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August 28, 2026

Philadelphia Glider Council, Inc.
c/o Charles Norman
P.O. Box 122
Hilltown, PA 18927

**Re: Hilltown Township Uniform Construction Code Appeals Board
Philadelphia Glider Council, Inc.; Appeal No. 2026-001**

Dear Mr. Grabowski:

Please find enclosed herewith a copy of the Decision of the Hilltown Township Uniform Construction Code of Appeals Board dated August 27, 2026 in the above-captioned matter. The original of this Decision is being retained by the Township for its file.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,
Grim, Biehn & Thatcher



KELLY L. EBERLE

KLE/ben
Encl.

cc: Hilltown Township Manager (w/encl.)
Mandrel Construction c/o Larry Grabowski (w/ encl.)

HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE APPEALS BOARD

In Re: Philadelphia Glider Council

Appeal No. 2026-001

A hearing was held in the above matter on Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Hilltown Township Municipal Building. Notice of the hearing was published in The Intelligencer advising that all parties in interest might appear and be heard. In addition, written notice was provided to neighboring property owners as required.

The matter was heard before Jeff Crozier, Mark Funk, and Joe Phillips. In addition, Kelly L. Eberle, the Board Solicitor, was in attendance, as was the Board stenographer. Applicant was present and was not represented by counsel. Charles Norman testified on Applicant's behalf. Matthew Wojcik from Barry Isett & Associates, Inc., was present and testified on behalf of the Township. No other individuals requested party status.

The following exhibits were admitted and accepted into evidence:

Board's Exhibits

B-1 Proof of Publication

B-2 Letter with Enclosure dated July 27, 2026 to Neighboring Property Owners from K. Eberle

Applicant's Exhibits

A-1 Uniform Construction Code Appeals Board Application with all attachments

No other documentary evidence was submitted or received by the Hilltown Township Uniform Construction Code Appeals Board ("the Board"). After weighing the credibility of the testimony and documents offered, the Board renders its Decision on the above Application as more fully set forth below.

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Applicant is Philadelphia Glider Council (“Applicant”).
2. The subject property is the real property located at 934 Route 152, Hilltown Township and more specifically identified as Bucks County Tax Parcel No. 15-028-053 (“Property”).
3. Applicant wishes to replace an existing wooden glider storage building, which was built in the 1980s with a new, single-story structure consisting of approximately 7,140 square feet.
4. The proposed structure will be built in approximately the same location as the existing hangar and will hold up to five gliders. The existing structure only holds four gliders.
5. The proposed storage building will not be heated.
6. The proposed storage building will only used to be store gliders; the tow planes are stored in separate hangars located on the north side of the Property.
7. The existing structure is classified as an S-2 storage occupancy and therefore is not required to have a fire suppression system.
8. The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code consists of codes that include the 2018 International Building Code (“IBC”) and the 2016 NFPA 409 - Standard on Aircraft Hangars.
9. IBC §412.3.6 requires that aircraft hangars shall be provided with a fire suppression system designed in accordance with NFPA 409.
10. Applicant seeks a variance, or such other relief as may be required, from IBC §412.3.6 in order to construct the glider storage building without a fire suppression system.
11. In support of its requested relief, Applicant asserts that IBC §412.3.6 is inapplicable as the gliders at issue do not meet the definition of an “unfueled aircraft” set forth in NFPA 409 §3.3.15.

12. NFPA 409 §3.3.15 defines an “unfueled aircraft” as “an aircraft whose fuel system has had flammable or combustible liquid removed such that no tank, cell or piping contains more than one-half of 1 percent of its volumetric capacity.”

13. Gliders, on the other hand, have no tanks, cells, piping, or fuel of any sort.

14. If gliders met the definition of an “unfueled aircraft,” Applicant would be required to install a “dry system” and a foam protection system.

15. Matthew Wojcik from Barry Isett & Associates, Inc., testified that the way the NFPA is currently written, it assumes that fire suppression will apply for all types of aircrafts and does not make a distinction for aircrafts that have never utilized a fuel source.

