

Airport Owner's Article

To the Editor:

Solberg Airport co-owner Thor Solberg recently published a paradoxical endorsement of eminent domain use by municipalities, "to assist airports in their development..." The article, in the September 2006 issue of *Airport Business*, a trade publication, seemingly endorses condemning land around airports to enable their expansion while accusing the township of acting "to prevent any further improvements to the safety, security and utility of the facility." See airportbusiness.com and Search "Another Side of Eminent Domain."

So, Mr. Solberg, why is it so abhorrent to you when the citizens of Readington seek to defend their property and quality of life from the threat of "inverse condemnation" by an expanded airport? Further, Mr. Solberg, why do you state that the township is preventing safety and security improvements when that is simply untrue? You would not try and misinform the public, would you?

As has been published previously, the 1997 Solberg Airport Master Plan and associated Airport Layout Plan, with conditional FAA and state approvals, remains on file and a threat to Readington residents. Only a final release of the Environmental Assessment, finding "no significant impact," stands between Readington and the jet

traffic Solberg seeks to attract with the expansion documented in the plan.

I'm sorry to sound angry, but this article, where Mr. Solberg goes on to imply that Readington is seeking to take his land for "...huge profits in land-use conversion" is an insult to every resident and taxpayer in Readington. He has not heeded his own plea "to join us at the negotiating table in a good faith effort to settle the future role of the airport in a way that benefits all parties."

Receiving over \$21 million and retaining ownership of a 100+ acre airport seems like a reasonably beneficial outcome to me. Residents will get the assurance of knowing their property will not be adversely affected by frequent jet traffic. Again, a reasonable outcome to me, but apparently not enough for the Solbergs.

Our Township Committee is acting according to law in seeking relief from the threat of the Solberg Airport expansion plan. Doing anything else in light of the recent referendum vote and in line with the vote of a majority of residents in recent elections would be abandoning their duty. I support the Readington Committee in their unpleasant task, but realize it is beneficial to all involved.

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