



## **MOTORSPORTS TASK FORCE**

### **AGENDA**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2007**

**COUNTY-CITY BUILDING**

**555 S. 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET, ROOM 113**

**7:30 A.M. - 8:30 A.M.**

1. Approval of Minutes - February 28, 2007
2. Final Report

**MINUTES**  
**MOTORSPORTS TASK FORCE**  
**Wednesday, March 7, 2007 - 7:30 a.m.**  
**County-City Building, Room 113**

**Task Force Members Present:** Russ Bayer, Chair; Carol Brown, Dave Dykmann, Randy Harre, Gary Juilfs, Chris Kingery, Karen Kurbis, Greg Osborn, Stan Patzel, Larry Lewis, Mike DeKalb, Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department (Ex-officio); Kerry Eagan, County Chief Administrative Officer (Ex-officio); Darl Naumann, Lincoln-Lancaster County Economic Development Coordinator (Ex-officio), Jeff Maul, Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director (Ex-officio) and Scott Holmes, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (Ex-officio)

**Task Force Member Absent:** Mike Tavlin

**Others Present:** Randy Moore, Jim McNeil, John Bishop, KLIN Radio; Jean Ortiz, Lincoln Journal Star; Cori Beattie, County Board Secretary; and other interested parties

**Minutes**

Bayer solicited corrections to the minutes of the meeting on February 28, 2007. In reference to page six, paragraph three, Kurbis requested the word "motoplex" be changed to "motorsports facility." No objections to this change were voiced.

Osborn moved approval of the minutes as amended; seconded by Kurbis. Motion passed unanimously.

Kurbis distributed copies of rebuttal information (**See Exhibit A**) to Brown's handout from last week. Brown added she will be sending her map electronically as it did not copy well. Kurbis then provided a brief overview of her handout. (For specifics, please refer to Exhibit A.)

**Final Report**

Eagan distributed copies of the report in legislative form which showed previous language crossed out and new language highlighted in yellow. (**See Exhibit B.**)

Eagan noted under Recommendations - Environmental Impacts, the word "serious" will be corrected to "significant." With regard to the potential impact on property values, he noted this wording seemed to read better under the Environmental Impact heading versus Economic Potential, although, placement was open for debate. Lastly, he listed the admonition for the County Board to read the report and attachments as a conclusion instead of a recommendation. Bayer thanked Eagan for his excellent work and asked members if they had any changes.

### Findings - Location

Kurbis said in reference to the third bullet point at the top of page three, previous discussion included the wording "...and compatible with other surrounding land uses." From his notes, Eagan said he did not gather there was a consensus for this change. Kurbis noted "residential area" by definition in terms of a residential zoning district would totally exclude anyone in the country. It was suggested to change the statement to, "Low impact on residential areas and uses." No disagreement to the change was noted.

Maul pointed out there appeared to be some contradiction within the report by requesting action from the County Board within 30 days, yet recommending further discussion and/or studies. He did not want to give the Board or any other City-County agency the opportunity for further delay. Eagan felt the Board could complete the list of three specifics within 30 days.

Brown said she did not know where the statement originated about the facility being near I-80. Eagan said it came from the subcommittee report. He added Rod Wolter also emphasized a facility be located near a paved road. Brown noted the subcommittee never said "preferably along I-80." Patzel said Wolter did mention the Interstate during his presentation. Bayer explained the I-80 reference was thought to be from the location subcommittee's report, as well as discussions which were held last week - not from another study or person.

### Findings - Economic Impact

Osborn asked for clarification with regard to the phrase, "Multiplier effect from tourism spending..." as, in his mind, additional businesses and jobs did not have anything to do with tourism but rather with a facility being in place and being successful. Harre said the multiplier effect comes from expenditures created by people coming in to the County. He noted in the horse industry when Oklahoma City hosts the world show, one dollar spends seven times in that community.

Osborn felt the report should mention something about the additional collateral businesses that happen because of a facility and not just tourism. Brown agreed. Bayer recollected this was included in Dr. Thompson's report. Osborn said the words "from tourism" are his hang-up and felt a possible, major point could potentially be excluded. He requested an another bullet be added to this section. Juilfs suggested and members agreed to include the following statement as a fourth bullet, "Other studies indicate positive secondary business development."

