

Call for a calm and reasonable discussion

The county is changing. I have lived in this county for over 83 years. My family was been in Aylett for over 134 years. My father and mother reared our family on a small farm off Upshaw Road. I would like start by expressing my strong opposition to the proposed motocross raceway. Of course, I am concerned about all of the problems cited by others – the noise, the negative impact on the environment (the well water, the wetlands, the animals and the crops), the increased traffic, and the over extension of our county services like our volunteer fire and rescue units.

On a positive note, I am pleased to see the county coming together as a community. Each meeting held by the Citizens for King William County with the mission statement ‘Promoting Excellence for Everyone’ has grown in number and personal interactions. I have watched as a diverse community has found common ground and ways to help the county I love. I was so happy when my niece, Judith Gwathmey, decided to build her home here. She has received two government awards -- one even from President George W. Bush, “The Presidential Mentoring Award”. In 2002 she bought land and built her home on Upshaw, not far from where her parents built their home, near her sisters and not far from where her father, my oldest brother, and I grew up. She bought enough land to create a nature reserve with access off Route 30 for all of the county citizens to enjoy. I know she loves jogging through it with a dog named Beau who loves every creek, mud puddle, and Governor’s swamp.

She has always been here for our family and for the Upper King William County Senior Center. It was her idea to have a pharmacy day (everyone brings their medication in a brown bag) at the Senior Center. The pharmacist detected some drugs that should not be mixed and may have actually saved some lives by doing so. She has made contributions to support the Senior Center and its activities (they were anonymous, which is typical of Judy). Now she is here working for the entire community. She believes in community service and believes the community citizens should have a voice in their future. She has taken a considerable amount of time off from her company and the university to help all of us.

Misters Mourino, Fauteux, and Campbell (all from Hanover), want to build the motocross raceway off Route 30. What’s worse, it appears that Judy is required by law to provide them with a large easement through her land. We all understand the need for easements to enable other home owners to get to their houses. Dirt and gravel roads like Wood Lane and Doe Crossing off Route 30 certainly maintain the character of the area without disturbing neighbors. The motocross simply destroys a dream of hers to place her land in a conservation

easement for the citizens. Approximately 256 acres could be a park providing space for little leaguers, horseback riding, biking, hiking and jogging. She has talked about putting in a pond for fishing, maybe a swimming pool, or an arts center where local talent can put on shows. When my husband asked her to donate land for an assisted living home for Seniors, she was more than willing and excited about the possibility. The problem is that public water and sewage have not yet reached the Senior Center that abuts her property.

Judy is being wined and dined by George Mason University, the University of Virginia, the Richmond Biotechnology Park, and even the Governor's office to move her company to Virginia. I ask the Board of Supervisors, what would be better for King William -- a company that will provide full time, high paying jobs or a motocross that will likely provide only minimum wage, part time jobs?

Of course, Judy says that she is not the issue. She keeps telling me that it is all about what's best for the community. Well, let me tell you -- Judy is part of our community. We need to support my niece. I am asking all of you **NOT** to approve the conditional use permit when it comes before you and to rescind the ordinance that made it possible.

My husband retired after 28 years of service on the Board of Supervisors. The Health and Human Services Building was named after him, "the Leroy T. McAllister Building". Through his service, I have lived with issues and controversies facing the county as it struggles to grow. As a teacher and guidance counselor, I understand that others might need to be educated about this complex issue. As a Christian, I know that the negative acts that have been committed against those who oppose a motocross raceway (e.g., mail tampering (a federal offense), personal threats, threats of violence, obscene messages, stealing and destroying signs, vandalism, and trespassing) must all be forgiven. As a citizen of King William County, I call for a calm and reasoned discussion to help the Board of Supervisors determine what is in the best interest of the entire community.

We need people with insight and vision. This motocross issue is something we must all think about with a long term view. The leadership of the Citizens for King William County is an energetic, passionate, committed group with high standards. Their meetings have been open and well attended. I support them speaking up for those of us who are often too weak, ill, uncomfortable or simply lack the know how. They have given us a voice that needs to be heard.

Elizabeth McAllister