

The Richland Township Zoning Hearing Board met July 15, 2026, at 6:50 p.m. to hear the Appeal or Application of the Applicant, James D. Dallas, III and Samantha Dallas for the subject property owned by David J. Horten and So Yeun Hoten located at the corner of Solomon Run Road and Mt. Airy Drive, Richland Township, Cambria County, Pennsylvania Tax Map No. 50-004.-162.001, which is zoned L-1 Light Industrial District under the Richland Township Zoning Ordinance. The Applicant proposed to use the subject property to sell and service gooseneck, equipment, utility, dump and enclosed trailers. The Applicant requested:

1. A use variance from Richland Township Zoning Ordinance Section 240-74B.
2. In the alternative, a compatible type manufacturing-light industrial use as authorized by Section 240-74B(28) of Richland Township Zoning Ordinance.

This hearing was conducted in the Richland Township meeting room, 322 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown PA 15904.

Present:

Bill Patrick, chair

PJ McGowan, vice-chair

Dave Strushensky

Eber Verhovsek

Mark Kishlock

Eric D Hochfeld, Solicitor

Tiffany Shomo, Secretary

Mr. Patrick began the hearing at 7:05 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Hochfeld began the hearing by listing exhibits. Board Exhibit #1 was the appeal application with attachments. Board Exhibit #2 was the Richland Township Zoning Ordinance, by reference, and Board Exhibit #3 was the posting of the municipal building, the property involved, advertising in the Tribune-Democrat and notification of this hearing to adjoining property owners via certified mail.

Court stenographer Ashley Hamilton swore in the following:

1. James Dallas
2. Cory Cree

Mr. Dallas stated that he is requesting a variance to allow him to start a trailer sales and service business on the subject property. He explained that he is currently a coal miner and is interested in starting his own business. Mr. Dallas stated that he believes the property would be a suitable location because of its proximity to Route 219, the nearby exit, and Route 56. He was advised that trailer sales would not be permitted on the property without the requested variance.

Mr. Dallas explained that the proposed business would involve the sale of gooseneck trailers, dump trailers, equipment trailers, and similar pull-behind trailers that are not independently powered. He also intends to have a garage on the property where trailers

could be serviced and inspected. He noted that there are currently no similar businesses in the immediate area and believes the location would provide convenient access for equipment users, including individuals who use side-by-sides, quads, and other recreational or utility equipment.

The subject property is located at the corner of Mt. Airy Road and Solomon Run Road, adjacent to the Quality Inn. Mr. Dallas stated that the property is currently vacant. There are trees along the right-hand side of the property near the hotel's parking lot and extending toward Route 219, while the area closer to the bridge consists primarily of overgrown grass. A high-tension power line owned by Penelec runs through the middle portion of the property. Mr. Dallas proposed constructing an approximately 50-foot by 50-foot garage with an office, paving the parking area, clearing most of the trees, and utilizing the remaining area for trailer storage and inventory. He acknowledged that there are required setbacks from the power line and stated that he would comply with all Penelec requirements. He indicated that he has not yet reviewed those requirements in detail.

Mr. Dallas stated that he does not currently operate a business at another location and that this would be a brand-new start-up. He was asked whether the business would operate as a franchise. Mr. Dallas explained that he has been in contact with Gator Made Trailers, and they indicated that they would discuss the possibility further if he obtains the property. He has also researched other locations associated with various manufacturers. Mr. Dallas noted that Gator Made does not offer enclosed trailers, which he would also like to sell, so he may need to work with an additional manufacturer.

Regarding access to the property, Mr. Dallas stated that access would be from Solomon Run Road, using the existing entrance located near the hotel. He explained that the property line appears to run through the middle of the existing driveway and that he anticipates sharing that entrance. Mr. Dallas stated that he has not yet reviewed the deed, but the township GIS information appears to show the property line extending across the entrance.

Mr. McGowan asked Mr. Dallas why he believed the property was suitable for trailer sales and repair. Mr. Dallas stated that the property is conveniently located near Route 219 and the airport and is highly visible to individuals traveling into the area, including those traveling to and from the airport. He explained that he has personally had to travel significant distances outside the area to purchase trailers and believes there is a need for a business of this type in the area.

