

Airport

(Continued from Page A1)

agriculture, or R-1— low residential.

At the time the zoning was set up in the township, Ada Reigle stated she missed seeing the notice in the papers and was unaware of the township's designation of the airport as agriculture or their later amendment of the area to R-1.

Reigle said they were advised by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's air traffic division that they should file a petition to have the zoning changed.

What the new zoning of the airport would involve is creating an airport hazard area. This has neighboring farmers and landowners nervous and worried—so worried that over 50 of them turned out for the Wednesday evening hearing.

The purpose of the new zoning, according to Reigle's attorney, is to insure the maximum compatibility of land use to air traffic on the airport land and the surrounding areas.

The plan calls for a designated area 2000 feet long, extending from the end of the runway and fanning out at an angle of 15 degrees on both sides.

Reigle explained this fan shaped area is to allow for wind drift carrying planes to either side of the runway approach area when there is a strong cross wind. No tall buildings or high antennae would be allowed to be built in these areas because they would create a hazard for the airplanes and jeopardize the safety of the pilots.

Specifically, no permanent structure could be located higher than 35 feet in the hazard area. And starting at the end of the runway, structures could not exceed one foot in height for every 20 foot of set-back distance.

The new zoning plan calls for any operation emitting dust or smoke in the hazard zone to be prohibited. And, it requires any radio or electrical device to be approved by the Federal Communications Commission within the hazard district.

Reigle pointed out there are zoning requirements spelled out in the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Blue Book, the 1972 edition of the Bureau of Aviation's Pennsylvania Laws Relating to Aviation, Act 120 passed in May, 1970.

The owner of the airport, which was built in 1943, said the zoning won't affect existing structures. He added he needs to protect his airport from the suburban sprawl that is occurring in the Palmyra area and noted the changes in land use since the 1940's.

Reigle, who's been flying for about 40 years, says he is allowed a 10:1 glide ratio by Federal Aviation laws. This means that at 1000 feet from the end of the runway, nothing should be at an elevation of 100 feet above the ground to interfere with take offs and landings.

Ada Reigle said she fails to see why farmers in the area are upset. "We've been flying since before 1945, and we're going to continue to be flying."

But farmers are upset. One farm family that's especially worried is Herold

and Gladys Brandt. Fifty acres of their farm lie within the hazard zone, with the fan shaped wedge falling between their house and barn.

They are concerned about the effects this planning change may eventually have on their property. Since they learned about the hearing and the proposed changes on March 15 after they read the notice in the local paper, the Brandts have gotten over 70 signatures on a petition opposing the proposed zoning.

The Brandts said they are afraid that the new zoning would limit their ability to keep their farm in agriculture. Brandt explained his family has owned the farm since about 1832, and he was born and raised there.

Since the airport was built, he said there have been numerous incidents which have given him cause to be alarmed.

He stated that 75 percent of the time, the airplanes fly directly over his buildings, and sometimes the planes are lower than his barn—less than 35 feet high. He added the noise of the single engine planes keeps he and his wife from sitting outside a lot in the summer time, so they stay inside the house.

He recalled a time when the airport was having parachuting shows and the chute of one of the jumpers failed to open. Luckily the emergency chute opened and he floated between Brandt's house and barn, narrowly missing the electric wire running between the two buildings.

"The jumper hit our tree and landed in my wife's peony bush. She had just put metal stakes in to support the plant, and when I got to the man his eyes were rolling. One of the stakes had gone between his head and the helmet, but fortunately he wasn't even scratched," Brandt said.

Another time, he recalled a homemade airplane made by the Reigles was being given a test flight by the Reigles' son. "Normally the plane was just taken up and right down, but this time he came sputtering around my

barn. The engine konked out and the plane came down in my wheat field, clipping the power line off the insulator with the landing gear," he said.

Brandt retired from farming in 1972 due to his health. He now leases the farm to Donald Hoffer.

When asked if the airplanes bothered him, Hoffer said the first few years he was farming the Brandt farm were somewhat frightening. "When I was out in the combine and saw a shadow coming over my head, it was a little scary," he said.

