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# *Commission Meeting*

of

## NEW JERSEY GENERAL AVIATION STUDY COMMISSION

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**LOCATION:** Committee Room 11  
State House Annex  
Trenton, New Jersey

**DATE:** March 13, 1996  
10:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS OF COMMISSION PRESENT:**

John J. McNamara Jr., Esq., Chairman  
Abraham Abuchowski, Ph.D.  
Linda Castner  
Jack Elliott  
Philip W. Engle  
Suzanne Solberg Nagle

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Robert B. Yudin  
(representing Gualberto Medina)

Huntley A. Lawrence  
(representing Ben DeCosta)



*Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by*  
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,  
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, CN 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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mjz: 1-115 (Internet edition 1997)

**JOHN J. McNAMARA JR., ESQ. (Chairman):** Good morning. I am Jack McNamara. I would like to call the meeting of the New Jersey General Aviation Study Commission to order. It is March 13, 1996, 10:30 a.m.

I would like to call the roll:

Abe Abuchowski?

DR. ABUCHOWSKI: Here.

MR. McNAMARA: Richard Bagger? (no response)

Ms. Linda Castner?

MS. CASTNER: Here.

MR. McNAMARA: Huntley Lawrence?

MR. LAWRENCE: Here.

MR. McNAMARA: Jack Elliott?

MR. ELLIOTT: Here.

MR. McNAMARA: Phil Engle?

MR. ENGLE: Here.

MR. McNAMARA: Senator Haines? (no response)

Pete Hines? (no response)

Bob Yudin?

MR. YUDIN: Here.

MR. McNAMARA: Wesley Jost? (no response)

Jack McNamara is here.

Suzie Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: Here.

MR. McNAMARA: Joseph Odenheimer? (no response)

Jack Penn? (no response)

Henry Rowan? (no response)

Fred Telling? (no response)

There is a suggestion -- a very good one -- that Henry Rowan and Wesley Jost-- Well, actually Wesley Jost, we know, did receive a notice of this meeting, but Henry Rowan did not, due to a technical problem in transmitting the fax.

This morning, as per the notice of this meeting, there will be no committee reports, or other reports, or old business attended to. We are just going to call and hear our witnesses. However, while waiting for them to arrive, we are going to have a report from Phil Engle, and have some discussion, with respect to noticing townships which either host or neighbor our State's airports to come before us. Mr. Engle reports that he has had some problems.

Phil, why don't you tell us about that?

First of all, let me just confirm-- Harry, are we clear on the record here?

MR. WHITE (Hearing Reporter): Yes, sir, the machine is working.

MR. McNAMARA: This mike is not the record mike, right?

MR. WHITE: That is correct. That is the amplification microphone. Please be aware, speak also into the other microphone, so we can get a clear record.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. WHITE: Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have called all of the townships that were initially sent questionnaires. The only one to respond yesterday was Green Township. They want to send someone, but he was not sure. He had to check with his Action Committee on when and what he could say coming into the meetings.

Also, I have scheduled Montgomery Township and Moonachie. They are the only ones that are scheduled right now from the towns. We have refaxed the questionnaire to all of the towns that have not responded and all of the towns have been called. The problem is, the mayors are not necessarily in the townships during the day to commit as to when they can come and appear before us.

MR. McNAMARA: Do we have any thoughts on this? We have at least-- Absolutely, we have to have 50 townships that host airports. We will probably have at least another 15 that neighbor airports.

We have five that are scheduled to come before us to give testimony. Of those five, none of them include Bedminster, Readington, Montgomery Township, Lincoln Park.

MR. ENGLE: Montgomery is scheduled.

MR. McNAMARA: Oh, Montgomery is scheduled. I'm sorry. But of the townships where we have notice from prior testimony -- prior witnesses -- that they are having difficulties in their relationships with their airports, only one is scheduled to appear before us. Do we have any thoughts on this on the Commission?

MR. ELLIOTT: Jack, we could subpoena them, but I would not recommend that. Phil has notified these people three times. I think that is

sufficient. If they do not wish to testify, it is my feeling that their refusal to testify says much more than they could possibly say if they came here.

It should be noted for the record that these people were given the opportunity to testify, but they refused it.

MR. McNAMARA: Now, in terms of what it says-- What you are suggesting, Jack, is that it says they have had an opportunity to participate in the resolution of the differences and the problems, and they refused to participate. That would confirm-- That would be almost corroborating testimony to what we have heard from some of the witnesses, who say that the townships aren't interested in being reasonable about this. They just want to resist, whether it is reasonable or unreasonable.

MR. ELLIOTT: That is correct, and was well put. Thank you.

MR. YUDIN: Jack?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes?

MR. YUDIN: I don't agree, respectfully. It is very possible that they are just not interested. I don't think we can assume from the fact that they are not coming down here that they are not willing to cooperate. Even if that presumption is accurate -- even if it is accurate -- I think it is important to talk to them, to question them, to personally see the demeanor and to personally hear their explanations, at least relative to those five or six that we have identified.

I favor sending them a letter in which we will ask them again to volunteer, but also saying in the letter that we are prepared to subpoena them and, if they don't come, actually subpoena them. I think it is a clear stone and very important to what we are going to recommend, that we have an

opportunity to cross-examine the municipalities, at least those that have been identified. I think that is very paramount.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you mean examine?

MR. YUDIN: Yes, examine them and to actually cross-examine them to try to elicit from them what their problems are. I don't think that is something we should just pass over and say, "They don't want to testify? Okay. Let's go on." I really think we should talk to them.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other thoughts on that?

Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: I just want to know why Readington-- They were supposed to come, I think. Not the last meeting, but the meeting before, we thought Readington was coming and they didn't come. Did we find out why they didn't come?

MR. McNAMARA: My understanding at the time was that they had gotten confused because Mr. Engle's office had contacted them, but they were going to come as part of our marathon meetings later in the month.

MS. NAGLE: Oh, okay.

MR. McNAMARA: Are they scheduled, Phil?

MR. ENGLE: No, they are not.

MS. NAGLE: I can call Readington, if you would like, and invite them to come.

MR. McNAMARA: Well, I think I agree with-- Are there other thoughts on this? Ms. Castner?

MS. CASTNER: I would just ask Phil: What happened with Alexandria Township, because I know they are very supportive of us. I am surprised that they didn't come.

MR. ENGLE: I don't know if there was any response particularly from them or not. As I said, the only ones scheduled right now are Moonachie -- excuse me, Dover Township, Green Township -- we had a conversation with him and he is just going to confirm a date -- and Montgomery Township.

MS. CASTNER: I do think that we should push harder to get them here, because I know that Alexandria Township is supportive of both airports within its boundaries. I'll call the township clerk myself and find out why there was no response from them.

MR. McNAMARA: Personally, I think I agree with everyone that the very best situation would be to have the townships come before us and tell us, in their own words, what their problems are -- if they have problems -- and tell us what they like about the airport, appreciate about the airport -- if they do. We know already that there are certain townships that own airports. There are other townships that have airports they do not own, but they like. There are townships that have airports they don't own and they don't like.

We had before us, yesterday, Essex County in Fairfield. I guess Fairfield, if you would believe the testimony of the representative of Essex County, which was very credible-- That Airport is owned by sort of a State corporate entity, which would be the Essex County Authority. The city in which it is, Fairfield -- or the township in which it is, Fairfield Township, has problems with the Airport.

We won't do much to resolve one of the major problems in the State with respect to airports, if we can't get these people to come in and tell us about it, in their own words. However, if we make the ultimate effort to get them to come in and they still resist, then we cannot draw any conclusion other than what Mr. Elliott suggests, that they just do not want to cooperate in resolving the differences. I want to proceed reasonably about it, but I don't see how we can do otherwise.

It is, first of all, necessary, that we have you, Phil, submit to us for our record -- which I would like attached to the minutes of this meeting -- all the letters to all the townships that have been sent out. Also, give us a report of every person to whom your staff has spoken in each of the townships, and attach that to the minutes of this meeting.

Then, I think it is important for us to send a letter -- or to send a second letter and make some personal efforts, as Ms. Castner and Ms. Nagle have suggested. I encourage you, please, to go forward and ask your respective townships to contact-- Well, you talk to Mr. Engle and get a time for your townships, so you can tell your townships when they can come. As we do that, Phil, let's try to fill up one day before we go on to the next day.

MR. ENGLE: Right. I am working on filling up the 19th right now.

MR. McNAMARA: Good.

MS. NAGLE: Excuse me, Jack. Do you want me to call Bedminster also?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes, if you would.

Then, I guess after we have given them a second letter and that letter is-- Bob, would you undertake to write the form of the letter? It would suggest: "This is an important thing for you to participate in. Your testimony is important to us. We are inviting you, but we reserve the right to subpoena you."

MR. YUDIN: Okay.

MR. McNAMARA: Then, I think, before we exercise that kind of subpoena power, we will reconsider -- after the response to the second letter -- and determine if and to whom we would issue subpoenas.

MR. YUDIN: I think by mentioning in this letter that we do possess subpoena power, that might shake loose a number of the airports, and hopefully it will. We won't be required to actually do a subpoena.

MR. McNAMARA: A subpoena has to be served upon a particular person, so I think the letter should be addressed to the mayor of each township, and that the statement in the letter about the subpoena should be worded in the form of "subpoena to you to appear before us." So it would be written personally to the mayors.

Does anyone disagree with what we have just said here? (no response) Are there any better thoughts or other thoughts on this?

MR. ENGLE: The only thing is, though, Bob, is that if you can get ahold of me in the office, or coordinate with me, because I have all the names and the fax numbers.

MR. McNAMARA: What I mean for Bob to do is just write a draft of this thing.

MR. YUDIN: Yes, I am just going to write the form.

MR. McNAMARA: Then, Bob, if you would give it to Mr. Engle.

MR. YUDIN: Okay.

MR. McNAMARA: Then you could circulate it again. May we ask you to do that?

MR. ENGLE: Sure.

MR. YUDIN: You're 288-6512?

MR. ENGLE: That's my fax number.

MR. YUDIN: What's your phone?

MR. ENGLE: It's 288-4710.

MR. YUDIN: Okay. If I have any questions, I'll talk to you.

MR. McNAMARA: I wonder if we shouldn't send this letter certified mail? I think we should.

MR. YUDIN: Oh, I agree.

MR. ENGLE: Either certified mail, Jack, or fax it to the--

MR. YUDIN: Well, you could fax it to them, but you should also send a hard copy, certified, return receipt.

MR. McNAMARA: Yes. Tell them the dates we are holding these meetings, because we have our schedule already in place.

MR. ENGLE: Right.

MR. McNAMARA: The Commission -- if you will keep a record of your postage expenses on this -- will undertake to pay that.

MR. ENGLE: No problem. Jack, do we have Commission letterhead?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes, we do. That is available in Jack Penn's office.

MR. ENGLE: It is?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes.

MR. ENGLE: Okay.

MR. McNAMARA: That should be used.

MR. ENGLE: Yes, it should, because I have been using my own letterhead. Maybe if we used Commission letterhead, it may--

MR. McNAMARA: That could make a big difference. In fact, that makes a big difference from a different point of view, from a legal point of view. They have been receiving notice on a letterhead that isn't our letterhead, and, you know, I don't know what their responsibility is to take that seriously.

That is available in Jack Penn's office. You should get that today.

MR. ENGLE: I will have it sent up today -- or, we will stop by today.

MR. McNAMARA: Yes. Theresa is sort of the repository of that.

MR. ENGLE: Okay.

MR. McNAMARA: That being said, are the representatives from Pemberton Airport here? (affirmative response from audience) Would you please come forward?

One more question. Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: Mr. Weisner is here. Do you want to go in order?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes, but these fellows were here. He came late. This is their slot.

Would you gentlemen please introduce yourselves?

**FRANK VITELLARO JR.:** How do you do? I am Frank Vitellaro Jr.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Chairman, could you please ask them to spell their names for the record?

MR. McNAMARA: Would you please spell your name for the record?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Sure, V-I-T-E-L-L-A-R-O, Frank.

**WAYNE CHOPER:** My name is Wayne Choper -- last name, C-H-O-P-E-R, first name Wayne.

**FRANK VITELLARO SR.:** Frank Sr., same spelling.

MR. McNAMARA: Gentlemen, do you swear the testimony you are about to give will be true, according to the law of perjury in the State of New Jersey?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: I do.

MR. CHOPER: I do.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: I do.

MR. McNAMARA: Let the record show that all have indicated in the affirmative.

The gentlemen here represent Pemberton Airport. Is that correct?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: That is correct.

MR. CHOPER: Correct.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: How do we-- Is there a certain form that we are supposed to follow?

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have any statements you are prepared to make, or are you here to just answer some questions?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, we can handle it any way you would like.

MR. McNAMARA: Why don't you proceed to make your statements, and then we will ask you questions.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Okay.

MR. CHOPER: Go ahead, Frank.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Basically, November 1, 1992, we purchased the Airport. The Airport has been around for roughly 33 years. It has been more or less a dead issue, until we purchased it. We took on a major undertaking. It is 14 acres, a grass strip, located in Pemberton Township. We have a 3000-foot turf strip. When we purchased our property, there were no improvements at all. Basically, the only thing on the property was electric and a telephone. There were a couple of buildings existing there, half falling down, overgrown, so it was just a major cleaning up process. Through the several years that we have owned the property, we have put substantial dollars and improvements into the Airport.

We have a time line here. I don't know if you want to go through this.

MR. McNAMARA: Please go ahead.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Go through the time line? Okay.

Well, the first thing is, in December 1992, put in a new well, all new underground--

MR. McNAMARA: May I ask you to speak into that mike in front of you? I am having difficulty hearing.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Which one, this one or that one?  
(indicating microphones)

MR. McNAMARA: The one with the gooseneck.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Okay.

In 1992, we put in a new well, plumbing, all new fixtures inside the office, tanks, etc. In 1993, we redid our driveway, all new underground piping. Our driveway is roughly 875 feet in our parking lot going into the property. We then submitted our first obstruction removal to the State Division of Aeronautics. We did that for the removal of the trees on our Runway 22 and 4. That was the biggest problem we had there. They were 60- and 70-foot trees on both ends of the runway.

In August 1993, we poured our new concrete floor into the existing shop that was there. It is, like, a 20 by 50 building. That was one of the original-- It was the wooden building slapped up there that someone put up. In September, we revitalized. We put new siding on, and stuff like that.

Then, in November, we went to the Zoning board -- to the Pemberton Township Zoning Board -- to put up our new hanger. We put up a 60 by 45 building.

MR. McNAMARA: You put it up?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: It is up?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, it is up now.

We went before the Board, and they really didn't give us too bad of a problem. I think what it was, was that they were dealing with something--

They didn't know what they were dealing with, with the Division of Aeronautics. They were pretty helpful along the way, but they--

MR. McNAMARA: Is this the township?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: The township, the Zoning Board itself.

MR. McNAMARA: The Township of Pemberton.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: The Township of Pemberton, correct.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: They were pretty helpful. There were a couple of lawyers involved. I don't know what was going on, there was some undertone there, but they were kind of giving us a little bit of a problem. However, the Board members themselves were pretty helpful, pretty receptive to everything.

In 1994, the application we filed in 1993 was finally cleared for the tree removal. That took roughly eight months. What we were able to do was, they only topped the trees on both ends. The way they are now, it is more of a hazard than what they were when they were 60-foot trees with leaves on them. Right now, they are just like telephone poles out there, which they are coming in to remove now. We just went through the process again.

MR. McNAMARA: Why was it done that way in the first place?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: You know, we don't know. We don't know.

MR. McNAMARA: DOT did that?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, DOT did that. Well, the contractor they had for DOT wasn't the hottest guy in the world. He just went in there and started cutting trees. He was there for, roughly, three weeks. He was in,

he was out. The owner of the company never even showed up half the time. I don't think they use him anymore. I think that was the final straw, because we were in touch with DOT saying, "Come down here and look at these guys." They came down and they saw the work he was doing, and I think they removed him off the list of contractors that the State Aviation uses.

Now we have put in for a clear cutting, which actually just got passed. We just finished filing all the permits for clear cutting, so they are going to take the trees totally out, take them down to, I think it is two feet. You have to leave two feet above the ground, wetlands and stuff like that. That finally got passed, and it is a major plus for us down there. It is going to make the Airport a lot more usable and a lot safer.

