

*Jerry Hoagland Campaign Meeting About the Intermodal Hub
Nevada, TX
April 6th*

*Written by a member of the SLL Group who attended the meeting.
The author's personal comments are in blue and marked COMMENT:*

Jerry Hoagland started the meeting by introducing the concept of the intermodal facility hub. He stated that, "The intermodal facility is my buddy George's (Elking) idea." He said that the DFW area has the 9th highest export of any US metro city; the 5th highest gross domestic product of all metro areas, and it is 19 out of 50 in the number of US ports. We could be a big inland port with the addition of the intermodal hub. He said it is not a rail switching area, but more like a business park. Mr. Hoagland showed several aerial pictures of other hubs, including the Alliance hub in Fort Worth, which is the model for this hub.

COMMENT:

(all these aerial photos had criss-crossing lines of airstrips and roads, not the green pastures and natural land we want)

To address the issue of why we need a hub, Mr. Hoagland showed a graphic that illustrated 15,000 containers come into the US on a ship, 300 containers come on a train, and 1 container comes on a semi-truck. We need somewhere to put them.

The intermodal facility study is done in two phases. Phase One is seeing if it is economically feasible. Phase Two is to go to the investors. Mr. Hoagland stated, "Is there a need? We don't know the answer to that yet. We will need private enterprise."

(COMMENT: First he says we don't know if we need it but he's already looking ahead to private enterprise? Isn't this putting the cart before the horse?)

The floor was then opened to questions. One question addressed the intermodal in south Dallas that went bankrupt. If that one went bankrupt, why should we try to put one here? Mr. Hoagland's response was, "I don't know the answer to that." One of Mr. Hoagland guests said the reason it went bankrupt was that it wasn't run properly.

The issue of trucking noise and traffic, similar to what is experienced north of Nevada near the sand and gravel pits was brought up. Mr. Hoagland said high noise and traffic is because that area is not controlled. By adding the intermodal, there will be regulations that limit what comes in and out, so having the intermodal would actually improve the noise and traffic.

(COMMENT: More trucks and trains will make less noise? This is like saying 2+2 = 1)

Another question addressed the safety of Community ISD, which could be ½ mile away from the hub. The woman asking question told Mr. Hoagland that she lived in Austin for a number of years, and the area and hub near the airport had a very high crime rate and that she didn't want that close to the schools. This would be a magnet for students to go and get into trouble around a bunch of empty, unsupervised buildings; school crossing will be more dangerous, and the possibility of hazardous material being near the school. She acknowledged the possible tax revenue that could go to the school, but didn't think jeopardizing students' safety was worth the money. She asked Mr. Hoagland what he would do to make sure the schools stay safe. Mr. Hoagland's response was that he couldn't answer the question because the county will not have any zoning authority.

Several more questions expressed concern for the quiet, rural lifestyle those in the area have chosen and that this project threatens this. Mr. Hoagland said, "we're not trying to cram it down your throats (COMMENT: sure could have fooled me)...when I started as county commissioner we had 144,000 people...now we have 800,000...growth is coming...I know you want that. (COMMENT: No, we

don't want that! This is the concept we are trying to get across!)” When Mr. Elking was asked to comment on this, he said, “Something is going to happen whether you like it or not.” This did not go over well with the majority of the audience. Mr. Hoagland reiterated that “we are not trying to cram this down your throats...if you don't want it, we won't build it.” He added that the people of Farmersville are, “very desirous of having the facility...if you don't want it, we will build it there.”

(COMMENT: Farmersville was just added as a potential site 10 days ago. Do you really expect me to believe that the majority of people in Farmersville have been informed about this hub to where they can say they want it? It's like voting on a health care bill when you haven't even read the bill yet!)