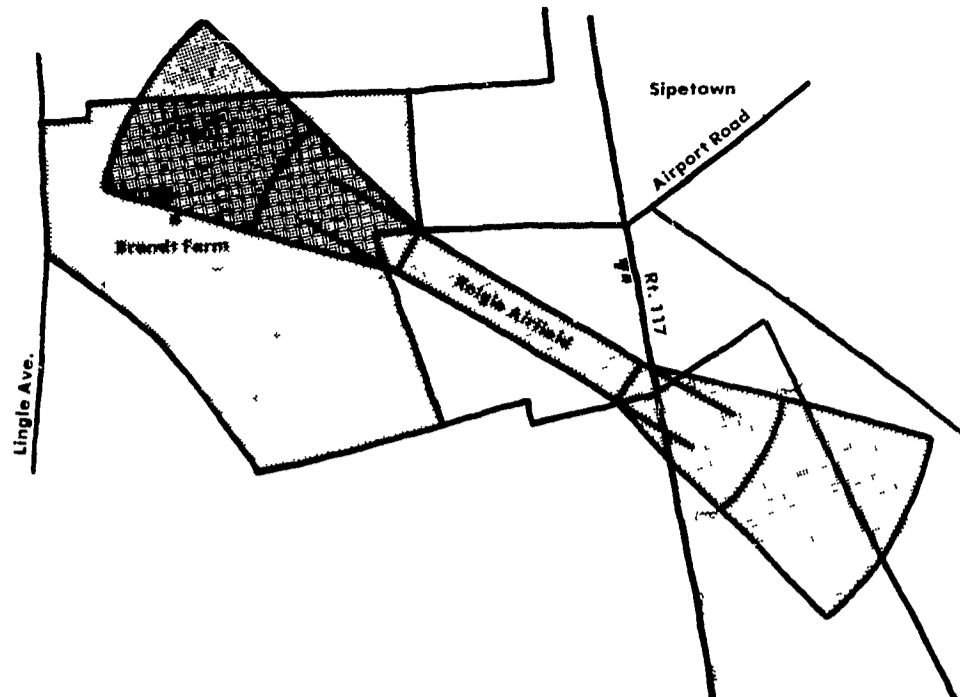
Hoffer keeps about 30 head of replacement heifers in the Brandt barn. He said he worries when he first brings them to the farm because he's afraid the planes might scare them and they'll stampede through the fence.

Hoffer said he's concerned that, because of the zoning, Brandts might sell out, and he can't afford to lose the farm and still pay his bills.

He said that if all goes well in the future he might like to buy the farm, but not if he couldn't put up a silo if it exceeded 35 feet tall.

Joe Eckenrode told the board of supervisors that they should be more concerned with getting proper lighting at the ends of the runway. He told the group of an incident where one of his grain trucks had to come to a complete stop on Route 117, located on the east side of the runway, because a plane was coming in too low for a landing.

A neighboring farmer on the east side of Route 117, also in the hazard zone, said she's afraid the zoning will hurt the resale value of her



This line drawing shows the fan-shaped hazard areas extending 2000 feet off either end of Reigle's sod runway. The darker area, within the Brandt property, shows the fifty acres that will be affected, with an area directly over the farm buildings.

farm. Even though she would like to see it always stay in farming, she said, the zoning would make selling it for industrial development an impossibility.

It was pointed out that the airport zoning affects mostly the land owned by those people who didn't request the zoning change. The hazard areas involve 2000 feet off either end of the 2300 foot long runway.

The Brandt attorney asked the township supervisors to keep in mind that neither Reigle nor Brandt has any more right for the township's consideration, and both have competing interests.

The Reigle's attorney admitted there would need to be some changes to the wording of the proposed zoning amendment, as

brought out by the public's feelings and statements.

The supervisors have tabled their burden of

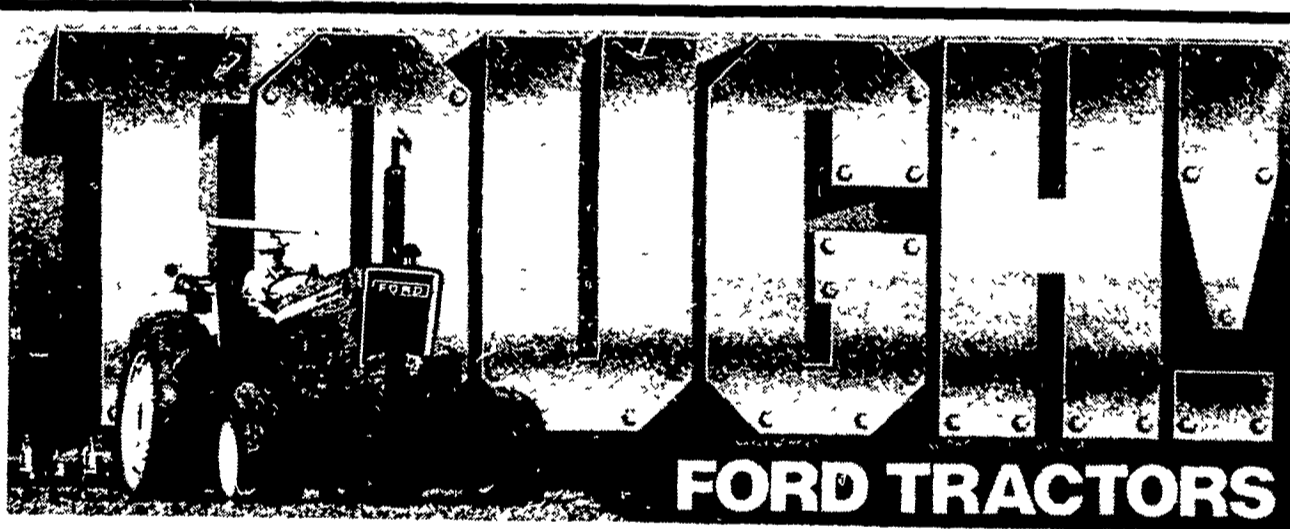
decision until May 21, 1980, when Case #9-79 will go before the local planning commission.

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