MR. McNAMARA: What are the lengths of those runways?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: It is a single runway, 22 and 4. It is roughly 3000 feet.

MR. McNAMARA: Three thousand?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Three thousand feet, yes.

In March 1994, we received the approval from the Zoning Board -- which I said -- for the building. That took five months. The whole process, start to finish, took five months. In April was when they started-- They cut the trees at the Airport in April -- did the first cutting of the trees.

MR. McNAMARA: When you say the Zoning Board, do you mean the Planning Board of Pemberton Township?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, right. The Planning Zoning Board, or whatever they call themselves.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: In May, we purchased all new grass mowing equipment, new tractors, new mowers, weed whackers, the whole shooting match basically. We purchased everything then.

In July, we had all new electric run into the property, all new service, 220 service, new pole, new everything -- boxes, underground wiring, the whole deal.

In 1995 was when we received our permits for the new hanger -- for the building of the new hanger. In August 1995, we actually broke ground. It took about three months from start to finish of the new building. Then, just this month -- actually just yesterday -- we received the permits for the clear cutting of the trees, which was a long drawn-out process with DEP, which was very helpful. They were really helpful -- everybody.

MR. McNAMARA: Who was?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: DEP. They were very helpful. I didn't know what was going on. It was just totally out of my-- I don't know about trees and wetlands, certain plants, and this, and that. I just kind of went through whatever they said to go through. That's what we did. They were very helpful. They held our hands through the whole process.

MR. McNAMARA: We have here Frank Sr. and Frank Jr., so it is probably appropriate, if it is all right with you, to refer to you in that manner.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Sure, that's fine by me.

MR. McNAMARA: Frank Jr., you have been testifying. Are you the Manager, the Chief Operating Officer?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, I guess, we all are. I do the majority of whatever has to be done, the paperwork, dealing with the Township, the DOT. I mean, we all do it, but I am the lion's share of the leg work basically.

MR. McNAMARA: Your application to clear cut those trees had to be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: So this process, really, if I understand it correctly, went in this manner: You purchased the Airport in 1992. You noticed you had a safety hazard in the nature of the tall trees at both ends of your runway. You made an application to the Department of Transportation for assistance to remove those trees. They hired a contractor who came out and took the tops off the trees, but left a hazard behind.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Correct.

MR. McNAMARA: It then became apparent that you had to clear cut this forest of telephone poles, as you described it. You had to make an application to the Department of Environmental Protection to do that.

Did you go back to the Department of Transportation for that?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, we were going back and forth. A couple of gentlemen in the Department of Transportation helped us. They told us who to contact at DEP, and then we went through that process with them.

MR. McNAMARA: Who were they -- those gentlemen?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Let me see: Garry Brenfleck, Max Patel. They were the two fellows I worked directly with. Then a gentleman named

Mike Kaminsky in DEP, who was extremely helpful. They were basically the three guys who were really the nucleus of the whole process.

MR. McNAMARA: Did Mr. Kaminsky come out and see the situation at your Airport?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes. We had pictures, the USGA quad maps, wetland maps, soil tests done. I mean, we had the whole deal.

MR. McNAMARA: You had to do all of that?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: How much did that cost?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Actually, DEP did it for free. They just came out and did it. I think that was actually included in the application fee of \$250. They came out and did a little bore, a soil plug, but everything else you could get for free through the township or through the municipality.

MR. McNAMARA: Did you own the land upon which those trees sat?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: I'm sorry to interrupt. Please go ahead.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, no. That's pretty much it. There are some trees that are owned by a corporation beyond Runway 04. I just received a letter from Neil Tully. He wrote a letter stating that I have to go to the owners of that property, and they kind of sign off saying that we have the right-of-way onto their property and they are free and clear of any and all liability, since it is a State contractor that is going to be coming in to do this next process for the trees.

MR. McNAMARA: How many aircraft are based at your Airport?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right now, we have 25.

MR. McNAMARA: Twenty-five?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you know how many operations you have per year?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Landings and takeoffs?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: I couldn't even-- I don't sit there and count them, to be honest with you. I don't know.

MR. McNAMARA: What are the problems that threaten the existence, in the long term, of your Airport?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right now, we are trying for land acquisition. As you know, 14 acres for an airport is not that much.

MR. McNAMARA: That is what you have, 14 acres?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: That is what we have. We have 14 acres, and it is all Airport.

MR. McNAMARA: How many acres are on your 3000-foot runway?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Excuse me?

MR. McNAMARA: How many acres are under your runway?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Everything. I mean, it is all--

MR. McNAMARA: The whole thing is one runway?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: The whole thing, basically, is one runway.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: Fourteen acres is the runway, taxi strip, maintenance buildings, main hanger, everything.

MR. McNAMARA: Everything. You name it--

MR. CHOPER: It's rectangular. It is roughly 3000 feet long, 250 feet wide. That is Pemberton Airport. They refer to it as 15-plus-or-minus acres on the map. Elbow room is what it lacks. Plus, there are, what, 15 hangers?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, 15 hangers.

MR. CHOPER: There are 15 hangers and it is 250 feet wide. Now, they taxi out of a hanger, a guy is landing, and there is no room to taxi by or anything. It is an accident waiting for a place to happen, as far as someone landing and someone taxiing out and taxiing back, and so forth. It is 250 feet wide. Now, the runway is grass. We tried 75 foot with the buckets. We narrowed it down to 50 because of-- Oh, and then, the road, also, goes down there. There is a road that goes down the side, so when you drive in, that is also part of that 250 feet.

It is probably the smallest public use Airport in the State. I couldn't say that for sure, but I think it is. It came about in 1950, I guess, crop dusters, and so forth. They licensed it, and it has been that way ever since. It needs elbow room.

Go ahead, Frank.

MR. McNAMARA: Is there land available?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. CHOPER: There is.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: We are in negotiations right now.

MR. McNAMARA: Pardon?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: We are in negotiations right now for the property next door. It is 127 acres. It is right adjacent to our Airport. We are trying to buy it, which would give us enough growth to keep up with everybody else in the years to come. It would keep us viable. We could put up hangers and then, hopefully, put in another runway.

MR. McNAMARA: If you were to acquire that adjoining land, would you be able to build a runway that would be 5000 feet long?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: We would be able to put in a 4500-foot runway.

MR. McNAMARA: Forty-five hundred feet. What would the orientation of that runway be?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: It would probably be almost north/south, due north/south, because of the way the property lies.

MR. CHOPER: No. The existing runway is 22 and 4 right now.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: The new runway we are talking about.

MR. CHOPER: Oh, the new one would be more east/west than north/south. Right now, we are 22 and 4. The other one would be--

MR. VITELLARO JR.: I have pictures of the property. I don't know if anyone is interested in seeing them.

MR. CHOPER: It wouldn't be a 90 degree over, it would be maybe 30 degrees to the right of 4. It would be 7 east and west possibly. I am just ball parking now.

MR. McNAMARA: Could it be 8/26?

MR. CHOPER: Yes, 226 and 8 or 8, 9, and 10.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you mean 08/26?

MR. CHOPER: Yes, 08/26.

MR. McNAMARA: What is your prevailing wind, do you know?

MR. CHOPER: Most of the winds are out of the south/southwest.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: West.

MR. CHOPER: Occasionally out of the southeast.

MR. McNAMARA: So if the acquisition of that land can be developed and if that runway would be compatible with your prevailing winds--

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, yes.

MR. CHOPER: Oh, more so than it is now, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: It would be an improvement on what exists now?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, yes.

MR. CHOPER: Definitely, yes.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Definitely.

MR. McNAMARA: Please tell us about the negotiations and the arrangements you have to make to make the acquisition.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, we are working with the Division of Aeronautics with the 90/10 funding. That is what we are going to try to do. I mean, nothing is finalized. We are still in the negotiation stage with the property owner. We have a master plan study underway which is going to incorporate this property.

We feel pretty confident that we are going to get the property. It looks pretty good. The gentleman who owns the property next to us is pretty anxious to sell, and naturally we are pretty anxious to buy. I think we are going to meet somewhere within the next several months, hopefully.

MR. McNAMARA: Now, what municipalities do you serve with your Airport?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: It is in Pemberton Township.

MR. McNAMARA: Say it again.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Pemberton Township.

MR. McNAMARA: Pemberton Township?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes. We are about five miles southwest of McGuire, so we have a lot of transient traffic from McGuire come in. A lot of pilots keep their planes there, and people from the Flight Club rent our planes from McGuire.

MR. McNAMARA: So you service a population that is pretty much employed in the environs of McGuire Air Force Base?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes. We have some people from the Mount Holly area, some people down by the Red Lion area, and stuff like that, but the lion's share of it is used by McGuire Air Force Base.

MR. McNAMARA: Other than the acquisition of additional land, what other problems threaten your long-term existence as an Airport?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: To be very honest with you, I really don't see any. The township is pretty receptive to us. They really did not give us a bad time. There are no noise complaints. There are really not that many houses around us. There is one farm that is about 160 acres to our right, then there is a 127-acre parcel to the left of us. American Cyanamid owns the property to the rear of the Airport, the south end of the Airport. To the north of us, there is just a bunch of farm fields.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you service American Cyanamid?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: No. I don't think their planes can land there, that's for sure. I think they go to South Jersey Regional, if they come down.

MR. McNAMARA: You know that this Commission was formed by the Legislature to investigate the demise of general aviation airports in the State of New Jersey. The Legislature would be interested -- without making any promises, of course -- to know what it is that you think the Legislature could do, what laws could be adopted, what changes could be made in the laws that would make it easier for you to operate an airport in the State of New Jersey, easier meaning in a manner that would assure your viability over the long term.

For instance, are you borrowing now to make the improvements? You have made extensive improvements at the Airport. Are you borrowing to do that?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, yes. We have money borrowed.

MR. McNAMARA: You have the, is it, 25 airplanes? Don't they generate the revenues necessary to service that debt?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Not really. We have to go out-- We are losing every month. Every month it comes down to where we are losing some money. But in the long term, we are hopeful that it is going to pay off.

MR. McNAMARA: Your real estate taxes -- is that a substantial bill?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: No, not really. That is not the lion's share of the expenses. Mostly, it is the improvements we are putting into the

property to try to keep up, or to make it more viable and make other airplanes want to come in to use our Airport and use our facilities.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you understand the question I am asking: What do you think the Legislature could do?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: I feel a lot of it has to do with the developers coming in. If they could have something to where the developers had disclosure to the property owners that come in-- There is an Airport in Pennington, Twin Pines. I was born and raised on that Airport basically. Developers come in, they buy the property right off the end of the runway. You know, I take off in my Cherokee, and I get calls from the FAA that I am buzzing, and that is not the case. I mean, a Cherokee on 85 degree days doesn't want to go anywhere.

They call, and I think that is -- whether it is disclosure-- I don't know if they knew the Airport was there, or whether the developer told the property owners that they would come in and the Airport was going to be sold. I don't know exactly what is going on there, but it seems to me that that is the major-- The lion's share of the problem is the surrounding property owners, where they start complaining about the noise, the this, the that. Twin Pines has been there for, what, 50 or 60 years? It has been there for a long time.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: Forty-five years.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Don't you think there are adequate provisions to notify the neighbors of airports that there is an airport in their neighborhood?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, you could probably just go out there and look around, or drive around, and you would see that there was an airport there. I mean, I don't know what is actually involved, to be honest with you. I don't know what the developers are telling the purchasers. They are looking to make a sale. The people, once they move in, all of a sudden the planes start flying, and, you know, the phone calls start.

MR. McNAMARA: Are you aware that there is a statute on the books in the State of New Jersey that requires real estate brokers to notify potential purchasers of residences in the neighborhood that there is an airport in that neighborhood?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, I have heard of that, but obviously at Twin Pines it didn't work, because there was a bunch of people coming up and complaining. I heard, through the grapevine, basically, that the builder told the property owners that the Airport was going to be sold.

MR. McNAMARA: So your conclusion is that the provisions of that statute are inadequate to achieve the protection that the Legislature was seeking?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, I agree with that.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: I think it should be put against the builder, really. The builder should notify, or it should be stated in the deed that there is an airport there. That way they can't turn around and say, "Well, we didn't know it," because that is what is happening, really. Builders do not actually explain to the people who are purchasing these homes that there is an existing airport, or an active airport, or whatever. All they are interested in is making a sale of the property. Then, all of a sudden, these people get up in

arms, "Our china is falling off of this," or, "It is making cracks in the windows," or what have you, and it isn't so.

Now, Twin Pines has had FAA helicopters actually fly over the area and establish patterns. The people who buy the property know there is an Airport there. Now, just as my son said, on 85-degree or 90-degree days, airplanes are not going to take off like a rocket, and they complain that it is a low flying airplane, which it isn't.

MR. CHOPER: I would like to mention, also, that I have friends in Michigan. From what I understand, for several years, anyone who buys within -- I don't know how many miles, I believe it is five or ten miles of an airport, it is written in the deed when they buy that place, so they cannot come out of the woodwork down the road and say, you know, "We didn't know it was there," and they want to close the airport up.

It is quite a distance out. I can't quote it, but you can check with the State of Michigan. I understand that there are some other states that put these restrictions on the deeds when people buy within a certain vicinity of an airport.

I have been in a lot of airports over 45 years of flying, and this is one of the few airports where we really do not have a neighbor problem. Our biggest neighbors are McGuire and Fort Dix. You would think that they would not be user friendly, but they are very, very cooperative and compatible.

Where we are actually just on the edge of their zone there, we have had no problems at all with McGuire. In fact, we have been through their (indiscernible) and so forth. They know we're there. We do get a lot of inquiries from McGuire. People move into the area with small airplanes. We

have a couple there right now from all over the country from people who have moved them up. I mean, they will check a section when they are going to McGuire and they will see that this is the closest thing there. The first call they make is to Pemberton. Of course, most of the time we cannot accommodate them, because we don't have hangers.

That is another thing. The demand for hangers is probably the majority of the phone calls that come in. We do get inquiries, "Do you have hangers? Do you have hangers?" Well, we would love to put up hangers, but there is absolutely no room when it is 250 feet wide and 3000 feet long.

MR. McNAMARA: So what you are saying is that there is an enormous demand for your services, but you just cannot accommodate the demand; that despite the fact that you have-- As I understand it, there are three airports within a seven-mile distance.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right.

MR. CHOPER: Correct.

MR. McNAMARA: They are: Pemberton, Red Lion, South Jersey Regional. The demand is such that all three airports are filled to capacity, and there are still people who want to come there.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, South Jersey Regional, I know, has a two-year waiting list.

MR. McNAMARA: Can't hear you.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: A two-year waiting list -- South Jersey Regional.

MR. McNAMARA: Has a two-year waiting list?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Has a two-year waiting list for hangers. Red Lion has I don't know how many hangers. There are not too many, I think there are only 10. They are all filled up, and they are owner occupied. They actually bought the hangers. I don't think the Airport bought the hangers and then are still renting them out.

MR. CHOPER: I would guesstimate that one of the reasons we don't get complains is because that environment we are in is continuously being overflowed by, right now, tankers, and so forth, from McGuire, and these people are basically a military clientele who live in Pemberton, Wrightstown, Jobstown, you know, the surrounding areas of McGuire/Fort Dix. They are used to that, and they do not complain. We have never had a complaint from a neighbor.

Oh, there is a school, by the way, Pemberton High School, which is right off the end of the runway -- 1000 feet or whatever. Really, when you land there, you go right over the school, of course. You know, you try to stay high and keep it down, but we have never had a complaint from the school. Again, I would say that most of those students are tied in with McGuire. In fact, I understand that that high school built a big addition on there prior to the closing of Fort Dix, and they got stuck with the building of it, because, you know, the Fort closed and the new school was in existence.

But anyhow, they are tuned to that. That is one of the reasons, I think, we do not get complaints, which is very unusual. I mean, I have been at Hadley, Kupper, North Brunswick, and a few other airports over the years. I don't have to tell you, I mean, you know what I'm saying. So that is unique. How long it is going to stay that way, I don't know, but it is in an area-- I

know when I fly above it, Philly is just down the road. You can see Atlantic City. You can see the Turnpike, I-95, Trenton. Then, the Pine Barrens are south of us, just about two or three miles. We are not in the Pine Barrens. We are just on the edge of them, so that is a whole other ball game.

