

CHAPTER 70-A – AIRPORT ZONING

PURPOSE

An ordinance regulating and restricting the height of structures and objects of natural growth, and otherwise regulating the use of property, in the vicinity of the airports in the county by creating the appropriate zones and establishing the boundaries thereof; providing for changes in the restrictions and boundaries of such zones; defining certain terms used herein; referring to the imaginary surfaces maps which are incorporated in and made a part of this ordinance; providing for enforcement; and imposing penalties.

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority conferred by Code of Virginia, §§ 15.2-2200 through 15.2-2316. It is hereby found that an obstruction has the potential for endangering the lives and property of users of the airports in Orange County and property or occupants of land in its vicinity; that an obstruction may affect existing and future instrument approach minimums of the airports in Orange County; and that an obstruction may reduce the size of areas available for the landing, takeoff, and maneuvering of aircraft, thus tending to destroy or impair the utility of the airports and the public investment therein. Accordingly, it is declared:

(1) That the creation or establishment of an obstruction has the potential of being a public nuisance and may injure the area served by the airports.

(2) That it is necessary in the interest of the public health, public safety, and general welfare that the creation or establishment of obstructions that are a hazard or air navigation be prevented; and

(3) That the prevention of these obstructions should be accomplished, to the extent legally possible, by the exercise of the police power without compensation.

It is further declared that the prevention of the creation or establishment of hazards to air navigation, the elimination, removal, alteration or mitigation of hazards to air navigation, or marking and lighting of obstructions are public purposes for which a political subdivision may raise and expend public funds and acquire land or interests in land.

It is hereby ordained by the Board of Supervisors of Orange County, Virginia, as follows:

SECTION I. – SHORT TITLE

1-1. This ordinance shall be known and may be cited as Orange County, Virginia, Airport Zoning Ordinance.

SECTION II. – DEFINITIONS

As used in this ordinance, unless the context otherwise requires:

2-1. *Administrator*: The official charged with the enforcement of the ordinance who shall be the zoning administrator unless otherwise provided by resolution of the governing body.

2-2. *Airport*: Means Orange County Airport (Orange) and Gordonsville Municipal Airport (Gordonsville).

2-3. *Airport Elevation*: 475 feet above mean sea level (msl) for Orange and 454 feet above mean sea level (msl) for Gordonsville.

2-4. *Approach Surface*: A surface longitudinally centered on the extended runway centerline, extending outward and upward from the end of the primary surface and at the same slope as the

approach zone height limitation slope set forth in section IV of this ordinance. In plan the perimeter of the approach surface coincides with the perimeter of the approach zone.

2-5. Approach, Transitional, Horizontal, and Conical Zones: These zones are set forth in section III of this ordinance.

2-6. Conical Surface: A surface extending outward and upward from the periphery of the horizontal surface at a slope of 20:1 for a horizontal distance of 4,000 feet.

2-7. Hazard to Air Navigation: An obstruction determined to have a substantial adverse effect on the safe and efficient utilization of the navigable airspace.

2-8. Height: For the purpose of determining the height limits in all zones set forth in this ordinance and shown on the zoning map, the datum shall be mean sea level elevation unless otherwise specified.

2-9. Horizontal Surface: A horizontal plane 150 feet above the established airport elevation, the perimeter of which in plan coincides with the perimeter of the horizontal zone.

2-10. Nonconforming Use: Any preexisting structure, object of natural growth, or use of land which is inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance or an amendment thereto.

2-11. Obstruction: Any structure, growth, or other object, including a mobile object, which exceeds a limiting height set forth in section IV of this ordinance.

2-12. Person: An individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, joint stock association, or governmental entity; includes a trustee, a receiver, an assignee, or a similar representative of any of them.