16. Mr. Wojcik noted that the 2022 Edition of the NFPA 409 has added §1.1.3, which clarifies that NFPA 409 only applies to aircrafts that use liquid hydrocarbon fuels.

17. If the 2022 Edition of NFPA were being applied, Applicant would not have to comply with NFPA 409.

18. Applicant confirmed that neither liquid hydrocarbon fuels nor any other energy fuel types would be stored in the proposed structure.

19. The Board expressed concerns with the proximity of the proposed structure to an existing storage shed.

20. Applicant testified that while the proposed structure cannot be moved elsewhere on the Property without breaching the existing conservation easement, disturbing stormwater management, and impeding traffic circulation, it will not be located any closer to the existing storage shed than is the current hangar.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Board has jurisdiction to hear the appeal.

2. The hearing was held in accordance with all requirements including public notice.
3. 2018 IBC §412.3.6 provides: “Aircraft hangars shall be provided with a fire suppression system designed in accordance with NFPA 409 based on the classification for the hangar given in Table 412.3.6.”
4. NFPA 409 §3.3.15 defines an “unfueled aircraft” as “an aircraft whose fuel system has had flammable or combustible liquid removed such that no tank, cell or piping contains more than one-half of 1 percent of its volumetric capacity.”
5. 2022 Edition of the NFPA 409 has added §1.1.3, which clarifies that NFPA 409 only applies to aircrafts that use liquid hydrocarbon fuels.
6. Granting a variance to allow the construction of the proposed glider storage building without a fire suppression system, and with the condition imposed in the Order, is an equivalent form of construction or other condition that satisfies the Uniform Construction Code requirements under the specific factual circumstances presented to this Board.

III. DISCUSSION

When reaching its decision in this matter, the Board considered and applied the following factors contained in 34 Pa. Code §403.122(g): (1) the reasonableness of the Uniform Construction Code's application in a particular case; (2) the extent to which the granting of a variance or an extension of time will pose a violation of the Uniform Construction Code or an unsafe condition; (3) the availability of professional or technical personnel needed to come into compliance; (4) the availability of materials and equipment needed to come into compliance; (5) the efforts being made to come into compliance as quickly as possible; and (6) compensatory features that will provide an equivalent degree of protection to the Uniform Construction Code.

Based on the above, the Board grants the variance from IBC §412.3.6, which requires aircraft hangars be equipped with a fire suppression system designed in accordance with NFPA 409 - Standard on Aircraft Hangars, on the basis that the gliders at issue do not meet the definition of an “unfueled aircraft” set forth in NFPA 409 §3.3.15. Furthermore, the inclusion of §1.1.3 in the 2022 Edition of NFPA 409 is consistent with the grant of this variance as it demonstrates an intent to exclude aircrafts that do not use liquid hydrocarbon fuels moving forward. The Board notes that the building will not be equipped with any sort of monitored smoke detection and fire alarm system and strongly urges the Applicant to install a monitored system.

The Board finds that granting the variance relief requested is consistent with the intent of the Uniform Construction Code under the circumstances presented by Applicant. Take in its entirety and limited specifically to the circumstances in this Application, the Board adopts the following Order.

DECISION AND ORDER

AND NOW, this 27th day of August, 2026, the Hilltown Township Uniform Construction Code Appeals Board hereby grants the relief requested conditioned as follows:

1. Applicant shall not store any aircrafts, vehicles, or any other energy fuel type within the hangar and shall post the building accordingly.
2. It is highly suggested that the building be equipped with a monitored smoke detection/fire alarm system; and
3. Applicant shall otherwise comply with all other Township, County, and/or State laws regarding construction and use.

The relief granted shall apply only to Applicant based upon the specific facts and circumstances set forth in this case and is applicable to this proposed structure only. The change of occupancy or use and/or future improvements shall otherwise require all applicable permits and approvals and shall comply with all Uniform Construction Code requirements.

HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP UCC APPEALS BOARD

Signed by:
By: Jeff Crozier
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Jeff Crozier

DocuSigned by:
By: Mark Funk
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Mark Funk

Signed by:
By: H. Joseph Phillips
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Joe Phillips