It is unique in that respect. I think McGuire and Fort Dix are here to stay. That is my own guesstimation, seeing what is happening. Fort Dix really hasn't closed. It is still there, it is open. They have a prison. They have a factory there. They have the reserves there. And McGuire is expanding. There are 15,000 people employed in that area -- McGuire and Fort Dix -- who are on the payroll, and, of course, it just expanded because Plattsburgh closed up.

So I think it is a hot area, like Jersey is, and the potential looks good. I mean, it is the old story in aviation, "If you want to make a small fortune, you have to start with a big one." But this is a little unusual. I swore I would never get involved with an airport operation after seeing-- But this looked like it had potential, and I still think it does, because we are starting out small. Most of the airports, I don't have to tell you again, you know, that were big, got locked in with taxes and so forth. Right now, we do not have a tax problem.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you anticipate that as you acquire additional land and add additional improvements that your taxes are going to become a difficulty for you?

MR. CHOPER: Well, I ballparked some figures. If we do get the land-- All the land that we are acquiring -- that is acquirable right now, is farm assessed. It won't be farm assessed once it becomes part of the Airport, but I

inquired. Supposedly, the land we use for the Airport, of course, will not be farm assessed, but the rest of it could be farm assessed, which means that we have the option of--

MR. McNAMARA: Continuing to farm and keep the low tax rate.

MR. CHOPER: Exactly--

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right.

MR. CHOPER: --and not making air, but just large enough for what we want. I understand there is a deed restriction that goes with this. If I am not mistaken, when DOT comes in and purchases property for an airport at 90/10, I believe there is a deed restriction that comes in, which means that it is for the life of the airport, way above and beyond our years. It will never be developed, which is fine. I mean, I am not against that. It is like the Farmland Preservation Act.

Well, go ahead. I am finished.

MR. McNAMARA: I would like to just go back to something you said before, which was, I thought, very interesting.

Mr. Choper, you have been flying for a number of years?

MR. CHOPER: Correct, since 1952. I was licensed at New Brunswick Airport back in 1952.

MR. McNAMARA: So you have been flying for 44 years.

MR. CHOPER: Forty-four years, that's right.

MR. McNAMARA: You have been flying in and out of a number of airports. Have you owned another airport? Have you ever been involved in the ownership of another airport?

MR. CHOPER: I have had another airport -- it is a seaplane base on the Raritan River -- since 1967. I have pilot's licenses already from 1967, so that is almost a 30-year-old deal. It is not restricted use. It is a privately owned airport. It is not a public use airport, is what I am trying to say. It is a seaplane base. I think it is the only one in the State, if I am not mistaken.

MR. McNAMARA: In your experience as a pilot of 44 years and an owner of another aeronautical facility, you have experienced complaints about noise around airports or airport operations noise complaints?

MR. CHOPER: Yes, you just brought up something. When we started it -- we started it from scratch -- I had a partner on it who has since died. It is interesting, because we had sometimes one airplane, sometimes two there. Initially, when we first started to fly off the river, there were nothing but complaints from the Coast Guard, "The boats, the this, the that," you know.

We finally got together with the Marine Police and so forth, and we agreed that when there was a lot of traffic on the river -- which there hardly ever was -- we would curtail the operation, you know, a tit-for-tat deal. It worked out. As the years went on, they got used to seeing us there, and there were times when we didn't fly for three or four months and they wondered why we weren't flying. You know, just the opposite took place. I found that to be very true at the beginning of any operation, you are going to get complaints. But as they see you go on and on, they sort of ease up.

MR. McNAMARA: What you just said is, not only do they ease up, but they anticipate your doing it, and are somehow unsatisfied if you are not doing it. Is that what you just said, that they call you up?

MR. CHOPER: Correct, correct, right. I know one thing, we got to know the neighborhood. A lot of people came down. We had little cookouts down there. We took just about everybody we could in the neighborhood for a ride, and they all loved it. Of course, that cut down-- It was the fact that they weren't familiar with what was taking place. Initially, the first month or two we had the seaplane operation going, there was nothing but complaints, but we haven't had a complaint in years and years and years.

MR. McNAMARA: That experience, apparently, was duplicated at Pemberton, when you -- if I understand your comment earlier correctly -- observed that there are no noise complaints, because the population in that area -- 15,000 people -- having become inured to the operations at McGuire and at your Airport, and the other airports, don't seem to notice it. Is that pretty much what you were saying?

MR. CHOPER: Oh, very much so. Very, very much so, especially since McGuire is a gigantic version of what we are.

(two sentences indiscernible; Mr. Choper and Mr. Vitellaro Jr. speaking over one another)

MR. McNAMARA: Wait a minute, one at a time now.

MR. CHOPER: At Pemberton, we will have 141s, tankers, you know, DC-10s, and so forth flying over continuously. I mean, it looks like they are down about 1000, but they are probably up around 2500. The same thing down the river there. They are used to seeing the aircraft fly up. You know, we have to take off and land on-- We try to stay away from the homes, of course, we will land over the river, do our approaches, and so forth. We will come down on the water. The boats don't complain anymore. The Marine

Police have no problems with us, but at the very beginning we had to sit down with them. I mean, they were getting complaint after complaint. Again, it was in 1967.

If we do not fly, they will come out and want to know where we were, or this and that. I was in a practice for 35 or 40 years in Hyland Park, and they want to know why I am not flying, and this and that. Sometimes three or four months go by and I don't go near the place.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay, thank you. That was my question. Frank Sr., did you want to add something?

MR. VITELLARO SR.: No, no. I was just going to state exactly what he just said as far as the traffic, as far as McGuire. It is constant every day, every day. In fact, even Air Force I practices landings over there. Maybe once a month you will see Air Force I flying over Pemberton Airport making an approach into McGuire. It can be a moving thing to see, but the traffic is continuous. It is an ongoing thing, and the people have just adjusted to it. That is what it is.

MR. McNAMARA: Off the record, I would like to ask if the Democratic operations of Air Force I are louder than the Republicans? (laughter)

Are there other questions for these witnesses? Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: You mentioned that there is a school off the end of your runway.

MR. CHOPER: Correct.

MS. NAGLE: Is that in the Airport safety zone -- that school?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: No.

MS. NAGLE: So it is farther away than that. Okay.

MR. CHOPER: Oh, yes. What is that, 1500 foot?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: No, it is a pretty good distance away.

MR. CHOPER: It's a couple thousand feet.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Actually, it's--

MS. NAGLE: How high up would the planes be?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Actually, I think it is like a mile or so off  
the--

MR. CHOPER: How high are we when we go over the school? It  
is about 500 or 600 feet, 700 feet.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: The school is about four miles away from  
us.

MS. NAGLE: I'm sorry?

MR. VITELLARO SR.: The school is about four miles away from  
us.

MR. CHOPER: Yes, something like that.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, it is pretty far.

MS. NAGLE: Oh, four miles away. All right.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: Four or five miles away.

MS. NAGLE: What do you consider-- I know you owned the Airport,  
you said, since 1992, so maybe you can't answer this at this point. Have you  
ever thought about the long-term ownership? Do you see it continuing in  
private hands, or what?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, yes, definitely.

MS. NAGLE: Thank you.

MR. McNAMARA: What assures that? Is it that the land is privately owned?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: In the event of the death of the last of you to die, what assures that it continues as an airport?

MR. CHOPER: You know, this mike is off, I think. (referring to one of the microphones)

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, I am 27. I do not foresee me going anywhere any time soon.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have a button on your right, Mr. Choper?

MR. CHOPER: No. They are not lighting up anymore like they were.

MR. McNAMARA: Is it lit now?

MR. CHOPER: No.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: There you go, there you go.

MR. McNAMARA: Is it okay?

MR. CHOPER: Oh, yes, now it is.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: You got it that time.

MR. CHOPER: What was the question?

MR. McNAMARA: What assures the continued existence and operation of the Airport in the event of the death of the last of you to die?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: I don't see myself going anywhere any time soon, but, I mean, that hasn't even been-- I haven't even thought of that.

MR. McNAMARA: It is just something that in terms of--

MR. VITELLARO JR.: I haven't thought that far ahead.

MR. McNAMARA: --your answer -- that it will remain an airport--

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: --for as long into the future as you can see.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: You don't see beyond your own deaths, and that is understandable.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Mr. Choper?

MR. CHOPER: I would like to mention that Frank is in his 70s, I am 64, and we hope to be around a lot longer. But, obviously, we are probably going to go before the two sons do. My son isn't here right now. He just finished up getting all his ratings down-- He is finishing up on his CFI right now down in Baltimore. He was down at the Aviation Career Academy down there in Lakeland all last year. He got his private, instrument, commercial, engine, and so forth. He loves aviation, believe me. A lot of people might know him, but he is a wealth of knowledge. He is looking forward to spending his life there. Frankie is also. Frank is what?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Twenty-seven.

MR. CHOPER: My son is 27 now also -- 26 or 27. But anyhow, these two kids are going to inherit the Airport, there is no question about it, and they are real hot on it.

MR. McNAMARA: One final question from me: The land that you are negotiating for next door that the State would be involved in assisting in the purchase of--

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes?

MR. McNAMARA: You don't have to tell me the exact terms of your contract -- I am not interested in that -- but the price per acre in order of magnitude, what would that be?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, when we started out, the farmer was dreaming. I mean, he thinks the property is worth, like, you know, a couple of million dollars, which it is not. So we are kind of going back and forth. It is going to go for between \$4500 and \$5500 an acre, somewhere in that neck of the woods. That is roughly where it is going to go. He is coming down. He is getting more realistic now.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay. So somewhere around \$5000 an acre?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Yes, sounds good.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there other questions? Mr. Yudin?

MR. YUDIN: I am intrigued about your comment on taxes, and I am not sure where I am going on this.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Okay.

MR. YUDIN: From all the testimony I have heard, you are the first owners to say that taxes are not a problem.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right.

MR. CHOPER: Correct.

MR. YUDIN: So this really intrigues me. Are you saying it is not a problem because it is only 14 acres?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, right now, the way Pemberton Township's structure is-- I don't know if anyone knows about Pemberton, but Pemberton falls into what is called a "dead zone" of McGuire Air Force Base.

All the surrounding area is considered a dead zone, meaning that if one of those big 141s or tankers falls out of the air, a whole bunch of people are going to be killed. I think the taxes are reflective of that.

MR. YUDIN: What taxes do you pay now? On the 14 acres, what is your tax?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Last year, we paid \$1850.

MR. YUDIN: Eighteen thousand?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: No, \$1850.

MR. YUDIN: For the 14 acres?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: For the 14 acres.

MR. YUDIN: Plus the runway. Oh, no, it is a grass strip.

MR. CHOPER: For everything, including the grass strip.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: That is our new building--

MR. McNAMARA: It is a grass strip, though?

MR. CHOPER: That is correct.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay. So they don't have any paved improvements there?

MR. YUDIN: Maybe we should recommend to all other airport owners that they tear up their runways and go with grass strips.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: We even looked into, as far as with the paving and stuff like that. That is not going to-- I can see if another 20 acres goes into this, that is, actual use of Airport, that we are going to take from this farm next door-- If another, say, 30 acres go into that and paving and improvements and stuff like that, I mean, we can't see the taxes going over-- I can't even guess, but I can't see the taxes going over, like, \$10,000, \$15,000,

maybe a little more, I don't know, but just the way the tax structure is right now.

MR. YUDIN: You are talking about the additional acres that you are now negotiating for?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right. The additional acres right now, the taxes on that are \$7 an acre. It is farm assessed.

MR. YUDIN: Well, are you sure that when you buy that you are talking about the portion that would stay farm assessed?

MR. CHOPER: Correct.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right.

MR. YUDIN: Does that mean that you have to farm it?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right.

MR. CHOPER: Correct.

MR. YUDIN: Is that your plan, to farm as much of that as possible to keep it farm assessed?

MR. CHOPER: Correct.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Right. Totally, to keep it in farm assessment, or lease it out. We actually have a farmer who is going to lease it to farm it as soon as we acquire the property, to keep it at \$7 an acre. As soon as you stop farming it, that is when the rollback taxes start.

MR. YUDIN: Now, you just said that you don't see your taxes going over \$15,000 when you are finished with your improvements.

MR. CHOPER: It's hard to say.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: I mean, it is hard to say, but we can--

MR. YUDIN: It is hard to say, but you must be looking at that to figure out--

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Oh, sure.

MR. YUDIN: Do you feel that you will generate enough revenues, because that is an increase -- a substantial increase -- over \$1850?

Now, you just have 25 aircraft there. Do you foresee, with the improvements that you are contemplating, if you then have the substantially increased tax base, whether it is \$10,000 or \$15,000, that you will generate enough revenues to deal with it?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: With the construction of "T" hangers, we would have no problem with it.

MR. YUDIN: All right. So that is the key, the construction of the hangers?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: The construction of the "T" hangers is the key, yes.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: The income from the "T" hangers will justify as far as an increase in the property taxes.

MR. CHOPER: Yes. I would say, also, that we are starting out from nothing and working into something larger. With this 120- or 130-acre farm, whatever transpires, you would want to enlarge it efficiently whereby you would have a minimum amount of acres for the Airport, and a maximum amount for farm assessment.

I know there was a time there where we just wanted five acres to put up some hangers, just to give us a little elbow room, to make it safer. Even then, it would have been hazardous, but less hazardous. But you don't need

that much room to put up “T” hangers. In 220 feet, you can have 10 airplanes, right, 5 on each side, so you don’t need much room for “T” hangers. What we need is room, just a little width, and, of course, whatever excess is there could be farm assessed. We already have farmers who want to--

There are certain communities where you can’t get farmers to farm. I know that, because I have a farm. Years ago, they used to pay you, and now you pay them. This is wide-open farmland where a guy can run his tractor back and forth for half a mile either way. We have a farmer right now who would continue to farm it. I might even get involved in it.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay.

I think we have to move along here. Are there-- Mr. Elliott?

MR. ELLIOTT: Are you at capacity now with 25 aircraft?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: No.

MR. ELLIOTT: You’re not? Do you have room for more?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Well, we have a few more, but we are not getting too crazy with it right now.

MR. ELLIOTT: How many are ultralights of those planes there now?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: About five.

MR. McNAMARA: By the way, have you ever seen one of those tankers falling out of the sky? (laughter)

MR. VITELLARO JR.: No, and I don’t want to see one of those tankers fall out of the sky.

MR. McNAMARA: Has it ever happened?

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Never, no. Never in that area.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay.

Gentlemen, I want to thank the three of you very much for taking the time to come to give us this testimony this morning and share your thoughts with us.

If you have any exhibits you would like to leave with us, we would be happy to accept them into the record, anything that you think might further the cause of the legislation that enabled this Commission.

If not, thank you very much.

MR. VITELLARO JR.: Thank you.

MR. CHOPER: Thank you.

MR. VITELLARO SR.: Thank you.

MR. McNAMARA: I would like to do a roll call of attendees. Is William Weisner here? (affirmative response from audience)

Is Joe Gayle here? (no response)

Is a representative of Marlboro Airport here? (no response)

Is a representative of Sussex Airport here? Mr. Styger?  
(affirmative response from audience)

Is Kent Lynn of Sky Manor here? (no response)

Is Francine Limpo here, of Greenwood Lake? (no response)

Is Vern Becker here of Vineland, downtown? (no response) You know, there is no "s" in it. I grew up in Vineland. I know it very well. I don't know how that "s" got in there. (referring to the way Vineland is spelled on witness list) It probably sneaked in.

Mr. Weisner, you are a representative and the owner of the Twin Pines Airport.

**WILLIAM WEISNER:** Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you swear the testimony you are about to give before this Commission will be true, according to the laws of perjury in the State of New Jersey?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have a prepared statement for us?

MR. WEISNER: No, not unless you are counting the one you mail in.

MR. McNAMARA: No, I am not counting that.

Would you tell us a little about your Airport, sir, where it is located and the history of it?

MR. WEISNER: I don't know too much about the history prior to when I owned it, except for the previous owner, which was Trenton Air Service, Charlie Peyton, who was once one of the State aviation officials. He originally started the Airport, oh, way back in the 1920s sometime, I am not sure when.

MR. McNAMARA: That was Charlie Peyton?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: I'm sorry.

