

Retired NFL player wants to build a private football training facility in rural Lake County

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By Tiffani Sherman

Former Pittsburgh Steelers cornerback Ike Taylor has put in applications to build a 6,000-square-foot estate with his own private indoor football training facility in Lake County.

Taylor, who lives in Windermere, is seeking a conditional use permit and rezoning for an 8-acre property on the north side of Pitts Road and Harbor Way that he bought in 2021 for \$161,000. The land is vacant residential with agricultural zoning.

If the plans go through, over two-thirds of the property would remain undeveloped and the rest would consist of a private football training facility and other structures.

According to the application, “The private football training facility is not a full-size indoor football field. It is a small portion of a field for Ike to train several of his nephews that play college football, maybe take on a couple of other private clients.”

Taylor was drafted by the Steelers in 2003 and played his entire 12-year career in Pittsburgh.

He won Super Bowls in 2006 and 2009 and recorded 14 interceptions and 518 solo tackles over his career. He also has served as an analyst on the NFL Network, and in a 2020 interview with the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, Taylor discussed his work as a private trainer, saying his clients range in age from 8 to 68.

“I’ve got a couple guys, professional guys, who have been asking me to train them, some college guys who’ve been asking me to train them, so I’ve been looking at some leasing developments,” he said. “Wound up buying like 10 acres about 30 minutes away [in Eustis, Fla.] so I’m in the process of building a gym. Right now I just train out of my garage, which ain’t bad, but I plan on doing my own little facility to my liking. You can come chill, stay, do whatever you need to do. I’m just waiting.”

The plans for the training facility show a 100’ x 150’ foot building and shows weight rooms and men’s and women’s locker rooms as well as a 35-yard practice field with an endzone. An observation room on the second floor looks out over the playing field. The plan also calls for multiple offices, a breakroom and a patio deck. An elevator connects the two floors.

H. Daniel Hutter, III of LIS Architecture and Engineering is representing Taylor, according to documents filed with the Lake County Office of Planning and Zoning. He wrote that the scale and proportion of the training facility would be similar to other metal barns in the area.

Currently, the property has no water, sewer, well, or septic system, so infrastructure improvements are part of the plans.

A second construction phase of the project, after the training facility and site infrastructure, includes a 6,000 square foot home with two stories and a pool and sand volleyball court. The application says “This property is to be Ike’s home where he wants to grow roots.”

Since his retirement, he has had many projects including launching a cigar line, coaching his son’s football team, and coaching and training other athletes.