

Developers should take track somewhere else

Letter to the Editor

Isn't it a shame what money, power, and control does to people. It seems that King William County is being bombarded by insurgents from every direction. We are in the throws of fighting a major battle with developers from Hanover County that want to develop a motocross track in the middle of an agricultural/residential area of our county. This original development plan contains five phases – four tracks, spectator areas, over 690 parking spaces, camping facilities for 221± RV's, two towers (which will probably have lights and PA's attached to them), and other facilities to accommodate those attending.

The problem with this whole scheme is the fact that there are no protections for the good people of King William – those people that have invested their largest sum of money in their homes. We have historic homes and churches located nearby as well as farms that have beef cattle and grow crops. We have a very weak noise ordinance that doesn't protect the adjacent property owners.

The original request that came to our Board of Supervisors for a text change in our ordinance was a request to allow “motocross by right” in the Agricultural/Conservation Zoning District. This would have been a dream come true for these developers had it not been for several of our citizens fighting the issue and saying that did not provide any protections for adjacent property owners. Consequently, the Board of Supervisors approved the “motocross by Conditional Use Permit” within the A/C District. The problem was compounded when the Board removed/gutted all specific protections from the text change. Therefore, when it comes time to vote on the issue we will be at the mercy of our Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. These people think they cannot deny any applications that come before them. It never occurs to them that they can deny based on specific site issues, environmental issues, public safety issues, costs to taxpayers and the county and not being in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

We have manpower issues in this county when it comes to public safety personnel both paid and volunteers. This specific site located off of Route 30 is reached by crossing over private property approximately 4,500' through a pine forest on a 50' wide gravel roadway. There is only one entrance/exit road. The terrain is steep in places with two stream crossings -- one being a small creek and the other over Governor's Swamp. The crossing of these streams is going to require more than jack-leg improvisation to make it a safe crossing or should I say escape. It would seem that a series of box culverts would be the only solution. Imagine if someone throws a cigarette out of their car, it will be like a bomb going off when the pine tags on the forest floor ignite. Who will be responsible if something serious happens -- such as loss of life in case of fire? How about the developers? They would wash their hands of it but how about their consciences? Could they live with that?

If this is such a great deal for King William, then why don't they put this monstrosity in their own lovely Hanover communities – Black Creek, Old Church, or along Route 360 near Battlefield School? Oh no! That would cause their neighbors to be up in arms and revolt against them. They might lose face within their own community and maybe they should. These developers need to start developing a conscience and think about our King William citizens. If this were indeed about kids, why don't they donate the land for a county recreational park for the entire population of this county to utilize? The majority of people that will participate in motocross will come from outside the county and possibly the state; there will be very few King William children participating in this event and really it is not about kids but adults that haven't grown up. So I say to the Hanover insurgents – take your plans and go to New Kent where there is already an approved MX site sitting next to I-64 and Route 33; or go to Budd's Creek in Maryland; how about Dinwiddie; what about Essex on Route 360 near Miller's Tavern? Why would you want to destroy a pristine swamp, active streams, and the surrounding environs?

J. B. Wagner

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MX insurgents