MR. WEISNER: It has been a grass strip all the years. There for a long time, when it got to the muddy season, it was actually down and you couldn't use it. Then I had it graded and drainage put in, and now we are only down maybe four or five days a year.

MR. McNAMARA: It is still a grass strip?

MR. WEISNER: Still a grass strip. I prefer grass strips myself. It is easier on the airplanes, more forgiving. The field has more or less had to function on its own, because to make a living I had to go out and work at something else -- electrical contracting -- although I am an aeronautical engineer, a licensed A&E pilot, you name it, I've got it.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have a degree in aeronautical engineering?

MR. WEISNER: Right.

MR. McNAMARA: How many aircraft are based at Twin Pines?

MR. WEISNER: It shakes around a little bit, but the average is probably about 32.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you know how many operations are conducted there annually?

MR. WEISNER: I would probably say about 2000 to 3000.

MR. McNAMARA: Would you tell us something about the difficulties of operating your Airport? Do you have hangars on your Airport?

MR. WEISNER: Yes, I have five--

MR. McNAMARA: Five?

MR. WEISNER: --which are constantly filled. I have a number of fellows who keep asking me for more, but I am strapped. The township won't let me build anymore. In fact, they have me tied so I can't do a damned thing.

MR. McNAMARA: They have you what? Did you say "tied"?

MR. WEISNER: Pardon?

MR. McNAMARA: What did you say, that the township has you tied?

MR. WEISNER: They have me tied down so I can't do anything. I can't get a permit to build a new building. In fact, when I did rebuild a hanger that was there originally, the building inspector told me to go ahead and build one around the old one and take the old one down and use the material to put in a new one, and they couldn't complain. Damned if the township didn't impeach him, and my lawyer had to go to bat for him in one of our cases. In fact, I tried to put in a couple of bathrooms at the end of the hanger, and they said that was an "expansion of use," to put in bathrooms. I don't know what they figure you are going to get out of a bathroom. But I couldn't put them in. I had to tear it down.

MR. McNAMARA: How many acres are there at Twin Pines?

MR. WEISNER: Fifty.

MR. McNAMARA: What is the length of the runway there?

MR. WEISNER: Twenty-two.

MR. McNAMARA: Twenty-two hundred?

MR. WEISNER: That's right.

MR. McNAMARA: How much capacity do you have to build additional hangers? How many additional hangers could you build if you had the approval of the township?

MR. WEISNER: Well, I have about 35 acres to play with.

MR. McNAMARA: So, several hundred?

MR. WEISNER: Probably.

MR. McNAMARA: What do you feel the demand for hangers is immediately at your Airport?

MR. WEISNER: I'm sorry?

MR. McNAMARA: What is the demand for "T" hangers now at your Airport? How many would you build if you--

MR. WEISNER: What, the rent?

MR. McNAMARA: No, no. How many "T" hangers would you build now if you had the permits?

MR. WEISNER: I would probably put up one large building first, and put "T" hangers from then on.

MR. McNAMARA: The large building would be for maintenance or a terminal or what?

MR. WEISNER: Maintenance, the construction of the home built, and things like that. That would not require moving planes around all the time just to get them in and out for the boys who want to fly weekly. Now, the ones who want to build want to spend time. I would put little shops in there so they could build. Actually, that is what my hangers have been tied up for most of the time now. Home builders are using them to build their ships in.

Now, that was kind of restricted when the EAA came up with a barn, which they tried to get on my Airport, but the township wouldn't let them. They had to go down the street to a veterinarian's place and put it on his airport. I don't think the township knows it is for airplane use. It is an animal hanger, so don't say anything about it.

MR. McNAMARA: I don't follow. The Experimental Aircraft Association wanted to conduct a function at your Airport and the township would not allow that?

MR. WEISNER: Would not allow it.

MR. McNAMARA: What was the reasoning of the township?

MR. WEISNER: Noise.

MR. McNAMARA: Noise?

MR. WEISNER: Yes. They said a rivet gun would make a lot of noise.

MR. McNAMARA: What would make a lot of noise?

MR. WEISNER: A rivet gun.

MR. McNAMARA: Oh, a rivet gun.

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Does a rivet gun make a lot of noise?

MR. WEISNER: No. You can't hear it if you are 50 feet away from it.

MR. McNAMARA: What is the neighborhood at your Airport? Are you in the center of a town or close to the population center? Why does the township oppose noise?

MR. WEISNER: Well, I wasn't. When I bought the field, there wasn't anyone around me, but now it has built up. There are houses all over. Now they are in the process of putting up 1400 more. In fact, they are even putting a 135-foot water tower right across the street from my Airport.

MR. McNAMARA: Will that be a hazard to aviation?

MR. WEISNER: Well, I don't see it as a hazard, but it would be to the transients coming in who do not know the local rules we have on the field -- the operational rules. We fly strictly on the east side of my field, due to the fact that Mercer is on the west. Their pattern would conflict if we used the standard left-hand pattern on both sides of the field. So we made an agreement years ago that I would have all my personnel -- or, pilots fly strictly on the east side of the field, and stay out of the west.

MR. McNAMARA: How close are you to Mercer Airport?

MR. WEISNER: Three miles.

MR. McNAMARA: Again, why is it that the township has made things so difficult for you?

MR. WEISNER: Well, I have no real idea on that, outside of the fact that when it originally started, I think somebody wanted to develop the land.

MR. McNAMARA: What township are you in there?

MR. WEISNER: Hopewell Township.

MR. McNAMARA: Hopewell?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have any kind of a commission with the Township of Hopewell, any Airport commission that perhaps the mayor or some councilmen sit on? Do you have any kind of open line of communication between the Airport operation and the township?

MR. WEISNER: No, I don't. I thought I would. In fact, the mayor was one of my customers as far as my electrical business was concerned, and he was a P-47 pilot, but he is one who is scared to death to fly. He has no

use for it, and there was nobody else. Well, there was another person, a bomber pilot, who was on a committee, and he has no use for little airplanes either. I find a good many of your pilots, when they come back out of a war-- They are either for it or dead against it. They got scared to death in the war and they have had it. Myself, I have always loved it. It has been my hobby -- my interest all my life.

MR. McNAMARA: What service does your Airport perform for your community?

MR. WEISNER: Well, I don't know as far as the community itself is concerned, because the community actually--

MR. McNAMARA: I don't mean the Township of Hopewell. I mean just the area around your Airport.

MR. WEISNER: Oh, just the area around. Well, we have a number of pilots who store their planes at my field. They live around me. Actually, I draw pilots from quite a distance, too. There are some from Pennsylvania, New Brunswick. They come down to my field from all over, which is odd to me, because why would they bypass a couple of fields just to come down to my little grass strip?

Now, I am easy going and I don't push anybody. Maybe if I had pushed the township a little bit, got a little hot, but I can't get that way. I am not built that way.

MR. McNAMARA: One service is obvious, I guess, but it may easily be overlooked. You have a grass strip and, as you said, it is easier on the aircraft. There are certain aircraft that were developed during the time when

there was nothing but grass strips. For those aircraft, it is easier to operate them, I am sure, in and out with a grass strip.

MR. WEISNER: That's true. I canter to the older type aircraft more than anything, the antiques. We have fly-ins there every year, and a couple of picnics.

MR. McNAMARA: Obviously, you have people there who are developing new concepts in aviation, who are members of the Experimental Aircraft Association?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Is that correct?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: So it is your kind of an Airport that becomes the cradle or breeding ground for those new concepts. Is that fair to say?

MR. WEISNER: True.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other questions for Mr. Weisner? Mr. Yudin?

MR. YUDIN: When did you buy your Airport, what year?

MR. WEISNER: When did I buy the field? In 1956.

MR. YUDIN: You painted a pretty good picture about the Township of Hopewell standing in your way relative to any improvements. The improvements that you wanted to accomplish, did you actually go through a formal application with the Planning Board? Were these improvements--

MR. WEISNER: I think when I first built my hanger, they didn't have a Planning Board.

MR. YUDIN: Okay, but they do now?

MR. WEISNER: Yes. It was all up to the building inspector.

MR. YUDIN: Well, maybe, maybe not. My question is, the improvements you wanted to do, did you get some legal advice? Let me explain what I mean by that: Were variances required for these improvements, or was it just a matter of the township told you informally that it didn't want any and you acceded to the township's request?

In other words, what reasons -- legal reasons, such as you needed a variance or it wasn't a permitted use? What legal reasons did the township give you, if any, to prevent you from accomplishing these improvements? Because once you make an application, if it is a permitted use and if a variance is not required, and you start to process, the township cannot legally prevent you. They can't say, with a general phrase, "That will make noise. We don't want you here." You would win, probably, in the end.

So my question to you is: Did you actually formally make applications to the township -- whether it was the Zoning Board or the Planning Board -- to accomplish these improvements?

MR. WEISNER: Yes, I did. I was in court with them for 15 years.

MR. YUDIN: Okay, good. That is what I want to hear. That is what I want to hear.

MR. WEISNER: I won a case, but what do you win? Nothing but a big lawyer bill.

MR. YUDIN: That's true.

MR. WEISNER: In fact, they even tried to restrict me to three airplanes on the field. That was what was on the field prior to when I bought it, and one of the airplanes was mine.

MR. YUDIN: Well, this case when you went to court, how long ago did this occur? Was this recent?

MR. WEISNER: Oh, it started in -- probably about 1957, I think. It went on for about 15 years, in and out, in and out, constantly.

MR. YUDIN: What was the essence of the complaint? What was the fight over? What were they trying to do that you--

MR. WEISNER: They were trying to close me up.

MR. YUDIN: They were trying to just close you down?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: Okay. So it took you 15 years, a tremendous legal bill, you were able to win, and you're open.

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: All right. Now, as far as the building of the hanger is concerned, you indicated you want to build a hanger. You indicated that you wanted to add bathrooms. Did you actually make the applications for those improvements?

MR. WEISNER: Well, at the time I built the hanger, they didn't have the Zoning Board, as I said, and a building inspector was involved in that. He okayed it, but then they jumped him for okaying it, saying he didn't have the authority, when he did.

As far as the bathrooms were concerned, they came on later as an addition to that hanger, because it was the building inspector's statement to me-- He said he didn't give a damn how long I made the hanger.

MR. YUDIN: But you never actually made an application to the Zoning Board?

MR. WEISNER: No, not on that. No. But later on, I did.

MR. YUDIN: Okay, later on you made an application to the Zoning Board to do what?

MR. WEISNER: To build hangers.

MR. YUDIN: And the Zoning Board turned you down?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: Okay.

MR. WEISNER: On the premise that I was a nonconforming use.

MR. YUDIN: Okay, so they turned you down.

MR. WEISNER: They got me zoned residential.

MR. YUDIN: They zoned you residential?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: Then they said you were a nonconforming use?

MR. WEISNER: That's right.

MR. YUDIN: And that is why they turned you down?

MR. WEISNER: That's right.

MR. YUDIN: I am not a lawyer. Is that legal?

MR. McNAMARA: In what year was this? Was this since the adoption of the Airport Safety Act in 1983? Is this since 1983? What year did they turn you down?

MR. WEISNER: That light up there has got me so I can't see your lips too well. (Chairman makes adjustment to light) Okay, that's better.

MR. McNAMARA: What year did they turn you down? What year did you make the application that was turned down because you were a nonconforming use?

MR. WEISNER: That would have had to be back when I started, when we were in court, because that is what I went to court over.

MR. McNAMARA: What year was that?

MR. WEISNER: Let's see, go back 15 years, about 1982, or 1980.

MR. McNAMARA: The following year, the State Legislature adopted what was then known as the Airport Safety and Hazard Zoning Act.

MR. WEISNER: I'm sorry, it had to be before that. I'm losing track of time here. When you get old, you do that.

We started the fight about five years after I bought the place, and I bought it back in the 1940s -- no, 1956, really.

MR. McNAMARA: At the time, I suppose the township said-- I don't know, there was a question about if what they were doing was legal, if that was the reason that the Legislature adopted the Airport Safety and Hazard Zoning Act of 1983, which made it illegal to zone any airport as a nonconforming use.

MR. YUDIN: So, basically, if this gentleman were to reapply, they could not turn him down on the basis that it is zoned residential and, therefore, building a hanger on an airport is nonconforming. They could not do that now.

MR. McNAMARA: They could not. However, at least according to the people who drafted that legislation in 1983, they should not be able to. Now, not all townships have elected to conform with the Airport Safety and Hazard Zoning Act of 1983. According to the testimony of others who have already come before us -- specifically coming to mind are Mr. Walker and, I

guess, Mr. Solberg-- Who was the gentleman who spent \$700,000 on legal fees?

MR. YUDIN: Was that Ed Brown?

MR. McNAMARA: Ed Brown, yes. These townships have lived openly in defiance of this law. They did that with some justification during the period of time that that law was subject to challenge in the court system. But the courts have now sustained the constitutionality of that law. That is a recent decision. Now it is just about a year old. So as of this time, it would seem that it would be totally illegal for a township to do that, but that has still not caused these townships to conform to the provisions of that statute, according to the testimony of airport owners. We have to get the townships in here to tell us why not.

MR. YUDIN: Right. That is why it is so important to get Hopewell Township officials here, even if it means subpoenaing them, getting their side of the story so that we can adequately determine just what is going on. If this is accurate, what we are hearing here, Mr. Weisner could make an application tomorrow to build his hanger, and Hopewell Township could not turn it down. If they tried to turn it down, saying that is nonconforming use, he could appeal it and he would win.

But we should hear from Hopewell Township and get their side of it.

MR. McNAMARA: Mr. Yudin, you make an excellent point.

What I would like to do, if I may -- not because you brought it up, but because you are the appropriate person -- with your permission, I would like to delegate you -- a simple task--

MR. YUDIN: (laughingly) Thank you. I am not laughing at you.

MR. McNAMARA: A simple task -- but you are sensitive to this issue -- how we may exercise our subpoena power. I think that is important. I would like to put you in charge of maintaining the list of townships that we must hear from, even if we are forced to use our subpoena power.

Let's put Hopewell on that list, together with Readington and Bedminster. Montgomery Township is coming in, but they should be on there, too.

DR. ABUCHOWSKI: Is Allaire in Wall Township?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes, Wall Township.

MR. YUDIN: Phil, I will talk to you and we will put it together.

MR. McNAMARA: The reason I asked you instead of Mr. Engle to do that list, is because he is taking care of all of them. There are certain ones that will come up as we hear this testimony. Now that we are aware that we are having difficulty getting these townships to come in, we ought to make a separate list of those for whom we may have to exercise subpoena power.

Are there any other questions for Mr. Weisner?

MR. ENGLE: Mr. Chairman, has Hopewell adopted the Airport Safety and Hazard Zoning Act?

MR. WEISNER: No, not to my knowledge.

MR. McNAMARA: Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: When you decided to do the drainage on your grass runway so that you could get more use out of it, did you do that at your own expense?

MR. WEISNER: Yes.

MS. NAGLE: Can you snowplow your grass runway?

MR. WEISNER: No. We found that plowing the snow was more detrimental than it was any good, because it would create ruts, they would freeze, and the wheels would trip over them. In fact, I even asked the boys who run their snowmobiles on the runway-- They all do it, and you can't stop them. So I suggested they run lengthwise instead of crossways. They have been very good that way. At least they do not make ruts that are going to stumble an airplane.

MR. McNAMARA: Those are the neighborhood children? Those boys with the snowmobiles are the neighborhood children?

MR. WEISNER: Yes, they are from the neighborhood.

MR. McNAMARA: So you make your Airport available for those sorts of activities for the people in your neighborhood?

MR. WEISNER: That's right. In fact, I--

MR. McNAMARA: Do you charge them for that?

MR. WEISNER: I didn't hear you.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you charge any money to those boys using the Airport?

MR. WEISNER: No. At one time, I even approached the township about putting a rail train around the periphery of the Airport and let the local kids run it. In fact, my office was always open. I had a jukebox and a pool table in there for them to use. But someone got mad and chopped the pool table up and beat up the jukebox. I locked it up from then on.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other questions for Mr. Weisner? (no response)

Mr. Weisner, thank you very much for taking the time to come before this Commission today. We realize it is an imposition, but we are very grateful for your comments.

