

'School children and (airport) runways don't mix'

EDITOR:

At the last public meeting on the airport expansion, I was amazed to see the hand-out by the Solbergs that stated that they had no plans for expanding the airport.

I scratched my head and thought, "why have I been attending all these meetings over the last 15 years if the airport truly had no expansion plans."

Later in the evening Mr. (Thor) Solberg had the opportunity to explain himself. His explanation was worthy of President Clinton's definition of "is."

Obviously his definition of words is much different than mine so, in the rest of this letter, I'll use quotations around his definition.

Back when the Holland Brook School was being proposed, I was one of seven people who ran for the school board. I was the only one opposed to the current location as I felt that airport runways and school children shouldn't be close. Needless to say, I didn't get elected. I continued to pursue the issue at numerous school board meetings.

It was a lonely position and at that time I didn't see many of today's critics of that decision.

At various times, the school board told me that a grade 3-5 configuration was best for our district. Moreover, all of the 3-5 classes should be together in one centralized location and that being next to the Readington Middle School was a big plus. Also, that particular property had been the proposed site for every new school since the 1970's, which is well before any airport expansion plans existed.

What became obvious at the Feb. 2006 meeting is that by the Solberg definition, the Solberg family had no airport expansion "plans" nor any "plans" to pave the crosswind runway at the time the Holland Brook School was built. So apparently, the 1990 decision to build the school was the correct decision.

I still believe that school children and runways don't mix. Now that the school is built and has been operating for a dozen years, I take a different view. I believe it is the responsibility of every citizen who is concerned about children, to oppose any expansion of the airport that would bring more traffic towards the schools. We especially don't want it to become a jetport. According to the Master Plan that the Solbergs authored in the later 1990's, that

crosswind runway would be transformed from a rarely-used grass runway to an expanded, lengthened, and paved runway that would be longer than the main runway is today. In fact, at 3,900 feet, it would be long enough to handle a group of small business/commercial jets that cannot use the airport at all, today.

Please vote YES on May 16th to show your support to the town to prevent the expansion to a jetport. The opposition will attempt to lull you to sleep saying there are no expansion "plans" or that the Board of Adjustment can limit any expansion. Numerous New Jersey court cases have overruled any attempt of local zoning boards to impose conditions on airport use.

In the last few weeks of the campaign, the opposition will mail us volumes of glossy fliers, and they will try to divert our attention to debt and expenses. Actually it will be much cheaper for us to buy it now than after it expands. But for us parents, it is our children that are most important.

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