Mr. McGowan also asked why Mr. Dallas believed he should be permitted to operate the proposed business at this particular property. Mr. Dallas stated that the property has been vacant for a long period of time and that the proposed use would not generate a very high volume of traffic. He also stated that the power line would not interfere with his proposed use of the property and that the business could provide an economic benefit to the area.

Mr. Strushensky confirmed that the parking lot would be paved and the proposed building would be constructed prior to occupancy and before the trailer inventory is brought onto the property. Mr. Dallas confirmed that this was his intention.

Mr. Dallas was asked about the possibility of providing off-season storage for customers. He stated that, given the additional space available on the property, he believes customer storage could potentially be offered in the future. Mr. Hochfeld clarified that the matter currently before the board is approval for the sale of trailers as business inventory. If Mr. Dallas intends to provide customer storage as a separate use, he would need to request approval from the Township. Mr. Dallas acknowledged this and stated that customer storage is something he may consider down the road, but his immediate focus is on trailer sales and servicing.

Mr. Cree, Airport Manager, stated that he does not have a problem with or oppose the proposed business, the location, or its proximity to the Johnstown Airport. However, he requested that the developer be required to submit an analysis to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), including Form 7460-1. Mr. Cree explained that the property is located within the transitional surface associated with the airport runway and that the FAA would need to evaluate the proposed height and location of the building to determine whether it would constitute an obstruction.

Mr. McGowan asked whether construction within a certain distance of the airport is required by law to undergo an FAA review. Mr. Cree stated that he believed the review was required based on information available through the FAA website. He was unsure whether the requirement would appear during a deed search but explained that the FAA website has a prescreening process that can be used to determine whether a proposed project requires an FAA analysis. Mr. Cree stated that he entered this particular property into the FAA search and the results indicated that a submission was required. When asked how a property owner would know about this requirement, Mr. Cree stated that he believed the requirement is also addressed in the Township's zoning ordinance. He explained that he had seen the notice and wanted to bring the matter to the board's attention. Mr. Cree reiterated that he has no objection to the proposed business and stated that, personally, he believes economic growth around the airport is beneficial.

Mr. Dallas was advised that the next step, if the variance is approved, would be to proceed to the Planning Commission for site plan development review. This process would include review of erosion and sedimentation (E&S) requirements, stormwater management, the site plan, and other applicable development requirements. Mr. Dallas stated that he was aware of these requirements.

Mr. Dallas stated that the proposed building would have approximately a 16-foot ceiling height and would be approximately 28 feet high at the peak. He did not have a specific construction timeline at this time. He explained that his sales agreement provided him

with 30 days to obtain funding and that he has begun obtaining contractor estimates. He was advised that contractors may not be able to provide estimates until late fall.

The board took a recess from 7:26 pm – 7:41 pm.

Mr. Dallas had no further testimony.

Mr. McGowan motioned to deny the applicant's request for a use variance. Seconded by Mr. Strushensky. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. McGowan motioned to approve the applicant's request for a compatible type light industrial use for the sales and service of trailers. The applicant must follow all Richland Township Codes and Ordinances. Seconded by Mr. Kishlock. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Hochfeld stated that the Board had approved the compatible use and explained that, under the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant has six months to obtain a building permit. He noted that the Board has the authority to grant a time extension. Mr. Dallas requested an additional six months, for a total of twelve months, to obtain the building permit from the Township.

Mr. Hochfeld explained that Section 240-102 of the Zoning Ordinance permits the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) to extend the time allowed for development of the property. Mr. McGowan made a motion, pursuant to Section 240-102, to extend the applicant's time to obtain a building permit from the original six-month period by an additional six months, providing Mr. Dallas with a total of twelve months to obtain the permit. Seconded by Mr. Verhovsek. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Strushensky made a motion to adjourn the hearing at 7:45 pm. Seconded by Mr. Verhovsek. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

*T. Shomo*

Tiffany Shomo, Secretary