AQUALANE SHORES • COQUINA SANDS • GULF SHORE
ASSOCIATION OF CONDOMINIUMS • THE MOORINGS
PARK SHORE • PORT ROYAL • ROYAL HARBOR • SUN TERRACE

Dear Mayor Heitmann and Members of the City Council:

For years, issues surrounding the Naples Airport have consumed a disproportionate amount of the City's time, attention and resources. What should be recognized as an important community asset has instead become the subject of recurring controversy and litigation between two public institutions that ultimately serve the same residents.

In July, the HOA Coalition, representing communities encompassing nearly 75% of Naples residents, urged Council to end this adversarial approach, stop expending taxpayer resources on an unnecessary legal battle, and redirect its attention toward the issues that most directly affect our residents and the future of Naples. That has not happened.

Enough time and taxpayer resources have been devoted to this dispute. The Coalition strongly believes the October 2nd mediation should mark its conclusion.

- **The airport dispute has consumed enough of the City's time and resources.** Naples has substantial work before it—resiliency and stormwater improvements, aging infrastructure, beaches, traffic, public safety and other investments critical to the long-term future of our City. Yet the Airport continues to command significant City resources and attention despite the Coalition hearing no indication from the communities we represent that continued litigation is a priority.
- **Continued litigation requires compelling public justification.** In April, Council authorized the governmental conflict-resolution process and litigation by a 6–1 vote, with an initial $125,000 cap on legal fees. That allocation has likely been exhausted, if not exceeded, while nearly $70,000 has also been spent on an appraisal of the airport property. Regardless of how these expenditures are categorized, they are taxpayer dollars being spent in furtherance of this dispute. Before another taxpayer dollar is committed, residents deserve a clear answer: *What tangible benefit will continued litigation deliver to the citizens of Naples that cannot be achieved through mediation, negotiation and cooperation?* After years of controversy and mounting expense, the burden should be on the City to demonstrate why continuing this fight serves the broader community.
- **The City's most important investment is Naples itself.** Council has repeatedly emphasized its responsibility to protect the City's investment in the airport property. We understand that responsibility, but the City's obligations extend far beyond a single asset. Fiscal stewardship requires determining whether continuing to pursue this legal dispute is worth the cost to the broader community.
- **The Airport Authority is transitioning to an elected governing body.** Whatever views individual Council members may have about that change, the new governance structure places the selection of Airport Authority representatives directly in the hands of voters. Continued conflict over giving citizens a direct voice in airport governance does little to advance the interests of the broader community.
- **The Naples Airport Authority is a City partner, not an adversary.** The City and Airport Authority are public institutions serving the same community, and their long-term interests are inherently connected. The pursuit of a mutually beneficial, long-term financial arrangement should be addressed through direct

engagement, transparency and community involvement—not by treating the Authority as an adversary. Council should be working to strengthen this relationship, not spending taxpayer dollars fighting it.

- **October 2 should be the point of resolution—not a means toward more litigation.** Council should enter mediation making it clear it has no intent to continue pursuing litigation and is prepared to find a mutually beneficial and long-term financial arrangement. The opportunity to resolve this dispute is now. The airport controversy has occupied enough of the City's time, attention and resources.

We strongly urge Council to use the October 2nd mediation to bring this hostile action to a close. End the cycle of conflict. Stop committing taxpayer resources to an adversarial relationship between two public institutions that should be working together. The Naples Airport Authority has long served this community and should be treated as a constructive partner. It is time our City act responsibly.

Respectfully,

Leadership of the HOA Coalition:

Bruce Robin, Aqualane Shores
Maegan Dustin, Coquina Sands
Helen McGrath, Gulf Shore Association of Condominiums
Cliff Holland, The Moorings
Nancy Walkenhorst, Park Shore
Bob Meier, Port Royal
Joseph Murray, Royal Harbor
Daniel Barone, Sun Terrace