2-13. *Primary Surface*: A surface longitudinally centered on a runway. When the runway has a specifically prepared hard surface, the primary surface extends 200 feet beyond each end of that runway; when the runway has no specially prepared hard surface, or planned hard surface, the primary surface ends at each end of that runway. The width of the primary surface is set forth in section III of this ordinance. The elevation of any point on the primary surface is the same as the elevation of the nearest point on the runway centerline.

2-14. *Runway*: A defined area on an airport prepared for landing and takeoff of aircraft along its length.

2-15. *Structure*: An object, including a mobile object, constructed or installed by man, including but without limitation, buildings, towers, cranes, smokestacks, earth formation, and overhead transmission lines.

2-16. *Transitional Surfaces*: These surfaces extend outward at 90-degree angles to the runway centerline and the runway centerline extended at a slope of seven feet horizontally for each foot vertically from the sides of the primary and approach surfaces to where they intersect the horizontal and conical surfaces.

2-17. *Tree*: Any object of natural growth.

2-18. *Utility Runway*: A runway that is constructed for and intended to be used by propeller-driven aircraft of 12,500 pounds maximum gross weight and less.

2-19. *Visual Runway*: A runway intended solely for the operation of aircraft using visual approach procedures.

SECTION III. – AIRPORT ZONES

3-1. In order to carry out the provisions of this ordinance,

there are hereby created and established certain zones which include all of the unincorporated area of Orange County lying beneath the approach surfaces, transitional surfaces, horizontal surfaces, and conical surfaces as they apply to the Orange County Airport and the Gordonsville Municipal Airport. Such zones are set out in FAR part 77 and shown on the imaginary surfaces maps attached hereto. An area located in more than one of the following zones is considered to be only in the zone with the most restrictive height limitation. The various zones are hereby established and defined as follows:

3-1-1. *Utility Runway Visual Approach Zones:* The inner edge of this approach zone coincides with the width of the primary surface and is 250 feet wide for Orange and 200 feet wide for Gordonsville. The approach zone expands outward uniformly to a width of 1,250 feet at a horizontal distance of 5,000 feet from the primary surface. Its centerline is the continuation of the centerline of the runway.

3-1-2. *Transitional Zones:* The transitional zones are the areas beneath the transitional surfaces.

3-1-3. *Horizontal Zone:* The horizontal zone is established by swinging arcs of 5,000 feet radii from the center of each end of the primary surface of each runway and connecting the adjacent arcs by drawing lines tangent to those arcs. The horizontal zone does not include the approach and transitional zones.

3-1-4. *Conical Zone:* The conical zone is established as the area that commences at the periphery of the horizontal zone and extends outward therefrom a horizontal distance of 4,000 feet.

SECTION IV. – AIRPORT ZONE HEIGHT LIMITATIONS

4-1. Except as otherwise provided in this ordinance, no structure shall be erected, altered, or maintained, and no tree shall be allowed to grow in any zone created by this ordinance to a height in excess of the applicable height limit herein established for such zone. Such applicable height limitations are hereby established for each of the zones in question as follows:

4-1-1. *Utility Runway Visual Approach Zone:* Slopes 20 feet outward for each foot upward beginning at the end of and at the same elevation as the primary surface and extending to a horizontal distance of 5,000 feet along the extended runway centerline.

4-1-2. *Transitional Zones:* Slopes seven feet outward for each foot upward beginning at the sides of and at the same elevation as the primary surface and the approach surface, and extending to a height of 150 feet above the airport elevation. In addition to the foregoing, there are established height limits sloping seven feet outward for each foot upward beginning at the sides of and at the same elevation as the approach surface, and extending to where they intersect the conical surface.

4-1-3. *Horizontal Zone:* Established at 150 feet above the airport elevation or at a height of 625 feet above mean sea level for Orange and 604 feet above mean sea level for Gordonsville.

4-1-4. *Conical Zone:* Slopes 20 feet outward for each foot upward beginning at the periphery of the horizontal zone and at 150 feet above the airport elevation and extending to a height of 350 feet above the airport elevation (825 feet above mean sea level for Orange and 804 feet above mean sea level for Gordonsville).

