

Community Action Saves the Day
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As a volunteer working at the Pleasant Valley Historical Society Museum, I was fascinated by the information available. The public interest in the closed-down Oxnard Air Force Base caught my attention.

During the 1970s rumors flooded the county about the closed down 773 acres Oxnard Air Force Base located in Camarillo (OAFB). This large mass of land was soon to be sought out by multiple agencies and many of them wanted to split the land into different parts dedicated to different uses. Multiple meetings were then held within about three weeks of May to discuss the terms, conditions, and prices of this area's further use. Some of the agencies who sought the land were:

- Oxnard Union High School District
- County of Ventura
- Park and Recreation
- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- City of Camarillo
- Commercial Airports
- Marine Corp

The General Services Administration (GSA), which was soon to take over the OAFB, indicated that they would not release the base until all governmental bodies involved had agreed on a plan for its use.

The City of Camarillo had passed two resolutions by the mayor, Stan Daily, the morning of May 13, 1971, that urged the Ventura County Community College and the Oxnard High School District to use the OAFB to push for educational purposes and even a third resolution was rumored to urge the Pleasant Valley Elementary School District to take similar action; however, councilmen stopped at the high school level. Many parents of the students agreed with these ideas and plan to push the allocation for education.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons wanted to have use of at least 150 acres as a youth rehabilitation facility. However, after attending the meeting and pushing for this land the Councilmen and city publicly stated their opposition to the prison proposal. This was not a happy thought for the citizens of Camarillo concerning their safety and personal wants.

The County of Ventura was seeking the base as a commercial county airport.

The City of Camarillo did not technically push for the land, but very much pushed against the idea of turning this "Camarillo Airport" into an annex for LAX commercial flights. The fight was argued for the reasoning of housing, environmental damage, and population explosion. The

fight for the OAFB to become a commercial airport was fought until 1976. Even the discussion had gone all the way to the White House with President Nixon. Mayor Stan Daily met with Special Assistant to the President, John Davies, to continue to work on negotiations of the Air Force Base's Land.

Many teenagers during this time of the land being unclaimed and unused were using the parks for baseball games and youth enjoyment. Park and Recreation then saw this as an opportunity to join in and negotiate a way to use some of these parks, baseball fields, and other lands for the use of parks and areas for the public's use.

Others, such as a member of the council, Thomas Martin, wanted to keep the facility "military in nature". The Marine Corp pushed for use of the base as an actual Air Force facility and training base. This idea has highly frowned upon after a pilot flew too low to the homes of Camarillo causing even more uproar about the use of the land.

Two of the final alternatives for the use of the land that council discussed...

The second alternative most closely reflects the uses seen today.

Alternative #1

1. Strongly support the private university for 440 acres of land
2. Request some 178 acres for use by the City of Camarillo
3. Apply 14 acres for an extension of Springville Road on top of the existing runway
4. Support the request by the County Board of Education for 7 acres of land
5. Recommend 115 acres be surplus sold to the highest bidder

Alternative #2 (if GSA refused the Health Education and Welfare(HEW) proposal in Alternative #1)

1. Request all 773 acres which were all of the base property uses being:
 - a) Provide general aviation airstrip of 265 acres with a 4000-foot runway
 - b) 105 acres for vehicular recreation area
 - c) 73 acres for Flood Control facility
 - d) 10 acres for air Museum
 - e) 14 acres for the right of way of Springville Road
 - f) Balance of 306 acres to be allocated to those other agencies which may desire to lease portions of the property
 - g) The remaining parcel would be under the jurisdiction of the City of Camarillo to develop as industrial uses

The citizens of Camarillo should be proud of the efforts and solutions that produced the airport we have today.

Sources for this paper were made available by the Pleasant Valley Historical Society of Camarillo