Lewis noted the Thompson study estimated \$9.9 million of tourism spending. He said two races alone could bring in that amount or more. He asked that it be emphasized additional dollars are likely. It was suggested to include the wording "conservatively estimated" in the respective bullet as Dr. Thompson's report (bottom of page one) stated, "...the report uses conservative assumptions and focuses on tourism impact." No disagreement to the change was noted.

Eagan added the asterisk referencing the Thompson study will be moved to the first sub-bullet.

### Findings - Environmental and Social Impacts

Bayer suggested the first sub-bullet be included under environmental impact recommendations as "C". No disagreement to the change was noted.

## Findings - Demand

Patzel wondered whether the bullet referencing the survey was even necessary as the Task Force decided it was not worth spending the money when demand was already known. Eagan noted a lot of time was spent developing the survey. Bayer added he would like to recognize the demand subcommittee's work and attach their original survey to the final report. Eagan said his thinking was if a survey is to be performed, it should be done by professionals so the data is reliable and scientific. Bayer said he is not recommending a survey be done, but rather bringing to light the subcommittee's work. DeKalb agreed and said if the subcommittee's report referenced the proposed draft, then it should be included as an attachment. Patzel questioned whether the group really wanted the County Board to waste time and/or money on a survey. Bayer clarified that a survey has not been recommended. Eagan said this can also be mentioned during the presentation to the County Board.

## Recommendations

Bayer highlighted the proposed changes to this section as follows:

1. 2.A. (Environmental Impacts) - Change "serious" to "significant";
2. Add noise testing statement from findings section as point "C";

Osborn asked that a bullet be included noting attached documents. This would be in addition to the conclusion statement encouraging the Board to read the report. Harre suggested, "Based on the foregoing discussions and reports attached to this document...". Brown suggested including minutes. Eagan felt these points were covered under "findings" or in the conclusion. Patzel said the Board only has so much time and he would rather see their time spent reviewing the report and the attachments. Eagan said these comments won't be emphasized any better than by including them in the conclusion.

Under the location recommendation Holmes questioned whether "Lancaster County" was specific enough. Eagan said it is clear from the report that some locations exist in the three-mile area.

## Attachments

Bayer said the following documents will be included as attachments: Location subcommittee report; Economic subcommittee report; Environmental Impact Considerations (Dr. Chéenne's report); and Economic Impact Analysis (Dr. Thompson's report).

Osborn asked whether the Task Force was to make a recommendation to the County Board regarding a specific location. Bayer said he did not believe this was the group's charge. Osborn asked if members would like to recommend to the Board that a motorsports facility be placed in Lancaster County. Eagan said this raises philosophical questions of private versus public responsibility. He indicated the report concluded good sites exist in the County for a motorsports facility. Although Task Force support for developing a facility is implicit in the report, it should not be something the government does.

Osborn moved to accept the Motorsports Task Force's report and recommendations as amended; seconded by Kurbis. Motion passed unanimously.

Bayer thanked Task Force members for their hard work. Eagan noted copies of the report will be distributed to the County Board as soon as possible. A formal presentation is scheduled for Thursday, March 15, 2007 at 9:15 a.m., in Room 113. Bayer encouraged members to attend

and provide brief comments if so desired. He also pointed out the group would lose its position of strength if an environment was created whereby it appeared there was disagreement. Holmes added everyone should try to attend as it should not be assumed your presence will not have an impact. Beattie noted the staff meeting is open to the public, although, the Board typically does not allow testimony. Osborn also requested copies of the report be provided to the City Council.

McNeil said the Task Force should be commended for its work. Moore also felt the Task Force did an excellent job.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cori R. Beattie".

Cori Beattie  
County Board Secretary

## EXHIBIT A

The following was submitted by Carol Brown, as her own independent work, to the MSTF on 2/28. Carol's comments are in black/normal print. Carol's statements contain some inaccuracies or invalidated statements that need clarification. Responses are provided by Karen Kurbis, as her own independent work, to the MSTF on 3/7 after having an opportunity to review Carol's original document. Karen's comments are in blue/italics.