MR. WEISNER: Thank you for the chance to come to speak on this. I have been hot about it for--

MR. McNAMARA: Say, Mr. Weisner, before we let you go, I would like to ask you the all-important question: If you had the opportunity to draft a bill to be adopted by the New Jersey State Legislature that would help to preserve airports in the State of New Jersey, what provisions would you include in that bill? What could the State do to help you to conduct your business and to stay in business?

MR. WEISNER: Well, since I am not trying to make money at it, I am not too well versed or able to state what someone else might do who is trying to make a living. I am not. To me, it is my interest.

But from what I have found from being in it now for 45 years, the biggest thing would be to get the local governments off our backs, so that we don't have to go to them every time we want to turn around or bend over.

Secondly, come up with some kind of tax relief like the farmers get, or exempt all airports, because we do not make money on runways. There is no income from them at all. Therefore, why should we have to pay a tax. As the township put it to me when we went to the county board and complained -- tax board-- They had reassessed and had tripled my taxes. My assessment went up to \$680,000. Well, the board listened to us, then they said -- asked the township-- Oh, they had assessed my hanger at \$150,000. It cost me \$3000 and a lot of sweat to build it. The board came up with:

“Well, if you have it zoned residential, how can you charge this man \$150,000 in assessment for a hanger? You can’t have a hanger on a private property.” So they discounted that, and that is as far as they went. So my taxes are still based on a \$500,000 assessment, which will hurt me now, because I have never made any money on the field since I have had it. I have always had to put into it at least \$2000 to \$3000 a year just to keep it open. I would like to see it at least break even once.

I have to back up a little bit here. Twice it made money. That was when big contractors rented the property to put their equipment on for about six months. I made more off of them than I did off of aircraft for the entire year.

MR. McNAMARA: Mr. Yudin?

MR. YUDIN: What is your tax bill per year?

MR. WEISNER: What is the tax rate?

MR. YUDIN: What do you pay in taxes per year?

MR. WEISNER: The tax rate, I believe, is \$230 or \$250 per 100.

So it would probably be in the neighborhood of about \$18,000.

MR. YUDIN: Eighteen thousand a year?

MR. WEISNER: Yes. Last year, it was around \$5000.

MR. YUDIN: They went from \$5000 a year to \$18,000 a year?

MR. WEISNER: About that, yes.

MR. YUDIN: From last year to this year?

MR. WEISNER: Yes, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: What do you see as the long-term ownership of your Airport?

MR. WEISNER: Development, which I hate to admit. I have turned it down. Hovnanian is building out there. He offered me \$5 million for the property, and I would not take it, because I want to keep it as an Airport.

Now, my kids-- The one who was most interested was killed on the highway.

MS. NAGLE: I'm sorry, Mr. Weisner.

MR. WEISNER: Anyhow, my daughter and my next youngest boy would like to carry it on.

MS. NAGLE: I hope they decide to do that.

MR. WEISNER: So do I.

MS. NAGLE: Thank you for coming. I am sorry for your loss.

MR. McNAMARA: Once again, sir, thank you very much for coming before us and sharing these things with us. I am very, very glad I asked you that question, because your thoughts on what the Legislature can do exposed another problem, which is the problem of a township being able to more than triple your taxes in a single year if they are disposed against your Airport. It is a very unfortunate situation.

Thank you very much, sir, for coming down.

MR. WEISNER: Thank you.

MR. McNAMARA: We are going to take a two-minute break here.

**(RECESS)**

**AFTER RECESS:**

MR. McNAMARA: Is Mr. Gayle here? (no response)

Is Mr. Styger here? (affirmative response from audience)

Is Mr. Lynn here? (no response)

Then we will go to Ms. Limpo.

Mr. Styger is the owner -- is that correct? -- of Sussex Airport.

**PAUL G. STYGER:** Yes, it is.

MR. McNAMARA: Mr. Styger, do you swear that the testimony you are about to give this Commission will be true, according to the law of perjury in the State of New Jersey?

MR. STYGER: I do.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have a prepared statement for us?

MR. STYGER: No, I don't.

MR. McNAMARA: You know, it is getting so that I almost prefer not having a prepared statement, because we seem to get to the root of the problems, things that are on the witnesses' minds, more quickly and more thoroughly without them.

Would you tell us a little bit about the history of the Sussex Airport, and then your history with it?

MR. STYGER: Yes. Sussex Airport has probably been around since 1927 or 1928. Its initial location was nearer town than the Airport where we are now.

During the war, 1941, there were vital defense lines up and down the East Coast -- the East and West Coasts -- roughly 50 miles in from the shoreline. It came right through the town of Sussex. It was at that time that aviation picked up at the little Airport, and at that time Caldwell Wright and all of the other ones down toward the city were closed to private aviation, so a lot of it was driven back our way. That was the time the location changed from where it was to a farm, where it is now.

So, from that time on, four other operators came up from the city and they ran for most of the wartime period a parachute drop-testing service. They were busy. They dropped chutes for Switlik, Pioneer, and so forth. Then after the war, well, I got out in 1946, and I bought some shares in the Airport. Let's see, there were four people in it then. I was the fifth, and then one other fellow came in. Later that year, three of us bought three of the original people out, got the GI bill, and just went on from there. The GI bill, as a lot of you know, was great for a period of time, 1946 to maybe 1949, and then it dropped dead.

So in the 1950s, my partners disappeared -- 1948, 1949, 1950 -- and I was there alone. In about 1952, they decided that they would either have to sell the Airport or I would have to buy the shares. So to protect the time I had in it for free, I decided that I would have to buy it. I have been there since 1946, but have owned it since about 1951 or 1952.

We gradually grew, and I guess it went from about 15 planes to-- We have in the neighborhood of 140 to 150 airplanes now. It varies a little bit, but that is where we are now.

In the early years, we, instead of renting the farm, bought the farm, after it changed hands. In 1966, I bought a little additional property and put the paved runway in. That is 3500 feet -- 3510 -- by 75 feet wide. That was really the change that brought more planes in, because the tricycle gear was coming about then. In a muddy field, the tricycle gears are not exactly the best operating gear you can have.

So that is where we are today.

MR. McNAMARA: Have you noticed over the years, Mr. Styger, that there has been a change in the technology of airplanes, especially airplanes for nonmilitary and nonscheduled airline uses?

MR. STYGER: Yes, very definitely. When we started, of course, it was all tailwheel planes, Cubs, and so forth. Then tricycle gears came in and radio sophistication. In the early days, you couldn't get the lady population to get into the Cubs frequently. That brought about the change in the design of the plane. That brought about the interior design and everything else. Everything was advertised for women, but that was really when the change came. Then, with the newer planes, the people changed considerably, and I think -- oh, I don't know whether to say the fun of flying disappeared, but it did to a degree when the big change came.

Today, I think more people are-- Let's see, I better change that. I believe that the sophistication of the aircraft has made aviation -- has split aviation into two different sections: the business section and the private section. Although we have a large number of planes and although we have a lot of the modern ones, we do have different types of pilots. What I think the State, the FAA, and the other organizations sometimes forget is that there are

a lot of people who want to fly for fun. Every one that we train is not interested in becoming an airline pilot. So many times, I think the training that is given people by new instructors is aimed only in that direction. I have seen a lot of people just shake their heads and leave after they were genuinely interested in flying. I have noticed that over the last few years.

MR. McNAMARA: When you say, "everyone we train is not interested," do you really mean to say that not everyone you train is interested in being an airline pilot?

MR. STYGER: That is what I meant to say.

MR. McNAMARA: You train people who are interested, and you also train people who are not interested.

MR. STYGER: Yes, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: In terms of the development of aircraft since World War II, were aircraft of that era-- Let me phrase this question differently: Were the airports of that era adequate to service the aircraft of that era? I guess the answer to that is self evident, and the answer would be, "Yes." Then the question should be: Were the airports of the 1946 era -- the Airport that you describe as a grass strip, which sometimes had drainage problems-- Would that be adequate? It would serve, I suppose, the Piper Cubs, Stinsons, Taylor Craft, and so on. Would that be more adequate to service the aircraft primarily in that area than wood and fabric aircraft that had smaller engines and less mass to them? Would those runways be adequate to service the aircraft today that are made for the same market, say, the four-place market?

MR. STYGER: Basically, no.

MR. McNAMARA: Would you tell us why, sir?

MR. STYGER: Well, the first Airport in Sussex had three runways. It was a triangular field, two 1100-foot ones, and one 1400-foot one. When it moved to the new location, we had two runways, both sod, 2000 and 2300 feet. Sod, well, I say sod thinking of my own place, because I have clay. Now, clay is as hard as a rock when it is dry, and it is like grease when it isn't. It is not an ideal sod base for today's airplanes. It would not be good. I wouldn't have any, well, any large percentage of the business I do have if I had a sod field. It just isn't in the right character.

MR. McNAMARA: When you increase the mass of the airplane, do you have to have a longer runway to accommodate it?

MR. STYGER: Usually, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Going back to your observation about the people who fly today being different from the people who flew in the postwar era, essentially in the postwar era, were you saying that the emphasis was on sport aviation or just the joy, the fun of flying?

MR. STYGER: More so, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: More so than today. Today the emphasis is switched to being more business oriented?

MR. STYGER: I would say in most airports, yes. There is a big group that likes to fly for fun. They are around today at all of the airports, but I believe the percentages have gone against that group. But in every survey that is taken the questions are: How many radios do you have on the plane? Do you use it for business commuting? Most always, it is questions that tie it to an economic base.

I can understand this. All I want to say is that there is a big group of people out there who are interested in flying, who would like to fly, who are excluded, to a degree.

MR. McNAMARA: What services do you provide at your Airport to your local community?

MR. STYGER: Do you mean services to the customers or to the community?

MR. McNAMARA: Both. Start with your Airport customers.

MR. STYGER: Okay. We have a flight school. We have a repair shop. We have a radio shop. We have an EAA Chapter. That's about it. I give tours to all kinds of high school, grammar school, preschool children throughout the year, any group. Because it has been there for a long time, because of its location along the highway, it is a well-known landmark. I think that with 99 percent of the people, we get along very well. I have very few complaints.

MR. McNAMARA: How many acres are there?

MR. STYGER: Well, let's see. There were about 100, and we just bought another approximately 20-some acres, so 120 acres.

MR. McNAMARA: About 120 acres. How many runways do you have?

MR. STYGER: Just one. There is a side runway that isn't designated, but it is used by Cubs, or something in that category.

MR. McNAMARA: That runway, I guess, is 3500 feet long. So if I may extrapolate from an earlier witness, roughly 15 acres of your 120 acres

is given to providing that runway, I assume, and adjacent taxiway. Is that correct?

MR. STYGER: That is correct.

MR. McNAMARA: The remaining 105 acres of your land, is that open space, wetlands, habitat for wildlife? What is it? Or is it all of the above?

MR. STYGER: Probably all of the above, I guess.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay. Do you render any other community services? Do you conduct any shows -- air shows -- or any educational activities other than taking the students up for rides, tours, and so on?

MR. STYGER: We have been having an annual air show. This will be our 24th year. That started in 1966, the year we first put the runway in. It is quite well known. We have spectators and visitors from all over the country.

MR. McNAMARA: Are people interested in that kind of thing?

MR. STYGER: They seem to be. We have always tried to have the best performers who are available. Judging from our mailing list, which I believe is over 12,000 now, they come from all over. I am amazed, in a way.

MR. McNAMARA: You say you have people who come to your air show and they end up on a mailing list. Do they ask to be put on your mailing list?

MR. STYGER: Oh, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: You have 12,000 people on that list?

MR. STYGER: Right.

MR. McNAMARA: How many attend your shows annually?

MR. STYGER: We started with one-day shows. We are now up to three, but we have a model airplane day the day before the actual air show. So it is four days, or three days, whatever you want.

The attendance is usually 25,000 to 30,000 total.

MR. McNAMARA: Thirty thousand people come to see this air show?

MR. STYGER: Yes. I have to assume that you haven't seen the air show. (laughter) I'm sorry about that.

MS. CASTNER: He's right.

MR. McNAMARA: I concur. We can assume that Ms. Nagle at least has.

MR. ENGLE: Mr. Chairman, it is one of the premier shows east of the Mississippi.

MR. McNAMARA: Thank you.

Are those 30,000 people-- Do they all come from the State of New Jersey?

MR. STYGER: Oh boy, no. They come from pretty distant places, from all over the country. We have some from--

MR. McNAMARA: Do a great majority of them come from the State of New Jersey?

MR. STYGER: Do what?

MR. McNAMARA: Do a great majority of them come from the State of New Jersey? How many of them would you estimate are from the State of New Jersey?

MR. STYGER: Well, it would be strictly an estimate. I don't know, but I am going to say 55 percent to 60 percent.

MR. McNAMARA: And on your mailing list?

MR. STYGER: I looked at the breakdown, but I don't remember what that was. But there are a lot of them from -- a lot more than from Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and the New England area. I mean, the Carolinas, Florida, California. People do follow these, believe it or not.

MR. McNAMARA: The model aircraft day that precedes your air show--

MR. STYGER: Yes?

MR. McNAMARA: --is that well attended? Is there a great interest in model aircraft?

MR. STYGER: It is getting better every year.

MR. McNAMARA: Are the people who participate in that event younger people?

MR. STYGER: No, they are our age, or younger. I better not say mine, but they are all adults -- 99 percent.

MR. McNAMARA: They almost have to be younger than you and me, sir, but what I am talking about-- (laughter) What I mean by younger is, are they the youth of New Jersey?

MR. STYGER: There may be a few, but most of the people who are in the radio control -- Division of Aeronautics, let's say, are adults. A lot of them used to fly. A lot of them have always wanted to fly, so they got models. I would say that they could, as an average, have \$5000 in their equipment -- and that may be low -- just in the models.

Of course, when I started it-- Well, we used to have models in the show, one model. My show has always been quite long, so I had to do something to try not to get it any longer. So I decided on a day for the models, because that was a popular part of it. When I did that, they said, "Oh, Thursday, you're not going to get anybody out." It did start slow, but it is getting better every year.

As to how many, I don't know. There may be 1000 or 2000 people there that day.

MR. McNAMARA: I would like to get back to the tours that are given to high school students. Could you tell us about that program, if it is a program, or that activity?

MR. STYGER: It isn't anything that I have pushed, but it is something that has grown because of word-of-mouth referral. The majority of the tours are high school down. But what we do is take them into the hanger and show them different types of airplanes, metal ones, fabric ones, and so forth, and the different shapes. We take them into the shop and show them where everything can be worked on. Usually you find a variety of jobs going on. Then I would take them to the Experimental-- Well, all of the home-builts are in one hanger. I take them over there and show them those and answer questions. The radio shop, and then we walk around outside and point out different types of planes. Of course, all along the way you answer questions.

Each year we get probably a few more who want to bring a group. It's preschool, it's Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, it is a mixture of everything. But I think it helps with community relations. That is the reason for it.

MR. McNAMARA: Talk about community relations. Do you have any problems with your community?

MR. STYGER: With the people at large, no. When someone calls with a complaint about a biplane buzzing their house or something, I try to treat them with respect and answer their questions, you know, with courtesy. I think they appreciate that. Sometimes I worry when I am out of there that a pilot might grab the phone and not use the same decorum, let's say. But it hasn't been any problem.

I tell them that if they get the airplane's number and give it to me, I will talk to him, and that I am on their side. I don't want them buzzing the houses. I tell them that there is a 500-foot level. A lot of these people who call -- not a lot, but a percentage of them, are pilots themselves and they know what the story is, and they know when someone is violating the regulations. We have always had a good relationship with all of the people in the area. The township officials are a little different, but a lot of them, I think, want to show their authority, and we have had to jump through a few hoops lately that I didn't think were necessary.

We have had the air show for years. The Airport has been there for years. All of a sudden, we had to come up with site plans for the air show and, you know, a lot of regulations. We did it and it's over, but--

MR. McNAMARA: Was that site plan preparation for your air show onerous? Did it serve a good municipal purpose, do you think?

MR. STYGER: I really don't. We had to draw the line. We had to put all the vendors in. We had to draw everything, the cars-- They wanted to know how many cars were going to be parking. A lot of this was nit-picking.

MR. McNAMARA: Did it help them at all for safety purposes, fire or police?

MR. STYGER: No. That is the theory they are using. You know, if anything happened, the township would be involved. We have, for years, had the Fire Department park the cars. They get money for that. There are a lot of charitable organizations that do gain from this. This happened two years ago, all of the paperwork, and nothing has changed as far as what they have done.

