long enough for us to interview him and find out what he was doing in Egg Harbor in 1928.

We do know he also visited Door County in 1948, because an Advocate article says that he attended the Frigid Fun Flight on February 14, 1948, along with Capt. Joe Foss, a famous U.S. Marine Corps ace of World War II. Dr. Dan Dorchester arranged for these big name aviators to take part in the affair.

At the June 19, 1928 Chamber of Commerce meeting, aviation committee member E. G. Bailey announced that he'd advanced the down payment on a Stinson Detroiter and hoped to pay for it by selling stock.

Karl Reynolds said that choosing one central airport was a necessity and he felt it should be owned by the county or city. The Door County News writer mentioned the airport built by Reynolds on Highway 78 across from the old Sevastopol town hall. (In 1930, the highway number was changed to 57.)

"At the present time, Washington Island is ready to build an airport," said the Advocate writer, "and they have several choice locations in view. Sister Bay is planning an airport, which makes four in the county with the local airport (Reynolds Cherryland) and the field at Egg Harbor." The writer doesn't say whether he means the Murphy field at Egg Harbor, or the proposed Alpine field.

"Things are coming to a head," as an Advocate writer put it in a editorial in June 1928, and it was expected that plans for the maintenance of Cherryland Airport would be forthcoming. Also, a group of Washington Island people had met recently to plan for a landing field, and it was expected that the Chambers Island landing field would be ready by the end of the summer of 1928.

and it was not expected to arrive until the day the paper came out. Mel Peterson, a World War I veteran of Company F and an employee of Sturgeon Bay Motors, was listed as an incorporator of the new Cherryland Airways Company, along with E. G. Bailey and John Draeb Jr.

By June 22 of 1928, a committee of five on Washington Island had prices on four tracts of land available as airfield sites. Farms owned by Rob Gunnerson, Peder Hansen, George O. Mann and Hans Hansen were available in acreages from 60 to 98, with asking prices of \$4500 to \$10,000. The Advocate article of July 22, 1928, doesn't say which farm was bought, but by then work had been started removing fences to transform it into an airfield. Meanwhile, in Sister Bay, the Fichtner landing field, the site of Woodruff's airplane demonstration in 1925, was dedicated. A Waco plane from Chicago landed there on July 24. Also, the Upper Peninsula Airways Corporation from Escanaba, Michigan brought over a biplane, "The Swallow," and it used the partially completed runway to take up passengers.

And the Stinson Detroit purchased by E. G. Bailey and company had finally arrived and landed at the Sister Bay field. It was a beautiful ship, painted cherry red with green wings. "Door County's own airplane," so described by an Advocate writer, arrived at Cherryland Airport on July 21, 1928. It was flown up from Appleton, where the damaged propeller was replaced, by Tom Mitchell, accompanied by Charles Towne, a pilot from the Stinson factory at Detroit. It had missed the "pavement celebration" planned for July 14 by a week.

The first people to have a ride in the new plane were Alric Erickson, manager of the Horseshoe Bay orchards (his son, Alric, would later choose a career in the U.S. Air Force); Sam Erickson, Sister Bay contractor; and Herman W. Ullsperger, manager of the Fruit Growers Union. The first paid county tour was enjoyed by David Nebel, Miss Helen Hall and John Draeb.

Mrs. Albert Kalmbach won the airplane naming contest with the suggestion, "Miss Door County." That airplane, as far as can be determined, was the first Miss Door County.

The Chamber of Commerce had great plans for the Stinson purchased by Cherryland Airways. It was decided to send a case of Montmorency cherries to President Coolidge at the summer White House at Brule. Tom Mitchell would be the pilot, and it was to be decided who would accompany him on the August trip.

Lowney Feuerstein, Dr. H. G. Grovogel, Max Johnson, Clarence Maede, Rolfe Olsen, Thomas J. Pinney, Edward Felhofer, R. B. Bieri, John J. Byrne, Leonard J. Stoneman, Frank Felhofer, Jack Stoneman and John Severson.

If one knows anything about the history of Door County, they would recognize that these were leaders, people who got things done. Edwards and Farmer had already recruited 35 additional club members, bringing the total to 68.

Dr. Dorchester was the toastmaster at that meeting, and he urged all to promote the airport idea, hoping the county board would vote to establish one at their May meeting. At the end of the meeting, Mayor Donald W. Reynolds made a few remarks favoring the promotion of aviation. He said he hoped the time would come when Sturgeon Bay could have air mail which he said was most essential to the business interests of the community.

But before the county board could meet, Washington Island got one up on the mainland. At the annual town meeting on April 4, 1939, the Island voted to buy the airport that had been in operation since 1928 from the locally owned stock company, to prevent it from being plowed up into crop land. The Islanders were not about to give up this marvelous new connection to the rest of the world.

Dr. Dan Dorchester, president of the local N.A.A. club, Chester Teske, the secretary, and William Feuerstein, came back with a glowing report about the state convention of the N.A.A. in Clintonville at the end of April 1939. The state officers praised the club for having the largest membership in the state and a very active one.

The group reported on the convention at the April 24 meeting of the club at the Mill. Said the Advocate reporter, "Dr. Dan's enthusiasm over the development of aviation is taking hold in Wisconsin, and his excellent leadership in N.A.A. work placed him in the spotlight at the Clintonville event, drawing many favorable comments. Had Door County had an approved airport, he could have landed the fall convention and had this city accepted as a stop on the coming air show."

The club voted to work with the chamber of commerce in the handling of the air show planned for May 20-21 in connection with the Cherry Blossom Festival. Earl M. "Mitch" LaPlant was present to represent the chamber of commerce.

Rolfe Olsen flew to the meeting from Escanaba and stayed over until Wednesday night so he could give flying lessons. He now had 15 beginning students, as well as a number as advanced students he'd