

## **TLNA Council March Record**

The TLNA Council meeting scheduled for March 12, 2020 was canceled in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following this cancellation, the TLNA council voted via email on the following two items.

### **1. Resolution opposing F-35s in Madison**

Safe Skies Clean Water had planned to speak at the canceled March TLNA meeting to ask the council to oppose locating the F-35s at Truax Field in Madison. The text of the planned presentation by Harry Richardson from Safe Skies Clean Water is attached. In light of the meeting cancellation, Evelyn sent an email to the listerv soliciting comments regarding the issue.

Evelyn drafted the attached resolution opposing the Operational Beddown of F-35 fighter jets at Truax Field Air National Guard Base and made a motion via email on March 18 for the council to support the resolution. Patty seconded the resolution via email on March 19.

Evelyn sent the drafted resolution to the neighborhood listerv for comments on March 23, requesting that all comments be sent before March 26. The comments received are attached.

Between March 25 and 26, the council voted in favor of the resolution via email in an 12 to 0 vote. One council member abstained.

### **2. Printing and mailing the neighborhood newsletter**

The spring newsletter was finalized on March 15, just as guidelines regarding social distancing were being issued. The council debated over email whether to move forward with printing and, if so, whether it was safe to have people delivering the newsletter door to door. In recent years, the council has discussed the possibility of having USPS mail some or all of the quarterly TLNA newsletters, partly in an effort to reach neighbors' mailboxes in apartment buildings and condos (newsletters are typically left in piles in multi-unit building entryways). The COVID-19 situation provided a logical opportunity to test this out.

In email deliberations, council members noted that the delivered newsletter would be a good expression of community connectedness during this period of isolation. Further, Keith and Patty pointed out that newsletter articles could be shifted in order to add information about how to support TLNA businesses during the pandemic as well as to add a blurb about subscribing to the newsletter online. Patty received estimates on a few different USPS delivery route options and calculated that it would cost roughly \$1,000 more than we usually spend per issue to have the newsletters delivered.

Keith moved to print and mail the newsletter to five USPS routes and to add information to the newsletter about current TLNA businesses offerings and online newsletter subscriptions. Evelyn seconded Keith's motion. Between March 19 and 22, 11 council members emailed in favor of this action; no council members voted in opposition.

## **Talk at Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association Meeting**

Harry Richardson from Safe Skies Clean Water

Hi, thanks for inviting us to speak about the F-35 issue, my name is Harry Richardson, I'm an active member of the Safe Skies, Clean Water WI Coalition. I've lived in the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood for about 15 years and lived in Madison, mostly on the east side for 42 years.

There are many concerns about the Air force proposal to bring 18 F-35's out to Truax Field. The final Air Force decision is due out at the end of the month, so this meeting and any action coming out of it will be very timely. One of our key concerns about the siting is the disproportionate impact on people of color, children and low income communities on Madison's North and East Side, including the need for relocation.

The Air Force's own final environmental impact statement (EIS) confirms the most affected area is 50% people of color, mostly poor. This would affect an estimated one thousand-three hundred households and two thousand seven hundred and sixty-six people. Their homes would be exposed to high noise levels, that would average over 24 hours to at least sixty five decibels, rendering nearly two hundred acres "potentially incompatible with residential use," an official federal designation. When flying overhead, the F-35's, by the Airforce's own admission, is four times as loud as the current F-16's (115 db vs. 94 db, with effect of after burners unknown).

Dr. Elizabeth Neary has been working as a pediatrician for fifteen years. She is a member of the Wisconsin Environmental Health Network and of the Council on Environmental Health of the Academy of Pediatrics. She's alarmed at the proposal to site F-35's in Madison and wrote a guest column in the Capital Times on the issue. She notes there are approximately a dozen schools and fifteen child care centers in and around the areas where the most intense noise is predicted. She says based on her own research and experience many children will be harmed by this intense noise. The early years of a child's life are critical for the development of hearing. According to the Office of Disease Prevention children's ears continue to develop in early years and loud noises at that stage can permanently damage hearing. The noise created by the F-35's is an impulse sound, a brief very loud noise. Impulse noise causes more serious hearing loss than steady state noise. Measuring the sound over a 24 hour period, as done in the EIS, doesn't measure the true impact on children. The EIS further notes this could lead to impaired reading comprehension and recognition memory. Health impacts on adults includes overproduction of stress hormones, interruption of sleep, ringing in the ear, negative effects on mental health, increased blood pressure and impacts on heart disease. For children the impacts are far greater. Heightened noise interruptions can lead to delayed speech development, reduced attention, impaired concentration, long term memory issues and decreased math and reading skills. The kids who live in the Truax neighborhood are struggling, with only 48% considered to be Kindergarten ready. One of the schools closest to the predicted zone is Hawthorne Elementary, where most of the kids are low income and children of color. This siting will likely exacerbate already existing disparities in our community. We should act to protect them by adamantly opposing the placements of military jets in Madison.