4-1-5. *Excepted Height Limitations:* Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed as prohibiting the construction or maintenance of any structure, or growth of any tree to a height up to 50 feet above the surface of the land.

SECTION V. – USE RESTRICTIONS

5-1. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this ordinance, no use may be made of land or water within any zone established by this ordinance in such a manner as to create electrical interference with navigational signals or radio communication between the airport and aircraft, make it difficult for pilots to distinguish between airport lights and others, result in glare in the eyes of pilots using the airport, impair visibility in the vicinity of the airport, create bird strike hazards, or otherwise in any way endanger or interfere with the landing, takeoff, or maneuvering of aircraft intending to use the airport.

SECTION VI. – NONCONFORMING USES

6-1. *Regulations Not Retroactive:* The regulations prescribed by this ordinance shall not be construed to require the removal, lowering, or other change or alteration of any structure or tree not conforming to the regulations as of the effective date of this ordinance, or otherwise interfere with the continuance of a nonconforming use. Nothing contained herein shall require any change in the construction, alteration, or intended use of any structure, the construction or alteration of which was begun prior to the effective date of this ordinance, and is diligently prosecuted.

6-2. *Marking and Lighting:* Notwithstanding the preceding provision of this section, the owner of any existing

nonconforming structure or tree is hereby required to permit the installation, operation, and maintenance thereon of such markers and lights as shall be deemed necessary by the administrator, to indicate to the operators of aircraft in the vicinity of the airport the presence of such airport obstruction. Such markers and lights shall be installed, operated, and maintained at the expense of the airport owners.

SECTION VII. – PERMITS

7-1. *Future Uses:* Except as specifically provided in [subsections] 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 hereunder, no material change shall be made in the use of land, no structure shall be erected or otherwise established, and no tree shall be planted in any zone hereby created unless a permit therefor shall have been applied for and granted. Each application for a permit shall indicate the purpose for which desired, with ample specificity to determine if the resulting use, structure, or tree would conform to the regulations herein prescribed. If such determination is in the affirmative, the permit shall be granted. No permit for a use inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance shall be granted unless a variance has been approved in accordance with section VII, 4 [7-1-4].

7-1-1. In the area lying within the limits of the horizontal zone and conical zone, no permit shall be required for any tree or structure less than 75 feet of vertical height above the ground, except when, because of terrain, land contour, or topographic features, such tree or structure would extend above the height limits prescribed for such zones.

7-1-2. In areas lying within the limits of the approach zones, but at a horizontal distance of not less than 4,200 feet from each end of the runway, no permit shall be required for any tree or structure less than 75 feet of vertical height above

the ground, except when such tree or structure would extend above the height limit prescribed for such approach zones.

7-1-3. In the areas lying within the limits of the transition zones beyond the perimeter of the horizontal zone, no permit shall be required for any tree or structure less than 75 feet of vertical height above the ground, except when such tree or structure, because of terrain, land contour, or topographic features, would extend above the height limit prescribed for such transition zones.

7-1-4. Nothing contained in any of the foregoing exceptions shall be construed as permitting or intending to permit any construction, or alteration of any structure, or growth of any tree in excess of any of the height limits established by this ordinance except as set forth in section IV-1-5.

7-2. *Existing Uses:* No permit shall be granted that would allow the establishment or creation of an obstruction or permit a nonconforming use, structure, or tree to become a greater hazard to air navigation than it was on the effective date of this ordinance [December 9, 1980] or any amendments thereto or than it is when the application for a permit is made. Except as indicated, all applications for such a permit shall be granted.

7-3. *Nonconforming Uses Abandoned or Destroyed:* Whenever the administrator determines that a nonconforming tree or structure has been abandoned or more than 80 percent destroyed, physically deteriorated, or decayed, no permit shall be granted that would allow such structure or tree to exceed the applicable height limit or otherwise deviate from the zoning regulations.