The chart starts with 100db at the starting line and finishing line. Typically, this would be at the high end of most sportsman race cars, and higher sound levels than the majority of drag race cars that would compete at weekly events. *Disputed by Scott Holmes, 115 dba more likely (refer to pg 4 of 2-28 minutes). It should be noted that background sound readings alone at Pacific Junction drag strip (cars idling while waiting to race, not including any burnout noise) measured 80-85 dba.*

The blue area would be about 76db.

The orange area would be at a level of 70 db or less.

The Yellow area would be at a level of 64 db or less.

*Sound calculations not validated by Dr Cheenne's report. Even if these are correct, by the time the 115 dba vehicles are factored in, the yellow area would not comply with proposed Motor Sports ordinance.*

There are only two houses that fall in the yellow area, and they are across Highway 77 to the south east. *Houses (at least 8) exist on all sides of track, not just across the Highway.*

The highway already has truck traffic that can generate over 80 to 90 decibels. The highway will often average higher sound levels than the area in orange at normal traffic levels. *LLCHD, in correspondence dated 9-8-06, stated conducted background noise testing at this site revealed 57dba @100ft east of Hwy 77, 55.3dba @ 400 ft east, and 51.0 dba @ 3/8 mile from Hwy. Readings taken by neighbors resulted in some 70-80 dba readings on the hwy itself, but not 80-90 dba as stated above.*

The cart assumes no sound controlling features are employed at the track for easy comparison. If you draw a 5/8 mile radius around a sound source of 100 db you will have an approximate 64 db range. I believe my rules of thumb also are in basic agreement with the information presented by Dr. Chenne. *Unable to validate by Dr Cheenne's report as he only referenced 115 dba dropping to 56 dba @1 mile.*

If you add dirt berms along the track, you can subtract each zone by 10 to 15 db.

Add a wall to the top of the berm, or buildings and you can subtract another 10 to 15 db.

*This was not confirmed by Dr. Cheenne's report. He stated "any kind of depression will help mitigate high frequency noise but would do very little for low frequency noise unless it was a very deep bowl and this would not be practical." He also stated berms would need to be very close to sound source and be very tall to be effective at low frequencies.*

The concrete guard rail will probably help with another few db reduction.

If one assumes that even 15 db can be reduced by various means, then the sportsman cars will not register above 61db at the edge of the property.

Pro Cars and Top Sportsman cars will run in the 120 db range at times. That would still only be at 81 db at the property line. If additional sound reduction means are employed, the sound level at the property edge can be below 75 db even with pro cars. Fuel cars are another matter and their rarity deserves exemption. *Note the reference to 75 dba for non-fuel cars, this is 10 dba above the proposed Motorsports ordinance for any dwelling within a mile of the property boundary.*

With a pit full of vehicles, people and activities, it will also help reduce sound travel from the racing surface. Vegetation can help. Basically any obstacles that block or absorb sound waves helps. *Dr. Cheenne stated "Trees and vegetation provide very little sound attenuation at low frequencies".*

If the 75 db used in commercial zones is applied, and exemptions are made for special events. Then any racing activities can be handled at the facility. *This statement is not relevant to the proposed site as it is in AG zoning with no attempt to change zoning to commercial. It may apply to other locations identified within the city 3 mile jurisdiction.*

The hills to the east and west will cut another 10 to 15 db from the sound levels. No one outside of a mile would be realistically impacted by sound level. *LLCHD background noise testing @ 3/8 mile east of Hwy 77 (over the 1<sup>st</sup> hill) resulted in a drop of 4.3dba (from 55.3 to 51.0), no where near 10-15 dba.*

You can take the same basic contour and overlay it to other potential sites. If you are looking at an oval track or a road course, then draw a 5/8 mile zone around the racing surface to get the 64 db zone around the track. *This is assuming a 100 dba maximum which is not a realistic representation of the noise generated at a drag strip.*