On another topic, according to research by Solidarity Realty, the affected homes would lose two hundred and fifty five million dollars in property values. According to Jesse Pycha-Holst of Solidarity Realty who says, "this only begins to describe the loss to the homeowner equity and the city/county tax base. It doesn't include the property value of publicly owned subsidized housing which may have to be relocated at taxpayer expense, the property that must be purchased by the county for demolition, the loss of school funding or any possible impact on TIF (Tax Incremental financing) Districts.

The costs of mitigating these homes is likely to be high. There may be funds available from the FAA but that would even begin for at least two years.

The costs of the F-35's themselves is mind boggling. The Pentagon estimates overall spending on the plane over its expected lifetime of sixty years at one point six trillion dollars. Time magazine calls it the most expensive weapon in human history. The program has been marred by setbacks, including five crashes since 2014, contractor delays and giant cost overruns according to the New York Times. **Wisconsin taxpayers** paid just over two hundred and one million dollars in 2017 on the F-35 (about the cost of 2,624 Elementary School Teachers for 1 Year).

For F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, taxpayers **in Madison, Wisconsin** are paying \$10.53 million. Here's what those tax dollars could have paid for instead:

- 137 Elementary School Teachers for 1 Year, or
- 142 Clean Energy Jobs Created for 1 Year, or
- 189 Infrastructure Jobs Created for 1 Year, or
- 105 Jobs with Supports Created in High Poverty Communities for 1 Year, or
- 1,315 Head Start Slots for Children for 1 Year, or
- 990 Military Veterans Receiving VA Medical Care for 1 Year, or
- 312 Scholarships for University Students for 4 Years, or
- 424 Students Receiving Pell Grants of \$6,195 for 4 Years, or
- 7,157 Children Receiving Low-Income Healthcare for 1 Year, or
- 23,776 Households with Wind Power for 1 Year, or
- 3,920 Adults Receiving Low-Income Healthcare for 1 Year, or
- 22,151 Households with Solar Electricity for 1 Year

**Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association**  
**Statement in Opposition to the Operational Beddown of F-35 Fighter Jets**

The Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association (TLNA) opposes the Operational Beddown of F-35 fighter jets at Truax Field Air National Guard Base.

One of TLNA's central concerns is the impact of high-decibel noise on the surrounding community. The Air Force's Environmental Impact Statement, issued February 19, 2020, concludes that over 2,200 residents of the area stretching from Commercial Avenue north to Highway 19 would experience 65 decibel-level noise, while around 300 residents of the Carpenter-Ridgeway neighborhood would experience sound levels between 70-75 decibels. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, 65 decibels and above is "not compatible" with residential or school use. The Center for Disease Prevention and Control has found exposure to loud noise to contribute to health conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and hypertension, while the World Health Organization has linked high-decibel noise exposure in children to poorer reading comprehension, standardized test scores, and long-term memory. The American Academy of Pediatrics has also concluded that such high noise levels can cause preterm labor and growth restriction in babies. This high-decibel noise will have significant disproportionate impacts on the low-income and minority population that reside in the surrounding areas.

In addition to the dangers from noise exposure, TLNA is also concerned about the impact on our community's drinking water of the bedding-down of the F-35s. Materials used in the operation of the aircraft contain PFAS, a chemical linked to development problems, thyroid disease, cancer, and weakened childhood immunity. Groundwater pollution from PFAS is already a problem in Madison because of the F-16 jets. (In May 2019, the chemical was found in ten of nineteen tested municipal wells, resulting in the well closest to the airport (Well 15) being shut down.) The construction required to expand Truax Field and the operation of the jets pose a significant risk of further groundwater contamination, not just to the immediate surrounding area, but to Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood as well as the entire city of Madison.

Whatever economic benefits are said to accrue from the bedding-down of the F-35 fighter jets, they pale in comparison with the harm that will certainly be done to the health and livelihoods of our friends and neighbors.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association opposes the basing of a squadron of F-35 fighter jets at Truax Field because it is contrary to our neighborhood's values of promoting the health and well-being of our community and our city.

Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Council  
March , 2020

## Listserv Comments received:

- Great idea. I support opposing the F-35s.
- A letter of opposition? Have a majority of TLNA residents expressed opposition? What about a letter citing pros and cons instead, like we did with the Salvation Army proposal, when a letter of opposition would could have actually had an impact? Who is this letter of opposition addressed to and what is the purpose of the letter?
- We oppose the F-35's.
- This reads to me as a description as to why F-35s are bad, not really why F-35s are *particularly bad @ Truax Field/near Tenney-Lapham*. Don't other communities throughout the nation have waterbeds? Don't other communities have residencies and schools? Are other communities not affected by noise pollution? I'm anti F-35 in general, but given F-35s are coming to some number of communities in America, I don't see why we are special, don't see this resolution as making it clear why we *in particular* shouldn't have F-35s near our neighborhood. Said another way, I don't view Tenney pushing NIMBY type attitudes and don't think we should do so in this context either.
- I strongly oppose the passage of this resolution. In my opinion, the controversy over the F-35s has been blown way out of proportion. Opponents to the F-35s have not cited any credible evidence substantiating their claims that the jets will have adverse impacts on the health or welfare of our community. In my view, the economic and security benefits of having these jets far outweighs the *de minimis* impact they will have on the community.