

Rick Dale to the Bayfield County Zoning Committee, 3/18/2010

My family and I own and operate Highland Valley Farm in Bayfield Township. After the Russell Klinger Family, we are the nearest resident property owners to the proposed Shadow Wood project. My wife Janet and I have lived and paid taxes in Bayfield County for more than 36 years. The successful establishment of our fruit farm has been the fulfillment of our life's work.

Starting with a dream and 50 acres of vacant land, we worked and invested to make a home and develop a farm business. Along the way we raised a family—three bright & industrious kids—all of whom have decided to return to their roots to make a life in Bayfield County. In the early years I drove a school bus and did carpentry jobs for neighbors. Janet, an RN, worked first at the Washburn Hospital, then the County Nursing Service, and finally Ashland Hospice. For 18 years following her nursing career she ran a popular licensed child day care in our home. I volunteered as an EMT, provided leadership for the 4H club, and served on my church council. For four years I was an elected supervisor for the Town of Bayfield, during which time I provided leadership for a comprehensive road resurfacing project and the Bayfield Farmland Preservation program. More recently, Janet and I have been active in the Regional Conservancy, the Friends of the Library, the Chamber of Commerce, and numerous other community efforts.

We no longer need to work off the farm. Today, Highland Valley Farm is recognized as a leading producer of blueberries in the State of Wisconsin. We are visited by more than 5,000 pick-your-own customers annually. Our products are distributed to retailers and processors over a five state region. The farm supports three household incomes—and provides 25-35 additional part-time jobs during our summer harvest. We would like to think that our contributions and long tenure in this community count for something.

Our retail customers tell us that a large part of the berry picking experience they return for year after year is the pristine beauty of our valley setting and the peace and quiet they find here as a respite from their hectic urban environment. These are the same qualities that drew our family to this place 36 years ago. Nobody chooses to live near an airport. You wouldn't—and we **didn't**. If a re-zoning allows the construction of a private-for-pleasure airport near us, we know it will degrade our business, degrade the quality of our life, and devalue our property. I am confident that a competent attorney could put a price tag on those threatened values.

And that is the point that I think you should consider. Janet and I were here long before this young woman hatched her non-compliant plan for an exclusive fly-in resort. We are no longer the youngsters who came to Bayfield County 36 years ago. We are considerably older & wiser, heavily invested here, concerned for the future of our family and this community, and not intending to back down or go elsewhere. I was encouraged when Judge Anderson in his recent decision stated that citizens who believe they will be adversely affected by the zoning change **do have standing** with the courts.