

BMNC Presentation

A year has passed since the Canadian Motor Speedway proposal was first announced at Fort Erie Town Hall. Every opportunity has been exercised by Concerned Citizens of Greater Fort Erie (CCGFE) to express our concerns and objections to this retrogressive development over mainly good agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive corridors and a Provincially Significant Wetland. We waited patiently for a promised report from the Mayor who, on the taxpayers' dollar, attended the Richmond speedway in the spring in order to experience the event and explore how Richmond mitigates the negative side effects of noise, traffic, pollution, infrastructure issues, etc. to apparently institute some of the strategies in Fort Erie if the speedway is built. CCGFE has inquired about the report and the answer from Town staff to date has been that a report has never been completed. Mayor Martin's comment after his trip, noted in an interview in the Niagara Falls Review May 14, 2010, was, "you could hear (noise), but it wasn't problematic". What does this mean exactly and is this the extent of feedback we can expect from our 'investigative team'?

On September 13th, Fort Erie Town Council passed the zoning and bylaws which will allow the construction of a motor speedway in conjunction with other ancillary uses. Rather than wait for all the required studies to be completed, including the peer review of the noise study, the Town instituted holding provisions on the new zoning that will not be removed until the necessary studies are complete to the satisfaction of the Town and other governing bodies.

The new zoning, MS-434 (H) (the area occupied by the actual motor speedway) allows the use of motor vehicles, motorcycles, go-cars and motorized snow vehicles. Operating hours are 9am-6pm, seven days a week, year round, exempting eight "Automotive Race Events" per year (each lasting up to three days in duration) from the 6pm curfew.

This bylaw and how it relates to noise is in our opinion far from comprehensive. There is no curfew for the exempt race events; no provisions have been made limiting or monitoring noise levels; nor are there any mitigating strategies to deal with noise complaints from the community. We are unaware of any completed studies relating to noise and vibration effects on wildlife.

CCGFE struggles to understand why what is probably the single largest development in Fort Erie's history has been rushed forward without proper, independent investigation by the Town. The fact that most Fort Erie residents still do not understand this is NOT just one or two races a year; but a track that will be used for car clubs, driver experience, and other private functions (all of which operate on a skeleton staff and do not involve any spectators, aka 'tourists') year round; is strong evidence that the Town has not taken enough time to inform the residents and consider the impact this development will have on character of Fort Erie. Development is necessary, but must it be at the expense of our quality of life?

The final chapter is far from written. CCGFE has hired a planner and lawyer to represent our concerns at the OMB hearing, a date for which has not yet been set. For more information, to volunteer or make a donation please check us out on the web: www.ccgfe.org <<http://www.ccgfe.org/>> or contact us at 905.994.7422

Sandy Vant, President
Citizens Coalition of Greater Fort Erie