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Received

SEP 14 2018

City Council's Office

All

September 11, 2018

Members of the Clearwater City Council
Offices of the City Council
P.O. Box 4748
Clearwater, FL 33758-4748

Re: Helistop at 1160 Mandalay Point, Clearwater

Dear City Council Members:

My sincere apologies for the tardiness of this letter; I had hoped to get it to you sooner. I am writing to request that the City of Clearwater grant a special use/variance, or adopt the necessary ordinance, to allow a helistop to be used and maintained at my home located at 1160 Mandalay Point, Clearwater. Helicopter traffic over my property and along north Clearwater Beach is substantial, and has been for many years. A helistop located at my property would not only allow for personal use, but also grant access for emergency helicopters. Please note that helicopters would not be permanently kept upon my property; the helistop would be used only for temporary landings and takeoffs. I have been a pilot since 1992, and I am very familiar with the FAA requirements relating to helicopters and helistops.

This helistop could allow for emergency medical evacuations of beachgoers in north Clearwater Beach, in addition to normal, personal transportation. The area of north Clearwater Beach near my home is remote from medical facilities and has limited access for emergency medical vehicles, especially during peak traffic periods. During the heaviest traffic periods, emergency vehicles cannot access and depart from the beach area within a reasonable time, which could be life threatening. Whereas landing an emergency medical helicopter directly on the beach poses hazards to the patient, bystanders and medical personnel, my purpose-built helistop would increase public safety by greatly improving emergency medical access to the crowded, tourist area of north Clearwater Beach. My helistop could be used by emergency medical helicopters in the event of medical emergencies on the beach and serve as an evacuation point during catastrophic evacuations.

The Clearwater Code of Ordinances and the Clearwater Community Development Code currently do not specifically allow for helistops upon residential parcels. It is my understanding that the City's Planning and Development Department interprets the Code as prohibiting helistops on residential parcels because such use is not specifically permitted by the applicable sections of the Code. Therefore, I am formally requesting that the City Council specifically grant a special use/variance to

allow a helistop to be used and maintained on my Property, or, alternatively, to modify the Code to allow for a helistop to be used and maintained on my Property. I note that Section 22.47(1) of the City of Clearwater Code of Ordinances already contemplates that helicopters may land on public beach areas "when human life is endangered or written authorization is granted."

The helistop would meet FAA requirements and will be maintained to FAA standards, at my expense. Please note that a helistop is different from a "helipad" in that the helistop will be used only for landings and takeoffs, and no fuel will be stored at the helistop. Furthermore, the location of the helistop will be sufficiently remote from my neighbors' houses so as to reasonably minimize wind and noise – the noise associated with the helistop should not be significantly greater than the everyday noise caused by the routine helicopter fly-overs in my neighborhood.

Given the anticipated lack of objections from my neighbors, the already frequent use of helicopters in the area and the public benefit of having the helistop available for emergencies, I do not anticipate that this proposal will be controversial.

In summary, the helistop will be a benefit to the City, and specifically would be of great benefit to the north Clearwater Beach area by providing ready access to emergency medical helicopters. Again, no helicopter will be permanently stored on my Property – only temporary landings will be permitted. I hope that the City Council will view my proposal as favorable in light of the potential public benefit, and will grant the right to operate and maintain a helistop on my property. Please add this request to your next City Council meeting agenda. I, and my attorneys, remain happy to work with the City Council and the rest of the City of Clearwater's government to provide you with any and all additional information you may require in considering this request.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pit Gills", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Pit Gills, MD

cc: David L. Koche, Esq.