

The Herald | [heraldonline.com](http://heraldonline.com)

[print](#) | [close window](#)

Final decision nears on airport changes

By Matt Garfield · [mgarfield@heraldonline.com](mailto:mgarfield@heraldonline.com)

Published 07/27/08 - 12:00 AM |

 [Comment on this story](#)

After three more months of talks and tweaks, Rock Hill and York County leaders appear close to approving new rules limiting development around the local airport.

The two sides have scheduled a round of public meetings this week and are expected to vote next month on the proposal. The county will take a vote shortly after Rock Hill officials take action in August, said County Council Chairman Buddy Motz.

"We're already ahead of them, so they need to catch up," said Motz, adding that he feels confident the measure has more than enough votes to pass.

Some neighbors say they realize their opposition efforts are nearing an end, at least in terms of blocking the rules. Opponents tried to get Motz's opponent, Alex Haeefe, elected to the County Council last month, hoping he could become their champion and somehow find a way to change course.

"If we had been able to get Alex Haeefe elected, we would've had one more voice on our side," said neighbor Jim Every, who lives on Woodberry Road. "And maybe it would have thrown a little bit of a scare into the council members. We came close."

Controversy centers on two parts: tighter zoning rules through the airport overlay district, and a 1,000-foot lengthening of the runway to attract more corporate jet traffic. Neighbors fear more noise and lower property values.

The city and county agreed to drop a provision that would have required people buying homes close to the airport to sign noise disclosure forms.

The form emerged as the top source of anger among many homeowners. It reads, in part, that people on a given property "may be exposed to significant noise levels as a result of the airport operations."

Neighbors fear potential buyers will be scared off. They complain the forms are a one-size-fits-all approach affecting 1,800 homes, even on streets where jets can rarely be heard.

Local officials also delayed the proposal for three months to hold more discussions with the public. Even if the rules are approved, some neighbors hope to convince local officials to abandon plans to lengthen the runway.

"We can only hope that by a show of numbers the county and city will understand that there is no reason to expand," neighbor Walt Wunderlich wrote in an e-mail to homeowners.

Any upgrades will take years to materialize. At a time of tight budgets and growing demands in Washington, Motz believes it will take close to a decade for any runway money to get here.

"There's a core group that, short of shutting the airport down, they're not going to be acceptable to anything," Motz said. "Everyone else will understand the need and necessity. Once the council moves on it, that'll be it."

Wunderlich and others disagree, saying they will continue lobbying to halt the expansion.

Matt Garfield 329-4063

All rights reserved. This copyrighted material may not be published, broadcast or redistributed in any manner.

**[Cheap Airfare](#)**

Compare multiple travel sites. Discount web fares made easy. [www.LowFares.com](http://www.LowFares.com)

**[Online Courses Directory](#)**

Directory of Colleges Offering Various Online Courses & [onlinecollegedegree](http://onlinecollegedegree)

**[Online Last Will-\\$13.99, Free](#)**

Online last will \$13.99, free trial. Quick document creation. [www.medlawplus.com](http://www.medlawplus.com)

Ads by Yahoo!