MR. McNAMARA: Is it the kind of paperwork that having done it once it will satisfy them forever, or is this something that has to be revised annually?

MR. STYGER: The site plan may be permanent, but each year there is an air show license application.

MR. McNAMARA: To the township?

MR. STYGER: To the township. This has become more involved all the time. There never used to be any, but there was a fee. The fee was not large. Then, two years ago, they tried to-- Let's see, I forget what in the world they did want. They wanted a number relative to the amount of people who were at the show. It could have amounted to, oh, \$10,000 or so. They had a public hearing. We were there. We had some friends on the board and it was voted down. The fee for the annual license, I think, is \$250 now. This never used to be, but the \$250 I-- Well, that is all right.

Now, in addition to that, all of the vendors are paying them money. So it is just something they saw as a way of tapping some money out of a business, as far as I can see.

We have, for years, had our own people on the road directing traffic. I hired the Sussex County Fair Police. They are individuals who are not necessarily associated with the Police Department or the Sheriff's Department, but they did have uniforms, and they did a great job. Then they came up with the ruling that we had to have the Sheriff's Department come in and do the work.

That wasn't good, for a couple of reasons. One was that it tripled our expenses right off the bat, and the other was that they did not do one-fifth as good a job as the other people we had. So, last year, we had a little discussion about that, and we were able to get emergency fire police. They said they could legally park cars on the road. The theory was that we couldn't put anyone on the road other than a sheriff or a police officer. I am not against having them, but the price was \$20-some an hour, you know. I am sure you have heard that airports are not having any kind of surplus funds that they don't know what to do with. Well, we are no exception. So they made it a little harder.

We did get the police to do it. There is still somewhat of an argument about what is legal and what isn't, but we are going to do it again this year.

MR. McNAMARA: Generally, are your discussions-- What township are you in, sir?

MR. STYGER: Wantage Township.

MR. McNAMARA: Say it again.

MR. STYGER: Wantage Township, W-A-N-T-A-G-E.

MR. McNAMARA: Wantage Township. Okay, I'm sorry.

Generally, the discussions between yourself and your host township are conducted basically-- When you go to meet with them, whether you agree or disagree, it is a typical business meeting?

MR. STYGER: Yes, it is a typical business meeting, but it is an expense every time. It is a \$500 fee for going before the meeting. I am a corporation, so I have to take a lawyer with me, tell him what to say, and then pay him for saying it.

MR. McNAMARA: That is because a corporation cannot appear except in the person of an attorney, according to law in the State of New Jersey.

MR. STYGER: Right, right.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have any idea what your economic contribution to your community is? Are there some transient flights or home base flights that arrive at your Airport -- that come to your community to do business?

MR. STYGER: Yes, we have--

MR. McNAMARA: Could you talk about that for a minute? Do you have any corporate jet aircraft or turbopowered aircraft either based on the field or using your Airport?

MR. STYGER: Based on the field, no, but using the Airport we have quite a few, because it is a rural area and the nearest airports are probably 25 or 30 miles away, I mean the ones that the corporate planes would use.

MR. McNAMARA: Right.

MR. STYGER: They want as long a runway as possible. We have had the Pennsylvania Governor land there to go to Pennsylvania right across

the river, which is eight or ten miles. You know, businesses are in and out quite frequently. We have a lot of cross-country flights from other airports, I mean student cross-country flights. Unfortunately, there are no big businesses near us and there are no corporate planes on the field, but they do come and see us.

MR. McNAMARA: So your Airport is actually one whose economic contribution is greater because of transients coming in, presumably from out of State or elsewhere in the State, bringing in those dollars to your area more so than the contribution of based aircraft bringing dollars into your area.

MR. STYGER: I don't know that I would say more so, but it is a contribution. They buy gas. We don't have any landing fee or anything like that, but they do contribute, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: You know the purpose of this Commission. You have heard the--

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: We explained that to the prior witnesses. If you were going to ask the Legislature to adopt a provision of legislation that would be helpful to your Airport or, more generally, to the preservation of airports in the State of New Jersey, what provisions would you list that would be helpful?

MR. STYGER: Taxes.

MR. McNAMARA: Taxes?

MR. STYGER: Real estate taxes, absolutely. I would like to see the approach zones purchased by the State at all the airports where they are still available.

MR. McNAMARA: Did you say purchase of the clear zones?

MR. STYGER: Yes, the clear zones. Let's see, and some kind of an arrangement with the wetlands people, particularly in relation to airports. I don't honestly believe there will be too many more of us on the scene, I mean, airports, and I don't--

MR. McNAMARA: Why is that?

MR. STYGER: Well, your friends and neighbors won't let you build them. If you had the money, I don't know where you could build one, because you have to notify everybody, as you know. All it takes are a couple, and you're out.

MR. McNAMARA: Is it a good business?

MR. STYGER: I love the business, but it is not a good business as far as making money, absolutely.

MR. McNAMARA: It is not the kind of thing where independent investors are going to look for an opportunity to pour their dollars into a new airport?

MR. STYGER: I don't believe so. They have to like it, because if they analyze it, they won't do it.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other questions for Mr. Styger?  
Mr. Yudin?

MR. YUDIN: What are your taxes? You said the acreage was 120 acres. What are the real estate taxes?

MR. STYGER: We just got the 20, so before that, around \$50,000.

MR. YUDIN: When it was 100 acres, about \$50,000?

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: You're paying how much, \$50,000?

MR. YUDIN: About \$50,000?

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: What is the entire 120 acres zoned? Is it residential?

MR. STYGER: No.

MR. YUDIN: What is it zoned?

MR. STYGER: We are on a road and the first 500 feet in are highway commercial. From that back is light industrial. So the runway goes through both zones.

MR. YUDIN: Commercial and light industrial?

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: Have you recently made any applications to do any expansion of buildings or anything of that nature with your local township?

MR. STYGER: As of last year, I had an old hanger. One of the trusses went bad. We put a new truss up, and they got real excited about that, because I did not apply to put one truss up in the front. They said, "Oh, you're changing the building." I said, "No, I am not altering a thing. It is on the same foundation, the same size. We are replacing one truss."

MR. YUDIN: You weren't changing a footprint of the building?

MR. STYGER: No, we didn't do a thing but put one truss in the front and put tin over it, where the other was taken off. Anyway, we resolved it. But what we had to go through was ridiculous.

Now, the building has a certain shape. You know, mine wasn't just an "A" frame. It has a double bend. So they wanted-- I had the truss up. We made the truss the same as the other one. We put it up there. Then they wanted, before they would give me a building permit, a mathematical analysis of the whole thing, and I had to have an engineer do that. I had the engineer do it. But the point is, the truss has to be the same as the one that came down. How would a different type truss look on a building? You know, it didn't make sense.

We did it, and it's over with. But it is just something to protect the person down the line. They want a signature. Then if the building falls in, they are off the hook. That is the way it works. If I put it up and I didn't have the mathematical calculations for the truss, then if anything happened they say it would be their fault because they did not look into it.

Well, on a new building, I can understand that, but on an old building you don't put something different from what the other members of the roof are. But that was the only time. I have not applied for any other buildings lately. We are going to.

MR. YUDIN: You plan to?

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: What, for additional hangers?

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. YUDIN: Have you had any preliminary discussions with the town? I mean, do you have a feel for what their feelings are going to be?

MR. STYGER: Well, we are waiting to get over the wetlands decision before anything else. That is the first problem. We bought this other field. It adjoins the Airport. I have had people who have wanted hangers for years, and I never had any money to build them. I am always, you know, trying to get to the top of the heap, or the top of the hill -- not the heap. But if this is approved, to build them, and I see no reason why it shouldn't be, then we will build hangers.

The problem is, this was a farmer's field and the farmer put a ditch down the length of the field. Now, because the ditch, when it rains, holds water, the vegetation in the ditch, when it is wet, is the kind they are looking for. So it is wetlands. That, then, destroys the area on both sides of it, which is not wet, but which is within that distance. So we are about to have someone come up and go through that again. Wetlands are a problem. That is all I can tell you.

I don't think there is any airport operator who wants to destroy the ecology we have. I like green grass. I mow it every year and I think it is great. I think it looks a lot better than the swamp, which, as you know, you are not allowed to touch.

But anyway, those are the three things that would help. Buying the approach zones and, in our case, they are both available, with no houses on them. It would be better. And, of course, I think taxes are ridiculous. A farm could have double the acreage, be right next door, and if I am paying \$50,000, they could be paying \$4000. Now, I have nothing against farmers.

I know they have a tough life, and I know they are helping the whole group of us. But we have a public service, too, and a lot of it we do not get paid for. The taxes are a big problem.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other questions? Mr. Engle?

MR. ENGLE: Sir, you mentioned the air show and some direct contributions that are made to the Fire Department, parking the cars, money for permits from your vendors, etc. What about some of the indirect economic contributions: the restaurants in the area, motels, gas stations?

MR. STYGER: Oh, they are all filled, every motel. You can't get a place. We are getting calls from January on. I think you can check those and you'll find there is a hard time getting a room when it approaches the time, or even months before. It does do a lot for the economics of the area.

MR. McNAMARA: What time of the year is your air show?

MR. STYGER: This year, it will be August 23, 24, and 25.

MR. McNAMARA: And your inquiries, sir, have already started coming in for it?

MR. STYGER: Oh, yes, sure.

MR. McNAMARA: Just on that subject, do you-- Does the Federal Aviation Administration come in and regulate the locations for the spectators, the automobiles, the structures, at the time of your air show?

MR. STYGER: We have to submit a form to the local FAA office, and on the days of the show they have representatives there. But before that, they approve this.

MR. McNAMARA: They have to approve it. Do they issue a permit to you?

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: So the permitting process for one air show includes the Federal government and you have to get a permit from your township?

MR. STYGER: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: You get the permit from your township after the Federal government comes and tells you where spectators can stand and cars can be parked. Does the local government have to come and tell you where spectators can stand and where cars can be parked?

MR. STYGER: Yes. That was one of the points that, you know, was in contention, because I said I make application to the Pentagon, to the FAA, to the State Division of Aviation, and then they are going to tell me what I have to do. The point is, they don't know anything about the aviation business, but they--

MR. McNAMARA: The township doesn't know anything about an air show?

MR. STYGER: Sure, but they say in the form, "according to their aviation rules and regulations." Nobody knows what they are, but it is in the form.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there other questions for Mr. Styger? Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: What do you consider the long-term ownership of your Airport, public or--

MR. STYGER: Suzie, I am worried. I don't know. I have four children, and none of them are interested. I don't know what to say. I

occasionally have people interested. I have never put it up for sale. I have wanted to. So far, I feel fine, and I like what I am doing. But I don't know. I can't tell you.

MS. NAGLE: Does the Airport, under any obligations for taking funds, have to stay open for a certain period of time?

MR. STYGER: Do you mean with the improvements?

MS. NAGLE: Yes. Did you get money--

MR. STYGER: Yes. I have had a ramp enlarged and I have had the runway overlay done. Right now, they are talking about the taxiway being moved over a little to satisfy the FAA. This was yesterday we had a meeting, just to move that over, because there may be a little area, and I mean 10 square feet or something like that, down the lower end, which, in a way, was determined wetlands. They went through this the last time they put the drains in the runway.

We had a fellow who was about to take our side when they came down to see the wetlands people here, but you could be talking about \$100,000, \$150,000. I told them, "I am about ready to throw in the sponge, because this is ridiculous." But that is the law.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have the room there to extend the length of your runway?

MR. STYGER: Well, if I had the money and there weren't any laws restricting it, yes. What I mean by that is, I would go right on across the road that is on one side. You could probably go to 5000 feet. But the road is a county road, and, you know-- I could go out maybe 200 or 300 feet, maybe 300 or 400 feet more to the road.

Now, there is a house a little bit off the center of the runway. The fellow is a friend of mine. I have talked to him. He will sell the house. He will let us cut the trees. We, with the State, have been theoretically working on a price for that for a year and a half or so. All he wants is a figure. He wants life rights. He is older than I, so it can't go on forever. But he will do this. So we are waiting for the paperwork. The State has not done things like this, so it is taking forever. If that were out of the way, if the trees were cut, it would probably take, oh, 1100 or 1200 feet off of our -- would add that much to the use of our runway.

MR. McNAMARA: Ms. Castner?

MS. CASTNER: I have gone, and it is a great air show.

MR. STYGER: How are you?

MS. CASTNER: For the record, there is a study done by the Longwood group from the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism on residual dollars, direct dollars, from the large State festivals. I know that your event is on it. I know that ours is and Suzie's is. So that may help in the record to show how many dollars are produced from those events occurring. It is all completely documented. I have seen it for the last three years. It is called the Longwood Study.

MR. McNAMARA: Ms. Castner, is that a study that is available to you?

MS. CASTNER: We could get it from the State Division of Travel and Tourism through--

MR. YUDIN: Is that Linda Conlin?

MS. CASTNER: Yes, Linda Conlin.

MR. YUDIN: That is the Department I am in. I will get it.

MR. STYGER: That was just done recently.

MS. CASTNER: It is redone every year, and it is presented every--

MR. YUDIN: Do you want to just spell it for me?

MS. CASTNER: It's Longwood. It is called the Longwood Study, and they present it every year at the Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism. It does document in each region -- which would include Sussex -- the large events that occur there and the dollars that come into the community directly. Then they go down three levels indirectly to the hotels, the highway, even for taking tolls, the whole thing.

I wanted to come back to one question. You said something very early on about fun.

MR. STYGER: Funds?

MS. CASTNER: Fun, F-U-N.

MR. STYGER: Oh, okay.

MS. CASTNER: I agree with you that we are often talking about how many dollars come in due to corporations and all of those hard core things. I do see two different groups of pilots. Because we do not have the production of aircraft like we used to, you see all the (indiscernible) people, and they are doing that for fun.

Can you comment on the value to a human being, just like the tours you do for the kids-- What do you feel the value is of teaching a student of any age -- male, female, anything -- to learn to fly?

MR. STYGER: Well, I think that would be very hard to put a price on, but I certainly think there is a value, because my Airport wouldn't be

there otherwise. We have a town that is 2500 people, and I have 150 planes some of the time -- most of the time. It has been word of mouth. It has been because they like to fly.

As recently as this week, I had a fellow come in. He was maybe -- what did he tell me, 67. He said, "Am I too old to learn to fly?" I said, "No." There are so many people who would like to use it as recreation instead of golf, the barroom, or something else. I feel it is a definite asset for everyone if they do. Ninety-nine percent of the people aren't interested in buzzing anybody's house or creating any problems. They just want to get up and float around. Well, it is just something that I find hard to put a value on, but it is certainly valuable.

MS. CASTNER: Could you equate it to an industry like any of the water sports, like fishing or waterskiing?

MR. STYGER: I suppose they are all the same. They all have their bull session periods, and our Airport is like all the other ones, I am sure. We have board meetings in there every day, mostly composed of retired people who are sitting around watching what you're doing. It is an out for them. Now, these are people who do not live in our little area. They come from a long ways just to come up and talk to people. I found that sometimes when I have flown to other places, an airport can be pretty cold. You know, you land, you pay the bill, whatever it is, and that's it. Nobody says boo.

MS. CASTNER: Could you compare it to someone selecting a golf course or selecting a--

MR. STYGER: Well, I never had time to play golf.

MS. CASTNER: Me neither.

MR. STYGER: I can't do that. I play a little tennis, but outside of that I can't-- But I imagine--

MS. CASTNER: I just think you hit on something that we always tend to overlook a little bit, and that is that it is an industry that does draw people for pleasure. Is that bad? I don't think it is, and I think you are justifying that it actually isn't.

MR. McNAMARA: You know, further along that line, one point is clear from what Mr. Styger has told us. In his particular case -- and it might be true in others -- he has people who like aviation for fun, you could call it sport aviation. The sport aviation people at his Airport are paying a substantial part, if not the entire cost, of maintaining an Airport -- or maintaining a base for the transient business aircraft that are coming into Sussex County. If it were not for the sport aviation people, then the incremental dollars that come into Sussex County because of that transient -- and it could be substantial, you could be talking hundreds of millions of dollars-- There wouldn't be that access.

MS. CASTNER: I don't think we should ever overlook that.

