



THE EXPRESS-TIMES

New ETA for Solbergs

Family has until Sept. 8 to respond. Readington wants to buy airport rights, land for \$21.7M.

Saturday, August 26, 2006

By ANDREA EILENBERGER
The Express-Times

READINGTON TWP. | Township officials are giving the owners of Solberg Airport until Sept. 8 to respond to their \$21.7 million offer for the land surrounding the airport and the airport's development rights.

Officials asked the owners on Aug. 10 to respond by Friday but granted their request for a two-week extension. Co-owner Thor Solberg Jr. said he and his two siblings need more time to sort through the lengthy proposal document.

"We have to wait until we can all in concert make a decision," he said.

In a letter to township special counsel James Rhatican, Solberg attorney Lawrence Berger wrote, "There is not unanimous agreement on the course that the Solbergs wish to take."

Solberg said the disagreement is minor but they haven't yet decided on a definite approach.

Township Mayor Gerard Shamey said officials are asking for a written statement of their position and a clarification of Berger's role in the matter. Berger represented Solberg Aviation Co. in previous negotiations with the township.

Solberg said Berger is an attorney for Solberg Aviation Co. but no decision has been made in "reference to our representation" during negotiations.

"The township is encouraged the Solbergs are trying to achieve unanimity among themselves," Rhatican said.

Previous negotiations have failed, with the discrepancy hinging largely on runway length.

The Solbergs want to bring a mediator into future negotiations, although officials haven't been receptive to that idea.

Shamey said officials are asking the Solbergs to state which specific issues they would like a mediator to focus on.

"To meet all the objectives, all of these options need to be explored, and I think the mediator can be helpful in drawing out what reasonable options there are so we can find a solution that doesn't put the total cost and burden on the local taxpayer," Solberg said.

Reporter Andrea Eilenberger can be reached at 610-258-7171 or by e-mail at aeilenberger@express-times.com.

© 2006 The Express Times

© 2006 NJ.com All Rights Reserved.