Several people questioned Mr. Hoagland about if he would buy land or a house out here once the hub goes in. Both Mr. Hoagland and Mr. Elking said no (COMMENT: then why do you think we want it out where we live?) but that they want their grandchildren to have jobs. Mr. Hoagland talked of a relative who lost her job and had an interview downtown, and he doesn't want her or his grandchildren to have to drive that far to work (COMMENT: this is something that those of us who live out here accept. We know we may have a longer drive to work or to the grocery store. We are okay with that.). Mr. Elking backed this up, saying that he's thinking of his grandchildren as well. Another audience member commented that she's thinking of her grandchildren and she wants them to have a few acres at Grandma's house to play in, not live in the shadow of development.

The next question addressed light pollution that the hub would bring. This resident values her dark skies because she enjoys stargazing and the hub would ruin it. She asked Mr. Hoagland what he would do to preserve the dark skies. He replied, “it's just a study. I can't answer this.”

At this point Mr. Hoagland noted that that Bill Carmickle, Mayor of Lucas, had just come in. He mentioned that one of the reasons we need this hub is to discourage municipal utility districts (MUDS) and he asked Mr. Carmickle to say a few words about this. Mr. Carmickle described a MUD that is trying to be built in Lucas that would have homes in the \$100,000 and how the people of Lucas want to preserve their lifestyle and don't want these homes next to their \$500,000 homes.(COMMENT: They were also added as a potential site 10 days ago with Farmersville. This area is near Lovejoy ISD. They have 2% of students as economically disadvantaged according to the Texas Education Agency. Compare this to Wylie ISD at 26% and Community ISD at 31%. I've taught in a wealthy school like this and there is no way they will agree to having this hub anywhere near them) He stated, “We will do what our constituents want us to do.” Mr. Carmickle went on to say that to protect our land, “citizens should annex their property to the city...maybe Josephine and Nevada should merge.” (COMMENT: No! I chose to live in an unincorporated area because I don't want anyone telling me what I can do with my land and my house)

Mr. Elking's involvement was questioned next. It was brought up that Mr. Elking is the campaign treasurer for Mr. Elking, he's on a lot of county committees, and he's listed as the Vice President for Marketing and Sales for Slay Industries, which is a transportation and distribution company. She asked if this is a conflict of interest. Mr. Hoagland said no. Mr. Elking said he's retired. She then produced a page from the Slay Industries website showing him listed as VP in marketing and Sales for the Plano office. Mr. Elking seemed surprised at this (COMMENT: more like shocked and reeling because he realized then how bad this made him look) commenting that, “wow, they should still be paying me!”

Someone asked for clarification on if the hub is going to be private or public. She pointed out that Mr. Hoagland seems to be flip-flopping on the issue, stating a website article that said it would be public and private, but tonight he said it would be only private. Mr. Hoagland said it would be “entirely private” and the only public involvement would be acting as the port authority on setting rules and regulations.(COMMENT: So folks, he ADMITS this is going to be PUBLIC private partnership, he is just trying to avoid talking about the costs to the taxpayer.)

A gentleman asked when we were going to get our say in the intermodal hub. Mr. Hoagland said he was going to appoint a Citizen's Advisory Committee and encouraged everyone to sign up for it (COMMENT: He STOLE this idea from Cheryl Williams! Cheryl explained this idea to me in an email back in March, long before Mr. Hoagland ever brought it up). If this group demonstrates that we do not

want the hub (this won't happen because he will stack the committee with his friends, just like he does current county committees), then it will not be built here. He thanked everyone for coming, and the meeting was adjourned.

COMMENT-

Bottom line: Mr. Hoagland's response to a lot of questions was "I don't know the answer to that." He doesn't know the answers because he hasn't even attempted to see things from our point of view...the noise, protecting the schools, and maintaining the lifestyle we chose. If he won't even consider our concerns, then he's not fit to be our county commissioner. Of the approximately 60 people in attendance, maybe 20 were supports of Jerry Hoagland. That's only 33% and not enough to win if the other 67% go to vote for Cheryl Williams