

Mayor blasts airport backers

Metro Edmonton

Mayor Stephen Mandel had stern words for supporters of the municipal airport, saying it was time for them to stand up and explain their stance.

In a luncheon speech for the Chamber of Commerce, the endless debate on the municipal airport garnered the strongest words from Mandel when it comes to what he called the “status quo.”

“Don’t tell us that your business status entitles you to special consideration, and that treating you like every other Edmontonian is somehow an affront,” Mandel said. “Don’t act like the 1995 decision was just a maybe.”

Mandel stressed that the “status quo” should explain why they think that the airport grounds should stay as is, saying that they should be coming to council to convince them why.

“Tell us about your vision. Tell us you understand what kind of city Edmonton wants to be in 30 years,” he said. “If you can’t do this, then maybe, just maybe, it’s time to let go of the past (and make) the move forward.”

The mayor also took a shot at those who have claimed the municipal airport is needed for faster medical response times with airlifts.

“Don’t scare people with health issues that are taken out of context by not looking at the whole time it takes to initiate and complete a medical transfer,” said Mandel. “If someone is really ill, they’ll get on a helicopter.”

He said that there was a lot of unreliable information circulating about the grounds, and that it was time to start clarifying some of these issues.

“There are all kinds of (misleading rumours),” he said. “There’s lot of misunderstanding what can and can’t be developed on the land.”