## MOTORSPORTS TASK FORCE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Second Draft, March 7, 2007)

### INTRODUCTION

The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners established the Motorsports Task Force to assist the Board in addressing the complex issues involved with motorsports facilities. The Task Force was asked to address the following questions:

1. Potential demand for motorsports facilities in Lancaster County
  - a. Examine spectator as well as participant demand
  - b. Review existing facilities in the region
2. Economic, fiscal, social and environmental benefits and costs to the community
  - a. Based on different types of facilities and activity levels
3. Pros and Cons of providing motorsports activities in one general location as opposed to decentralized facilities for a specific motorsport activity
4. Identify and rank the most promising and acceptable locations in Lancaster County for motorsports facilities and/or activities
5. Evaluate and make recommendations on the most appropriate business model for providing new facilities for participants and spectators, e.g., public, private, public/private partnership.

The Task Force was directed by the Lancaster County Board to complete its work and submit a final report to the Board by March 1, 2007.

### TASK FORCE MEMBERS

#### Regular Members

Russ Bayer, Chair  
Carol Brown  
Dave Dykmann  
Randy Harre  
Gary Juilfs  
Chris Kingery  
Karen Kurbis  
Larry Lewis  
Greg Osborn  
Stan Patzel  
Michael Tavlin

#### Ex-Officio Members

Mike DeKalb, Planning Department  
Kerry Eagan, County Chief Administrative Officer  
Scott Holmes, Environmental Division  
Manager, Health Department  
Jeff Maul, Executive Director,  
Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Darl Naumann, Lincoln-Lancaster County  
Economic Development Coordinator

## TASK FORCE PROCESS

As a preliminary matter, the Task Force discussed a definition of “motorsports”. Although motorsports can be broadly defined as any motor vehicle used competitively or by a hobbyist, the charge to the Task Force is focused on motorsports facilities. Thus a more appropriate definition of motorsports for purposes of the Task Force would involve racing of motor vehicles on circle tracks, drag racing strips, and road courses. Throughout discussions it was emphasized the Task Force report and recommendations will not be limited to a drag racing facility.

Given the broad scope of the Task Force charge and the limited time to complete the final report and recommendations, the Task Force identified and prioritized the most important issues for discussion. Three subcommittees were formed to focus attention on the following areas of concern:

- Economic, fiscal, social and environmental impacts
- Location
- Demand

The subcommittees met separately and reported back to the entire Task Force. Each subcommittee also produced a written report, copies of which are included with this report.

Additionally, the Task Force heard the following presentations from individuals with expertise in noise, economic development, and development and operation of motor sports facilities:

- Findings of previous motorsports committee - Dr. Darl Naumann, Economic Development Coordinator
- Motorsports facility overview - Rob Wolters, Brainard International Raceway; and Dave Holtgrave, architect with the firm of Holtgrave & Associates, P.C.
- Environmental Impact Considerations: Sound, noise, and drag racing- Dr. Dominique J. Chéenne, Ph.D., Director of Acoustics, Audio, Arts and Acoustics Department, Columbia College, Chicago
- Economic Impact Analysis: The Potential Impact of an NHRA Drag Racing Facility in Lancaster County - Dr. Eric Thompson, Director, UNL Department of Economics, Bureau of Business Research

## FINDINGS

Based on the subcommittee reports, special presentations, general Task Force discussions, and other information, the Motorsports Task Force has determined the following key points must be considered in formulating recommendations to the County Board:

### Location

- Approximately 280 acres is required for a facility that can accommodate ~~an oval track, road course, and drag strip~~ a multiple-use facility
- A stand alone drag strip requires approximately 160 acres, and at least one mile of length
- The most important criteria in locating a facility include:

- Close access to a major paved road, preferably along I-80, with adequate traffic control to prevent highway congestion
- Locate near existing noise sources to mask track noise
- Low impact on residential areas
- Potential sites exist in Lancaster County, including sites near Lincoln, which meet the location criteria for a facility
  - Potential sites are shown on the Location Opportunities Map contained in the Location Subcommittee Report (See Attachment A). The map is a preliminary identification of potential sites, and further review of all sites is required to determine feasibility for a motorsports facility

