

Thomas Jeffrey Smith

[REDACTED]
New Castle, Delaware [REDACTED]

March 28, 2023

Re: Statement Regarding the Incident on March 22, 2023 at New Garden Airport

Dear Federal Aviation Administration,

I submit the following information about the incident that occurred on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, involving N669YK at New Garden Airport, N57:

My flight in N669YK originated from KILG with the intent to land at N57. Prior to departure, I checked the NOTAMs and weather at KILG and N57. The reported wind at KILG was 150 at 9 knots. Visibility was well above VFR minimum requirements. I completed my preflight inspection of N669YK and recall the aircraft had 65 liters of fuel and 8.5 quarts of engine oil, sufficient for 65 minutes of operation.

I was flying with a passenger who is new to aviation. The winds at N57 were out of the south and we were experiencing some turbulence on base and final approach. I did not want to upset my passenger with a significant descent rate in addition to the turbulence, so, with my passenger in mind, I flew my final approach at an altitude that supported a gentle rate of descent. However, before crossing Newark Road, which borders the New Garden Airport property when approaching Runway 24, I encountered unexpected sink. In response, I increased N669YK's engine power and pitched up in order to reverse the undesired rate of descent. In quick succession, I recall entering sink, responding by adding power, raising the nose, hearing a loud banging noise, the engine stopped, and part of the propeller had detached from N669YK. I immediately pitched down and landed in the field just to the southeast of the approach end of Runway 24. Fortunately, no one was injured. Later, I understood N669YK struck the power lines along Newark Road.

N669YK is a 1984 Yak 52 and it has a valid special airworthiness certificate in the experimental category with an expiration date of January 31, 2028. N669YK's most recent condition inspection was completed in July 29, 2022.

I hold a Private Pilot Certificate, number [REDACTED]. My most recent 61.56 Flight Review occurred on July 19 2022. I hold a third class medical with a special issuance for a monocular vision waiver, effective March, 2019 and will expire on April 30, 2023.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]
Thomas Smith