We are discussing the option of changing from a private use airport to a privately owned, public use airport. As many of you know a solar plant is being installed approximately 2 miles east of our airport. It is already producing significant glare and is only 10% complete. After repeated calls to the FAA and a letter to Kurt Haukohl this is the reply we received. This is the exact letter.

 From Kurt to the board.

We found one letter for the powerline project within one-mile of the airport runway that was approved by the FAA. (attached)

It looks like everyone has been notifying David Fanning of NYE County about these things and not you or the airport, although the airports’ name in on the letter.

The FAA’s stance is that you do not have any protected airspace due to the fact that you are a private-use facility.

Only public-use facilities are given protected airspace.

If you put the airport into the Public-Use category then potentially the FAA would be required to defend your airspace as would the county and other public entities.  As it stands anyone could build something on the runway centerlines that might force closure of one end.

I always recommend putting the airport into the Public-Use category so that you get FAR Part 77 airspaces and protections.

Anyone ahead of you filing would be grandfathered as possessing the airspace first.

When / if you choose to enter Public-Use, you could publish very strict requirements like “prior permission required” for any type of operation.

The other airspace case we find is a side mount antenna probably to an existing structure that is noted as a hazard.

You’ll see a small chart of where this project is planned.

I cannot find your solar project so if you can give me more details on that would be helpful to see if it is in the system.

Collectively we might get lucky and be able to object to the project if I could find it, and they have made some other errors, in their submission.

End of letter

This is an issue your Board was not aware of and indeed is a complete surprise to us. Because of the gravity of the situation we are extremely concerned. I have been assured that we can put all the restrictions in place that we want to. There will be no operational changes to our airport at all. The state will do an operational assessment of our airport, and indeed they have already done one informally and the current assessment is with a very few changes which we had planned already we will probably enter as a class A facility. One of the benefits is that the classification of public use is that we will no longer pay property taxes on our airstrip and taxiway. We will not have any charter or air service operations, keep the weight restriction we currently have in place and with the help of the state impose common sense restrictions to maintain our lifestyle. No one, least of all us wants a busy facility that conflicts with our life and we will ensure that happens.

We will not accept and cannot even be offered any federal or state funds for our airport so that means they have only the guarantee that we will treat all pilots that fit our restrictions are treated the same. We currently do this anyway all we are doing is to formalize it.

The best part about it is at any time we if we are unhappy we can reverse the status with a letter, no restrictions, no liabilities, and we are back to a private use airport.

In closing we live in an uncertain world, as it stands our airfield could be impacted greatly without us being able to do anything about it and we have 50 years of sweat equity and money invested in something that we could lose the use of. As an organization I see no other alternative to this.

Change is difficult but the final outcome will be a stronger association with a more valuable airport, building equity and safeguarding lifestyle is what we are about.

Thank you for your time.