### **Economic Impact**

- A motorsports facility, whether stand alone or multi-use, has the potential to produce a significant economic impact. \*
- Thompson study estimated an annual impact in Lancaster County from a NHRA-sanctioned drag strip of \$9.9 million in tourism spending
- ~~Additional~~ Multiplier effect from tourism spending produces secondary positive economic impacts also probable
- Public funding for development and operation of a facility ~~creates a negative~~ may reduce the economic impact
- ~~Additional information is needed to determine the effect of a motorsports facility on surrounding property valuations.~~
- Location within five (5) miles of existing hotels, restaurants, and other travel-related services produces a higher impact from tourism spending

### **Environmental and Social Impacts**

- Noise (unwanted sound) from a motorsports facility poses a ~~serious problem~~ significant issue for compatibility with surrounding land uses.
  - Noise testing of simulated race noise should be done for any proposed location under atmospheric conditions most favorable for sound propagation (temperature inversion, humidity, etc.)
  - Existing environmental noises can help ~~dampen~~ mitigate the negative effects of motorsports noise (See Attachment C for a complete discussion of the noise issue as it relates to motorsports)
  - Noise standards need to be established, with the authority to waive allowances to exceed the standards for certain events
- ~~Additional study needs to be conducted to help measure other potential environmental and social impacts.~~

\* Thompson study was commissioned by Nebraska Motorplex

## Demand

- Nationally there is a high demand from both participants and spectators for motorsports.
- Participation at public hearings and correspondence to the County Board indicate a strong local interest in motorsports
- A well-designed survey with adequate controls can help measure the demand for motorsports facilities in Lancaster County

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing discussion, the Motorsports Task Force hereby tenders the following recommendations to the Lancaster County Board:

- ~~1. Lancaster County and the City of Lincoln should work together to maximize the opportunity for the development of a motorsports facility.~~
- ~~2. Noise standards. (To be developed)~~
- ~~3. Economic development can be maximized through private development and operation of a motorsports facility~~
  - ~~a. Careful consideration should be given to the amount of public funding which may be required to support a motorsports facility at a specific location~~

### 1. LOCATION

Potential locations of opportunity for motorsports exist in Lancaster County. Additional study is required to determine the feasibility of developing a motorsports facility at a specific location

### 2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- A. Although noise is a serious issue, a well-designed facility in the right location can help mitigate the impact on surrounding land uses. Regulations should be developed which help mitigate the impact of noise, while at the same time allowing enough flexibility to attract regional and national events
- B. Additional study is needed to help determine the potential of other environmental and social impacts, including the potential impact on surrounding property values

### 3. ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

The Motorsports Task Force believes motorsports presents a unique economic development opportunity for Lancaster County and the City of Lincoln, and strongly recommends the Lancaster County Board take the following actions in the next thirty (30) days to encourage the development of motorsports:

- Begin working closely with the City of Lincoln to maximize the possibility of developing a motorsports facility
- Declare by resolution the County Board's support for motorsports, and pledging its intent to assist the private sector with the appropriate use of County resources in locating and

- developing a motorsports facility
- Complete the proposed amendment of the Lancaster County Zoning Resolution to allow motorsports facilities by special permit

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing recommendations are based on the extensive information presented to the Motorsports Task Force through subcommittee reports, special presentations, and thorough discussions. The Task Force encourages members of the Lancaster County Board to carefully read this entire report, including all attachments.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Motorsports Task Force this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007.

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Russ Bayer, Chair

DRAFT

# LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- A. Location Subcommittee Report
- B. Economic, Fiscal, Social and Environmental Committee Report
- C. Environmental Impact Considerations: Sound, Noise, and Drag Racing - Dr. Dominique J. Chéenne, Ph.D., Director of Acoustics, Audio, Arts and Acoustics Department, Columbia College, Chicago
- D. Economic Impact Analysis: The Potential Impact of an NHRA Drag Racing Facility in Lancaster County - Dr. Eric Thompson, Director, UNL Department of Economics, Bureau of Business Research

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