7-4. *Variances:* Any person desiring to erect or increase the height of any structure, or permit the growth of any tree, or use property, not in accordance with the regulations prescribed in this ordinance, may apply for a variance from such

regulations to the Orange County Board of Zoning Appeals. The application for variance shall be accompanied by a determination from the Federal Aviation Administration as to the effect of the proposal on the operation of air navigation facilities and the safe, efficient use of navigable airspace. Such variances shall be allowed where it is duly found that a literal application or enforcement of the regulations will result in unnecessary hardship and relief granted, will not be contrary to the public interest, will not create a hazard to air navigation, will do substantial justice, and will be in accordance with the spirit of this ordinance. Additionally, no application for variance to the requirements of this ordinance may be considered by the board of zoning appeals unless a copy of the application has been furnished to the airport owner for advice as to the aeronautical effects of the variance. If the airport owner does not respond to the application within 15 days after receipt, the board of zoning appeals may act on its own to grant or deny said application.

7-5. Obstruction Marking and Lighting: Any permit or variance granted may, if such action is deemed advisable to effectuate the purpose of this ordinance and be reasonable in the circumstances, be so conditioned as to require the owner of the structure or tree in question to install, operate, and maintain, at the owner's expense, such markings and lights as may be necessary. If deemed proper by the board of zoning appeals, this condition may be modified to require the owner to permit the airport owner, at its own expenses, to install, operate, and maintain the necessary markings and lights.

SECTION VIII. – ENFORCEMENT

8-1. It shall be the duty of the administrator to administer and enforce the regulations prescribed herein. Applications for permits and variances shall be made to the administrator upon a

form published for that purpose. Applications required by this ordinance to be submitted to the administrator shall be promptly considered and granted or denied. Application for action by the board of zoning appeals shall be mailed or presented to the board of zoning appeals, c/o the County administrator as governed by article 12-04 of the Orange County Zoning Ordinance, 1979, as amended, [section

SECTION IX. – APPEALS

9-1. Any person aggrieved, or any officer, department, board or bureau of the county affected by a decision of the administrator may appeal to the Orange County Board of Zoning Appeals as established by article 12 (12-03 through 12-07) of the Orange County Zoning Ordinance, 1979, as amended [section 70-61 et seq. of the Code].

SECTION X. – JUDICIAL REVIEW

10-1. Any person aggrieved or any taxpayer affected, by any decision of the board of zoning appeals may appeal to the circuit court of the county as governed by article 12-6 of the Orange County Zoning Ordinance, 1979, as amended [section 70-69(a) of the Code].

SECTION XI. – PENALTIES

11-1. Each violation of this ordinance or of any regulations, order, or ruling promulgated hereunder shall constitute a misdemeanor and be punishable by a fine of not less than \$10.00 nor more than \$250.00 as governed by article 13 of the Orange County Zoning Ordinance, 1979, as amended [section 70-731 et seq. of the Code].

SECTION XII. – CONFLICTING REGULATIONS

12-1. Where there exists a conflict between any of the

regulations or limitations prescribed in this ordinance and any other regulations applicable to the same area, where the conflict be with respect to the height of structures or trees, and the use of land, or any other matter, the more stringent limitation or requirement shall govern and prevail.

SECTION XIII. – SEVERABILITY

13-1. Should any section or provision of this ordinance be decided by the courts to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof other than the part so held to be unconstitutional or invalid.

SECTION XIV. – EFFECTIVE DATE

14-1. Whereas, the immediate operation of the provisions of this ordinance is necessary for the preservation of the public health, public safety, and general welfare, an emergency is hereby declared to exist; and this ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by the Orange County Board of Supervisors and publication and posting as required by law. Adopted by the Orange County Board of Supervisors this 9th of December 1980.

FOOTNOTE

State Law reference– Airport zoning, Code of Virginia, § 15.2-2294.