The other thing I was trying to get to is that there are a lot of corporations that run very expensive getaway sessions for the middle-level executives on developing self-esteem. Some of the groups that run that -- Cradle Rock, Outward Bound, and some of those programs -- have emphasized the importance of doing something that may be challenging both physically and mentally, and flying is one of those activities that is presented as an option. So it is not just there for fun. It has a character-building, a personality-development process in learning to conquer flight.

MR. STYGER: There are definitely pluses, but there are some minuses -- the weather, you know. I have always hesitated to paint too rosey a picture, because I don't want anyone disappointed immediately. There are some drawbacks.

MS. CASTNER: Thank you for coming, and I think it is a great Airport.

MR. McNAMARA: Mr. Elliott?

MR. ELLIOTT: Paul, you have owned that Airport for a very long time, and you indicated that there have been changes in the attitude of the township toward the Airport and in your dealings with the township.

I wonder if you could briefly contrast for us the differences between dealing with the town when you first came to the Airport and today.

MR. STYGER: Well, Jack, the people have changed. That, I think, is the biggest problem. I mean the people in the offices. I think long ago most of the people who held elective offices were businessmen and they understood a little bit more about what you were going through. I agree with one of the fellows who spoke earlier that in the early days, you asked for a building permit and that was it. Now, it's two or three sessions, and the wetlands approval, and the county approval. It may be two years before you do anything, even though you may want to immediately. The delays sort of pour cold water on your enthusiasm sometimes.

I don't know what to tell you. I know they are trying to do their jobs, but sometimes they get a little bit too zealous.

MR. ELLIOTT: Are you saying there are less businessmen in township government today?

MR. STYGER: I'm saying that it is more difficult to be a businessman anyplace I know than it used to be. There are forms you fill out, you know, and-- It's all for free, but it takes your time. If I make a list of what I want to get done on a certain day, I never get that list done. There are all these interruptions. It's paperwork.

MR. ELLIOTT: And they understand less today about what you want to do and why than they used to?

MR. STYGER: I guess I would have to say that.

MR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other questions? (no response)

On behalf of all of us, Mr. Styger, thank you very much for taking the time. We know it is a long-- How long did it take you to drive down here?

MR. STYGER: It took a couple of hours. Well, it took me a half an hour to find you, but two hours.

MR. McNAMARA: But it is a long drive, and we really appreciate it. We have benefited from your testimony.

MR. STYGER: Okay. You're welcome. I hope to see all of you at the show. Just for your information, we are having Bob Lugar (phonetic spelling) this year. That's one. There will be more.

MR. McNAMARA: That's a real good one.

MR. STYGER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. McNAMARA: Ms. Limpo. Francine Limpo is a representative of the Greenwood Lake Airport.

Ms. Limpo, do you swear that the testimony you are about to give this Commission is true, according to the laws of perjury of the State of New Jersey?

**FRANCINE LIMPO, ESQ.:** Yes, I do.

MR. McNAMARA: What is your relationship to the Greenwood Lake Airport?

MS. LIMPO: My family has owned Greenwood Lake Airport since 1970.

MR. McNAMARA: Your family has owned it?

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Since 1970?

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have a prepared statement to make?

MS. LIMPO: No, I do not, but I would be happy to tell you some of the history.

MR. McNAMARA: Pardon me?

MS. LIMPO: I would be happy to give you a little of the history of Greenwood Lake Airport.

MR. McNAMARA: If you would, please do. That would have been my first question.

MS. LIMPO: My father purchased the Airport in 1970. There was one small paved runway, approximately, I believe, about 1600 feet. My dad was a avid aviator. He was a pilot. This was his hobby. He loved flying, he loved aviation. I sit here and I listen to all these gentlemen who are very

much in the same boat. I am one of the three children who have inherited the Airport.

My father had this dream when it came to Greenwood Lake Airport. He was determined to make it a viable, profitable aviation facility. Some of the things he did were: We had some "T" hangers when he purchased the Airport. He built a large hanger. He extended that small runway. In the mid-1970s, he put in the second runway, about 2500 feet. He was always convinced that there had to be some kind of revenue-producing property on a small private Airport to bring in revenue that probably had very little to do with the direct aviation.

To that end, he started--

MR. McNAMARA: Revenue-generating property, did you say?

MS. LIMPO: Yes. What he decided to do was build a restaurant. His theory was that when you have private pilots, there is a certain price ceiling as to what they are willing to spend. You have a lot of problems with what you can charge for tie-downs, hangers, etc. When you have a small private Airport, it is very expensive, as you know, to run, and he felt that something like a restaurant, or whatever, on the Airport would bring in revenues from leasing, the funds to help to support the Airport. To that end, he-- I don't know if you have been to Greenwood Lake Airport, but he had an ambitious project. He flew in a super constellation. It was gutted and made into a bar. It was really quite a fabulous facility. He had a luncheonette started, and he was about to open the restaurant in 1978 when he, unfortunately, died very suddenly.

The three of us -- his three children -- took over. We had other businesses to run. In the beginning, we tried to preserve his dream and tried

to preserve the Airport and keep it going. We had difficulty with the restaurant, because it was a rural area. There just wasn't that kind of traffic. Although we leased it to several different people, in the end we sold the liquor license and we closed the restaurant.

MR. McNAMARA: Sold the what?

MS. LIMPO: We sold the liquor license. We had a liquor license.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay. May I ask you to try to speak into that mike, the gooseneck mike?

MS. LIMPO: Oh, I'm sorry. Can you hear me now?

MR. McNAMARA: That one (indicating microphone), the long one.

MS. LIMPO: The long one?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes.

MS. LIMPO: Okay.

Since the 18-some-odd years since my dad passed away, we have really tried to keep the Airport running. I had to laugh at the joke about, you know, how to make a small fortune is to start with a large one. I think that is really indicative of airports. Airports are a labor of love. What you get out of owning and running a private Airport, in my opinion, is your personal satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment. I can't believe that anyone would say, "I want to go into business. Let me see, what would be a good business? I am going to run an airport. I am going to operate an airport." There is just no way.

The capital that is needed to keep an airport running, to keep it functioning, at least a small, private type airport, in no way compensates for

the kind of revenues you have coming in. I am sure that all airports have different circumstances. We have been most, most fortunate. As I said, my father -- this was his dream and he poured money into this Airport to try to get it built up and running. We kept it functioning, and recently we were the beneficiary of New Jersey State funds.

In the past two years, we have expanded, repaved, and widened our runway to 14,000 feet. If we did not have the State funds to do that, I don't know where we would be. We could not afford the million dollars it took to repave that runway. It cost us \$100,000. That was our 10 percent, and that was not easy to come by. I have been an owner of that Airport for all these years, and I have not seen any income whatsoever from that Airport, neither have my brother nor my sister.

MR. McNAMARA: Since 1978?

MS. LIMPO: Yes. Well, actually, we have owned it since the 1970s.

MR. McNAMARA: But you and your brother and sister have owned it since 1978--

MS. LIMPO: Right.

MR. McNAMARA: --and not one of the three of you has realized any income.

MS. LIMPO: We give of our time freely. We do not pay ourselves. We do everything we can. We divide up all the chores, or whatever it is -- legal, building, etc. There is just no money to pay us. I mean, you're laughing. I can see a smile over there. It is just crazy. I mean, a 4 percent

return on a savings bond would look like, you know, a wonderful return on investment compared to a privately run airport.

We have gotten to the point where we think, you know, now we are going to do this and we are really going to start to see things moving. We had a brief period in the 1970s when we had Jungle Habitat next door to us. With Jungle Habitat, we thought the restaurant was going to be great. We did a large business in rides. Then, of course, Jungle Habitat closed and we were left with another 1000 acres of nothing next to us.

Right now, we are really feeling very optimistic. We have our new runway. We have an ad. We signed up with a real estate broker. We want to do ground leases. We have a plan to divide up the Airport and ground lease for large hangers, "T" hangers, and for tie-downs.

Although we are in a rural area, we feel that a lot of your business and corporate airplanes are paying tremendous fees hangering their planes at Teterboro, etc. A lot of aviation businesses are paying high rents. We are hoping to bring some of these people onto the Greenwood Lake Airport to take over a section of land to build their facilities and, in that way, make the Airport grow and bring in the necessary revenue. That is a project we are just starting. We are very optimistic about it. Talk to me in a year. We'll see what happens.

MR. McNAMARA: Will you leave that ad with us for the record?

MS. LIMPO: Sure, I will be happy to leave it.

MR. McNAMARA: We would like to have that as part of our record.

MS. LIMPO: We consider it a good year when we break even. You know, we consider it a really great year if we have some money left over

to do some of the things -- capital improvements, fixing the hanger doors, etc. We need a lot of "T" hangers. We could rent "T" hangers from now to doomsday. It is a question of the capital needed to put them in. We are not looking at that. Hopefully, we will get someone to put in some "T" hangers. We have space for 100 "T" hangers that we have mapped out. We have a lot of room for tie-downs. And we have room for some very large buildings and hangers. We are really very optimistic about it.

What are our problems? I am envious of the person who pays \$1800 a year in real estate taxes. I cringed at the \$50,000. Ours are \$30,000.

MR. McNAMARA: Thirty?

MS. LIMPO: Thirty thousand dollars a year. Real estate taxes have always been a problem. When you bring in an income of about \$124,000 a year and you are paying \$30,000 in real estate taxes, another \$10,000 for insurance, which is horrendously expensive--

MR. McNAMARA: How much is your insurance?

MS. LIMPO: About \$10,000. That is basic liability, etc. We cannot afford to have fire insurance on the large hanger. It is prohibitive. We had to drop that, maybe 10 years ago, and have just had to go without it. We have all the necessary liability, etc.

There is really nothing left. We, at one time, paid someone to be the Airport manager, but we had to do away with that. We have part-time people who work with my sister, who has moved to Hilton Head with her husband. They have a direct line to the Airport. They answer all the telephones during the day from South Carolina. They are in touch constantly with the people in New Jersey who are on and off the field. That is how we are

running the Airport. I give up my time, and my brother-in-law flies up and does-- He is a builder. He does the repairs, so we are not paying any labor costs, etc.

Really, we do everything we can to keep this Airport running. We are hoping that with our wonderful new runway we will be able to start turning a profit and will really be able to put more money into building hangers and doing some of the other things that we really need to do.

MR. McNAMARA: Are large hangers essential to the operation of a successful airport?

MS. LIMPO: Right now, I would like to see the "T" hangers.

MR. McNAMARA: What I am asking is, you have large hangers with no fire insurance on them.

MS. LIMPO: Right.

MR. McNAMARA: You won't be able to replace them if they burn down.

MS. LIMPO: Right. We have one large hanger.

MR. McNAMARA: Would you say that at least one large hanger is important?

MS. LIMPO: Oh, absolutely. We have it leased to a FBO. They have a gas truck for our tenants. They provide the repairs, etc. We could easily support another fixed base operator on the field.

MR. McNAMARA: That one hanger--

MS. LIMPO: No, not in that one hanger. We would need another hanger.

MR. McNAMARA: But that one hanger now houses the--

MS. LIMPO: Fixed base operator.

MR. McNAMARA: --maintenance facility on the field, as well as the fueling facility?

MS. LIMPO: Yes. It is a 10,000-square-foot hanger. It is a good size hanger. It is also adjacent to what used to be the restaurant. We lease part of that to nonaviation businesses for office space. We have someone opening the luncheonette, really just to provide a service. It really provides us no revenue. We like to have the pilots flying in to have coffee and a hamburger or something, so we are happy to have anyone there who wants to try to run a luncheonette. So the luncheonette is open.

We were hit badly by the recession, because we had some good office tenants in what used to be the large restaurant. Unfortunately, when the recession hit, with all the office space in northern New Jersey that was available, we lost our tenants. We have, really, a makeshift office area, so we cannot compete with all the space that is available as far as offices are concerned in the northern New Jersey area.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you still have the constellation restaurant?

MS. LIMPO: We still have the constellation. It is now a pilots' shop and it is doing very well. We removed the bar, but we tried to keep as much of it intact as possible. It really makes a terrific pilots' shop. We are very happy with that right now. So that is being used.

We are holding our breathe since the renovations were done last year as far as the real estate taxes are concerned. If we get hit with a large real estate tax increase, I don't know what we will do.

MR. McNAMARA: What do you pay, do you know, per \$100? What are you rated as?

MS. LIMPO: I don't know what the rate is. I believe we are assessed at \$1.1 million. Between the buildings and the land, our taxes are at \$28,000, I think. Off the top of my head, that is what I recall.

MR. McNAMARA: Did you say \$28,000?

MS. LIMPO: Yes, \$28,000. I think they went to \$29,000, almost \$30,000 this year.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay. So you are getting hit at \$3 a 100. If you get another \$30,000, you know, tax increment, with respect to the million dollar runway improvement--

MS. LIMPO: Well, we hope not, because our position is that the runway we had was in such a terrible state that this is really a renovation of the runway we had to keep everything else running. The million dollar improvement, or million dollar repair did not add a million dollars onto the value -- the market value of the Airport. No way!

We are taking that position. If the time comes and we get an increase, we will have to see what happens.

MR. McNAMARA: What you are saying is, if they do increase your taxes, you will be in a desperate shape.

MS. LIMPO: We will be in desperate shape.

The other problem we have had recently, of course, particularly with this winter, has been snow removal. We put in a request for-- Now we have a 4000-foot runway and new taxiways. We really need some heavy snow removal equipment. The cost of that is, like, \$50,000, \$75,000, or \$80,000.

We don't have it. Our old snowplows broke down. They were not sufficient for the ice and the snow, both two years ago and this year. So we pay an outside contractor. When you start getting hit with this kind of a winter, with a \$10,000, a \$15,000, or a \$20,000 snow removal bill, in proportion to the income you have coming from the Airport, that is a problem.

Maintenance equipment: We would like to have a machine that brushes off the stones from the runways to keep the runways clear. A lot of planes didn't want to come into the old runway because of the stones and the pebbles, which would be thrown up from the props and would damage the aircraft. So that was something.

I heard people talking about property surrounding the airport. We could plead for the State to do something about purchasing the property surrounding the airports. We certainly cannot afford to buy it. If we could afford it, we couldn't afford to pay the taxes. We have had a very regrettable situation that has recently happened. We no sooner finished the runway than someone started construction right up to the safety zone, a 3000-foot distance. They are building a nursing home/retirement center at the end of the new runway. This was a devastating blow to us.

MR. McNAMARA: Why is that?

MS. LIMPO: Because, first of all, a nursing home/retirement center, you know you are going to have people complaining about the airplanes. It will be right at the end of the runway. They built it right on the -- you know, the safety hazard zone. Supposedly, it goes out 3000 feet. Three thousand feet is where they built the building.

We had trouble with the water tower they were building. The State came in and took care of that. They had to lower the water tower. They were putting up a water tower that was a hazard at the end of the runway. That was the only direction we could possibly expand that runway in future years. Although we are certainly not looking toward that now, we were thinking that in 10 or 20 years, that is the way the Airport could have expanded.

For the first time in all these years, we are starting to have problems with our neighbors. There has been a recent petition about the noise of the planes interfering with the quiet solitude of the country way of living, etc. We have never had that problem before in the surrounding area. Most people did not even know the Airport was there. We have never had any problem with our neighbors, outside of one or two minor incidents. We have had very good relations with the township up to this point.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you still?

MS. LIMPO: Yes. Most of the people in local government are very much in favor of the Airport for what it brings into the community. We consider ourselves a good neighbor. We have medevac utilizing the Airport consistently. We are in a rural area, so that is, of course, I think a positive for anyone living in the area.

We also have the Ranger services using the Airport when there are forest fires. They come in with the planes, load up with water, and take off. That is a big service, I think.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have a water source?

MS. LIMPO: I'm not sure where they get the water. I was thinking about that, but they fly in and they load up somehow and they take off. It is either with the chemicals, or whatever they are using.

MR. McNAMARA: We had some tests done on that earlier. At that time, it was indicated that they reloaded those tanker planes from trucks that they brought in.

MS. LIMPO: It might be, because I was trying to-- They certainly don't get the water from wells on our property, so they must come in with it somewhere. But they do use the Airport for that.

Most of the people who are based on the Airport come from the surrounding 30-mile area, the private pilots who keep their planes there. It does bring some people into the area as far as -- I would think for restaurants, general purchases, etc. They spend a lot of time at the Airport.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have any turboaircraft that come in?

