

A Way of Life *Gone with the Wind*

In talking with many of our residents about the proposed motocross, I can't help but think of a classic line from the movie *Gone with the Wind*. As the union army was shelling and burning Atlanta during the Civil War, a citizen ran frantically through the streets, crying, "Yankees in Georgia! Who let'em in?" Many of our citizens are now saying "Motocross in King William County! Who is letting them in?"

The answer is our county officials have opened the door. A little over a year ago our Planning Commission supported a proposed zoning change in the Agricultural/Conservation district to add "motocross track" as a permitted use. The Board of Supervisors approved the proposal and now motocross racetracks can be developed on any parcel of land that is zoned Agriculture/Conservation – regardless of size or location. The overall strategy for motocross in King William County has never been explained. Do they want motocross tracks throughout the county?

There have been at least two different developers interested in constructing racetracks. One, KW Morrison, LLC, purchased 327 acres in the Aquinton District and in August 2007, submitted an application for a conditional use permit. If the supervisors approve the permit, development can begin construction of the 4-track raceway.

With 90% of the county being zoned Agricultural/Conservation and the approval process being so easy, King William County could become the motocross capital of Virginia, maybe even the motocross capitol of the east coast! If we lose the war, the resulting noise, traffic, dust and pollution will only be the beginning. As in *Gone with the Wind*, the carpetbaggers will come. As residents panic to sell their properties and leave the area around the tracks, they will be offered low prices that further depreciate land value. Land most likely will be purchased in these areas to develop low-income housing, gas stations, convenience stores and souvenir shops. Again, as in the movie, a way of life preserved for hundreds of years will be "gone with the wind". Instead of approving the conditional use permit, the Supervisors should rescind the 2006 text change in the ordinance. If we need a motocross track, let's decide the best location and have just one. A large-scale commercial business such as this is better suited for an undeveloped area or the Route 360 business corridor. Creating an environment for a few to have fun at the unreasonable expense of many others is just wrong !

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