MS. LIMPO: I'm sorry?

MR. McNAMARA: Since you have installed your new runway, has there been any development of turboaircraft business, turboprops or corporate jets?

MS. LIMPO: We have always had turboprops at the Airport -- some, a few. There are not too many businesses in the area so, unless it is just for a pleasure trip or going to a summer home, we haven't really had that.

MR. McNAMARA: How many acres are associated with the Airport?

MS. LIMPO: We have 110 acres.

It is our hope to bring in some of the business aircraft, because we think that is where some of the revenues would be, especially in hanger space, etc. If we could just get some "T" hangers in, it would be a tremendous help to us.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you have one runway there, just one runway?

MS. LIMPO: Well, we had two. We had the original and then the runway that was built in the 1970s. Unfortunately, we temporarily closed the other runway because of the condition it was in. It needed to be repaved. So, working with the State, they agreed that we temporarily close it.

MR. McNAMARA: But your clear zones are still protected?

MS. LIMPO: Yes, yes. If we ever get the funds to repave and repair that runway, that would be a consideration to opening it.

MR. McNAMARA: What is the length of that runway?

MS. LIMPO: That runway now is 2500 feet. It was 2500 feet.

MR. McNAMARA: Could you extend your runways at all?

MS. LIMPO: Our runways could be extended. It would be expensive, but they could be extended.

MR. McNAMARA: How far could they be extended?

MS. LIMPO: We were looking at 5000 feet eventually. That was our real hope. You know, the plans could go for that.

MR. McNAMARA: On the runway you are presently using?

MS. LIMPO: I am not that familiar with the old runway -- exactly how that would be extended. I think that would have to have some excavation,

which I do not think would be impossible. Certainly with the newer runway we were thinking eventually 5000 feet when we did that.

MR. McNAMARA: If you had your choice about legislation -- asking your Legislature to do something to help you to make your Airport a viable Airport now, and for a lifetime, and also do something so the State would keep that Airport as an Airport in perpetuity, or encourage it to stay an Airport in perpetuity, what would you advise the Legislature to do?

MS. LIMPO: The first thing would be relief from property taxes. Our Airport is open to everyone. We do not charge a landing fee. I don't see why we should be paying taxes on these runways. The taxes are very high. That is one of the biggest problems we have. First would be relief from property taxes.

Second would be a program to purchase the surrounding area. We have a lot of available land surrounding our Airport, also.

Listening to some of the other testimony, I added something else. That would be to have some kind of a legal fund. So many of the things that are involved with small airports today really involve fighting, whether it is with a township, about wetlands, etc. There are tremendous legal fees. Even if there were a central office where you could go to someone for -- go to someone who would have the legal advice to give you pertaining to airports, saying, "This is the law."

I was very surprised, by the way, to hear about the statute and the real estate brokers, because one of the problems with our retirement home is that the people who moved in say they had no idea that they were at the end of a runway. I personally spoke to the developer and warned him. We sent

him a certified letter to be sure he notified everyone purchasing the property, or a home in the center, that there was an Airport. He assured me that they did. He assured me that these are retired people who will love to see the airplanes flying over them. It would give them a diversion.

Of course, now, six months later, we are getting petitions flying around about disturbing the peace and serenity of the surrounding area. It is very upsetting. I was unaware of that statute, and I made a note of it.

But if we could pick up a phone and say, "What can we do about this? How can we fight this legally, or what should we do? -- that would be a big help. Maybe that exists right now, but I am unaware of it. Up until now, the State has been very helpful to us as far as with the new project and where to go for help. They have been a tremendous help.

MR. McNAMARA: Now, one of the more intriguing comments you made earlier was that the management at the Airport, on a day-to-day basis, is at Hilton Head, South Carolina with a direct line to--

MS. LIMPO: Let me clarify that. We have a tenant, a fixed base operator on site.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay.

MS. LIMPO: So they are on-site all the time. They are operating their business. They oversee the general Airport. As far as, for instance, if a complaint comes in, eventually it has to get to the ownership and management of the Airport. That is where we come in.

MR. McNAMARA: I see.

MS. LIMPO: The funds that are spent, etc., but there is a 24-hour -- well, not a 24-hour, but a fixed base operator on the Airport at all times. We also get a lot of input from another source, the pilots' shop owner.

MR. McNAMARA: The township you are located in is?

MS. LIMPO: The Township of West Milford.

MR. McNAMARA: West Milford?

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

By the way, I am located in New Jersey myself, I also go back and forth.

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other questions for Ms. Limpo?  
Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: How many planes do you have based at Greenwood Lake Airport?

MS. LIMPO: We have about 50 planes based there on and off.

MR. McNAMARA: Has that increased since you improved your runway?

MS. LIMPO: Yes, it has. I think we had about 35 to 40. The problem we have is that we do not have the hangers. We put in several -- quite a few new tie-down spaces.

MS. NAGLE: I have another question: When you took the State funds and paved your runway -- I think you used the word "expand" -- did you extend the runway, or had it been grass and you just paved over it?

MS. LIMPO: It was dirt. There was a power line there. So part of the expense was to remove the power line.

MR. McNAMARA: How long was the runway before the overlay?

MS. LIMPO: I'm not sure. I think it was something like 3000. Now it is 3500, plus another 500 -- safety zone, I think they call it.

MR. McNAMARA: Is it 4000 feet of macadam?

MS. LIMPO: Yes, there is 4000 feet of macadam.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay.

MS. NAGLE: Did the runway length actually change then at your Airport?

MS. LIMPO: It did, yes.

MR. McNAMARA: Do you understand the question?

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: The question is: Before the overlay you could have had a runway of a certain number of feet, of which a certain part was already paved and a certain part was unpaved.

MS. LIMPO: Right.

MR. McNAMARA: If you took that whole length, did that whole length increase when the State came in and gave you the--

MS. LIMPO: You are including the part that was not paved?

MR. McNAMARA: Yes.

MS. LIMPO: Slightly.

MR. McNAMARA: Just very slightly.

MS. LIMPO: Just slightly, right.

MR. McNAMARA: Mr. Elliott?

MR. ELLIOTT: At the time when they proposed the building of this retirement community and nursing home, did you object to it?

MS. LIMPO: We did not know about it until they had started building.

MR. ELLIOTT: There were never any hearings about it at all?

MS. LIMPO: No. We were never informed about it.

MR. McNAMARA: Are you an adjoining landowner?

MS. LIMPO: We are an adjoining landowner.

MR. McNAMARA: And you were never notified?

MS. LIMPO: We were never notified.

MR. McNAMARA: Is that a function of absentee management?

MS. LIMPO: No, not at all. My understanding is that unless they were going into-- I take that back about adjoining landowner. I am not sure that our property goes up to that property. All I know is that they built it up to the 3000-foot safety zone. Someone else might own the property in the middle.

MR. McNAMARA: Okay.

MS. LIMPO: That is probable.

MR. McNAMARA: So you may not be--

MS. LIMPO: So I do not believe we were the adjoining landowner. We have very good communications as far as receiving all our mail and any phones that come into the Airport, as far as that is concerned. We have very good connections in the town, also, and are in constant communication with people in the town, including our attorney, who lives in the town and keeps us advised of all that is happening.

But we did not know about this until, all of a sudden, they started building. When we objected, it was already started.

MR. McNAMARA: And you did then object?

MS. LIMPO: Yes. I not only notified the New Jersey DOT, I also called the township, I called the builder. They said they were outside of the safety zone. We had no control over it. I said, "Isn't it ridiculous to build a retirement home? Who would put a nursing/retirement home at the end of a runway? You're asking for trouble, in my opinion."

MR. McNAMARA: Are there other questions? Ms. Castner?

MS. CASTNER: What would happen if the FBO left?

MS. LIMPO: We would find another FBO.

MS. CASTNER: So none of the three children are interested in--

MS. LIMPO: That is part of the problem.

MS. CASTNER: Does anyone have a rating or an interest in flying, even though they do not want to manage the business?

MS. LIMPO: I have a rating, but I do not want to manage the business.

MS. CASTNER: So, on a day-to-day basis, you are relying on the management of the FBO for -- I am just naming these -- flight school, for fuel sales?

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

MS. CASTNER: The pilots' shop is a different--

MS. LIMPO: The pilots' shop is a different entity.

MS. CASTNER: Are the hanger rents under the FBO, or do you collect those directly?

MS. LIMPO: We collect the hanger rents and maintain them. I am in charge of the hanger rents and the tie-downs.

MS. CASTNER: And the son-in-law comes up and--

MS. LIMPO: And the what?

MS. CASTNER: The brother-in-law comes up--

MS. LIMPO: For any kind of construction or building. We handle that ourselves. I handle any of the legal matters, hopefully.

MS. CASTNER: None of the three children receive money for management?

MS. LIMPO: No.

MS. CASTNER: Because there is no money?

MS. LIMPO: Because there is no money.

MS. CASTNER: Okay. Have the three of you -- because no one has been interested in running the Airport during this generation -- thought about passing it on to the next generation?

MS. LIMPO: You know, I never thought about it, frankly. We have been so concerned with just keeping it going right now, I never thought about passing it on to the next generation, outside of trying to make it such a viable enterprise that we can go back to having a full-time manager of the Airport, which we had at one time.

MS. CASTNER: I asked that question because -- well, for a lot of reasons. But if you cannot afford a manager, it doesn't create any money, and you hope for it just to break even-- You said at the beginning of your testimony that if you had a \$10,000 bond or a \$100,000 bond in the bank, you think this would be a much better investment.

MS. LIMPO: Right, right, absolutely.

MR. McNAMARA: Presumably, it would be a much larger bond with 110 acres.

MS. LIMPO: Well, presumably.

MR. McNAMARA: But what you are saying is that even a \$10,000 bond is a better investment.

MS. LIMPO: Yes. You don't own an airport because of the economics involved. I am sure you know that from listening to everyone who has testified today. It is really a labor of love and an interest in aviation.

We have tried to keep my father's dream alive. When developers approached us in the 1980s, I did not want to sell. I did not want to sell because I felt it was just too soon. I felt it was an airport, there weren't many airports, we should keep it as an airport as long as we could. It may have been a mistake. With the recession, we had a difficult time.

However, now there is new hope again. I mean, our Airport today is-- We are hoping that we are really going to make the success that my father dreamed about, with the new improvements. MS. CASTNER: Have you had to put money into that?

MS. LIMPO: Pardon?

MS. CASTNER: Have you had to put money into that?

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: She had to put in \$30,000 -- or, what, \$100,000.

MS. LIMPO: We put \$100,000 in on that. I considered it an accomplishment. Outside of that and some other repairs that had to be done, basically the Airport has maintained its own for the past 12 years.

MS. CASTNER: That is really the question I had. It was not the capital improvements. It was on a year-to-year basis, did you three have to--

MS. LIMPO: On a year-to-year basis, we have covered all of our expenses.

MS. CASTNER: It was only when you decided to do the capital improvements that--

MS. LIMPO: The capital improvements, right. Now the big decision is, do we want to build some of these "T" hangers? Very seriously, I am considering it.

MR. McNAMARA: You are in an area of the State where there are very few airports.

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: You are sort of the last family representing airports. I guess you are the second most northern Airport in the State, Sussex County being slightly higher--

MS. LIMPO: Right. They have their air show, which I understand is really wonderful.

MR. McNAMARA: What's that?

MS. LIMPO: They have that wonderful air show, which I believe brings in some good revenue.

MR. McNAMARA: Ms. Limpo, thank you.

First of all, are there other questions? Mr. Yudin?

MR. YUDIN: Just a thought, because it seems the situation with the retirement/nursing home is going to get worse, not better. I am talking

about the people who live there complaining that, “Gee, we didn’t know there was an Airport.” You might want to get your hands on that statute.

MS. LIMPO: Yes, I will.

MR. YUDIN: You might want to notify the developer and the real estate agent that the statute does exist, and you might want to insinuate to them that all the people who are buying -- or the residents who are coming into the nursing home might have grounds to back out of the contract, if the developer and/or the real estate agent did not notify them, as they are required to under this statute. Maybe that would give you a little ammunition to counter the argument that they didn’t know you were there, because they are obligated to notify you.

MS. LIMPO: What is the name of the statute?

MR. YUDIN: I don’t have it.

MR. ENGLE: New Jersey Safety Zone?

MR. McNAMARA: It was the Airport Safety and Hazard Zoning Act. It was revised about four years ago. Part of its revision was to change its name to the Safety Zoning Act. At that time, a provision was added to that section of the statute.

MS. LIMPO: Okay. I know where to get that, I think.

MR. McNAMARA: Are you an attorney?

MS. LIMPO: Yes.

MR. McNAMARA: You mentioned that you were doing the legal work.

MS. LIMPO: Well, I am a recent attorney. I figured, “It couldn’t hurt. It could help.”

MR. McNAMARA: Are there any other questions? Ms. Nagle?

MS. NAGLE: Is there anyone from Greenwood Lake Airport looking into public ownership of the Airport?

MS. LIMPO: There has been some talk about the town possibly purchasing the Airport.

MS. NAGLE: Do they seem receptive?

MS. LIMPO: They do seem receptive -- very.

MS. NAGLE: So, obviously, they think there is a value to it.

MS. LIMPO: The township has been wonderful -- the people in the township have been, basically. We consider ourselves very lucky when we hear some of the stories about other areas.

MS. NAGLE: Thank you.

MS. LIMPO: Thank you.

MR. McNAMARA: Ms. Castner?

MS. CASTNER: I am on Suzie's wavelength here.

If the township did not want to purchase it and you, being the second generation and the comments you have made so far, would you want to pass this on to your children, or would you want-- My question is: Do you want to give this burden to your kids?

MS. LIMPO: No.

MS. CASTNER: Thank you.

MR. McNAMARA: Where is your residence? Where do you reside?

MS. LIMPO: Connecticut.

MR. McNAMARA: You're in Connecticut?

MS. LIMPO: I am a Connecticut resident.

MR. McNAMARA: Once again, thank you very much. You, I think, get the award today for the longest drive. I thank you very much.

MS. LIMPO: I took the train.

MR. McNAMARA: Thank you for taking the time to do that, and thank you for letting us have the benefit of your comments.

There is one other item I would like to address: Linda, you had gotten a list of real estate appraisers, which you and I had talked about several months ago. I would like to ask you if you could give them a call and see if we could arrange to have them come to our meeting on the afternoon of March 26, the last Tuesday in March.

MR. ENGLE: That one is filling up.

MR. McNAMARA: That one is filling up? I'll tell you what: Would you get together with Phil. He is in charge of two days -- actually, what do you have?

MR. ENGLE: Four days.

MR. McNAMARA: You have four days. Phil is in charge for the next four days in the month. Get a slot for two or three real estate appraisers to come in and give us testimony about what airports are doing to the value of land. Okay?

MR. ENGLE: Jack, for the record, I think we may have found out what one of the problems is with getting the towns. We used the Division of Aeronautics book that has all the airports in it. Many of the townships are not listed. Such things as Allaire Airport is listed in Belmar. Sussex is also listed incorrectly. You know, Wantage Township is listed as the town of Sussex.

So the questionnaires went to the towns, not the townships.

MR. McNAMARA: Let's get that straightened out.

MR. ENGLE: We will work on getting that straightened out.

MS. LIMPO: I forgot to mention one thing, if I may?

MR. McNAMARA: Please go ahead, Ms. Limpo.

MS. LIMPO: It is sort of an aside. Tort reform: One of the problems, I think, with small airports has been the lack of new planes. Hopefully, with the new Federal--

MR. McNAMARA: General Aviation Revitalization Act.

MS. LIMPO: Right. Maybe we will have some planes generated and built in the United States that are affordable. Most of the planes on the field are 20 or 30 years old. That is why I think you have had the downturn in the general aviation business. You can't afford to buy an airplane. You can't go out and buy a \$25,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 Cessna 150, I think it is. I consider that a good trend for us and a hope for the future.

MR. McNAMARA: Thank you again.

MS. LIMPO: Who would like this sketch of our ad?

MR. McNAMARA: Please give that to the hearing reporter.

Unless we have other business to come before this Commission, we stand adjourned.

Thank you all very much for coming.

**(MEETING CONCLUDED)**