

CITY OF EAGLE LAKE
MAY 28, 2020 GoTo Meeting
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

- Mayor Auringer called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. via electronic GoTo Meeting.

ROLL CALL

- Council Members present: John Ries, Dennis Terrell, Ryan Short, Garrett Steinberg and Mayor Auringer.
- Staff present: City Administrator Jennifer Bromeland, Police Chief John Kopp, and Deputy Clerk Kerry Rausch.

AGENDA

1. Determination of Whether and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is Necessary
 - Matt Lassonde with Bolton and Menk presented an overview of the EAW process and stated the EAW was prepared within the guidelines. The proposed Motorsports Park is a three-mile driving track on 230 acres of land that will include 11 condos. This land has been sited for industrial use by the city. A traffic study has been completed with no significant concerns. The wetlands in this area are highly degraded. Wetland credits will be purchased at a 2:1 ratio. Noise mitigation strategies have been identified and plans have been created which include the establishing of a Sound Review Committee which will be comprised of three residents, one city council or staff member, and one member of the track. This committee will investigate noise complaints and make recommendations to the city council. The berm and wall will eliminate noise emissions. Houston Engineering did a Third Party Review and copies were made available to the public and governmental agencies. Seventeen individuals submitted 350 comments and the reviewer found no significant environmental impacts.
 - Alex Wolenski, Track Management Consultant with Gyver Consulting, stated he has worked with multiple developers and tracks and that Bradford Development has been proactive by addressing concerns prior to the track being built. Mr. Wolenski stated he likes to see layers of mitigation and the Motorsports Park has three layers which include internal monitoring, sound wall mitigation, and sound review committee.
 - Decibel meters will be set up within the facility to help determine when sound outside of track will be an issue. They will be able to identify individual vehicles which are creating too much noise. A no tolerance policy for car noise emissions will be in place.
 - The sound wall will allow cars to have some level of noise but will keep the noise within the facility.
 - The Sound Review Committee will be utilized if the first two layers are breached. This is where changes to the track and standards can be addressed.
 - Erin Guentzel, 60375 224th Lane, Madison Lake, stated she is disappointed that she had only 24 hours to review this document and feels many questions remain unanswered. She feels due to the changes made this review should go on to an environmental impact statement (EIS).
 - Mike Guentzel, 60375 224th Lane, Madison Lake, stated he feels a project of this size needs to be decided by more agencies than just the five city council members. There have been many changes to the project since the public viewing and the EAW needs to be redone. He has concerns with the quality of the noise study, the finding of facts does not address the amount of snow which will be dropped on County Road 27. He stated he spoke with a County Commissioner who feels it should go to an EIS. He asked how this would be better for wildlife and the lake. He also stated that Expo/Crossbow is not a legal vehicle in the United States. He stated he understands the wall changes but has concerns that the hotel was removed and seasonal living condos were added back in.
 - Nicole Davros, 101 Valley Lane, stated she feels there is enough missing information from the EAW and the city should take its time. The project is wrong and has the potential of significant environmental impact and feels the EIS is warranted. She voiced concerns that archaeological site may be disturbed. She stated she has it on good authority that the DNR will not make improvements to the lake if this project goes through.
 - Matt Lassonde explained that the changes to the document occurred because it was clear that additional measures were being requested by the comments made, especially noise on the lake. The team reached out

to a noise specialist to see how it should be handled. The noise level on the track is projected to be MPCA compliant for the lake. The adding of the noise wall is in response to comments received for noise to the lake and as an aesthetic screen. It will stop flightless animals from jumping onto the track. The city would oversee the Noise Review Committee but would not financially fund it. Gary Curtis, with Brainerd International Raceway, offered to monitor sound activities from activities proposed on site. Snow concerns could be explored more by the developer. Storm water management BMP's have been developed to mitigate the increased run off. Retention swells and dry ponds will be developed and will direct flow. The MPCA will be responsible for storm water management plan approval.

- Jeff Lutz, with Houston Engineering, explained that they provided the review of the EAW on behalf of the City, they reviewed comments and responses and concluded that an EIS is not needed. In the event an EIS is recommended, the EAW information would hone in on specific items.
- The lake elevation is lower than the track and this will not impact noise.
- Ryan Thilges, 60721 Millie Lane, stated Blue Earth County would have snow related concern with a 20-foot barrier. As a resident he feels it is a dramatic change to the landscape and feels an EIS should be completed.
- Matt Daly, a CPA with Crow River Financial, stated the changes made may be perceived as dramatic but are a net gain from an environmental standpoint. From an impervious surface and traffic standpoint there would be less impact. The hotel was removed but the EAW takes into consideration the hotel and entertainment center. COVID-19 has drastically reduced the occupancy levels of hotels and due to this it is not an appropriate time to develop a hotel. The condos will not be seasonal living units, they will be zoned as non-residential.
- Gary Borchardt, 21402 598th Ave, Eagle Lake, requested that citizens have 30 days to review the finding of facts and asked about storage facilities on site for fuel and asked if the fire department has the capabilities to handle fuel issues on the track. He stated that he noticed a resolution was created in advance and feels this is inappropriate. He also stated that noise monitoring stations should be within city limits and not on site at the track and that if noise within the city is too high, the track should be shut down. He volunteered to serve on the Noise Review Committee. It was explained that resolutions are drafted in advance to allow council members to review them prior to the meeting, but this does not mean the decision is finalized prior to the meeting. Also explained was that the City is the Responsible Government Unit to review the documents. Administrator Bromeland stated legal council was not present for the meeting but if Council feels more time is needed, they can request an extension. Minnesota rules do not require a public review period. Upon approval the city has 1-5 days to submit to EQB.
- City Council comments included that they have had the original finding of facts for 30 days and have had the changes to the documents since Tuesday. Council Member Terrell stated he feels questions have been clarified over the last 30 days and that if noise levels meet state levels inside the track it will meet levels outside the track. He feels the city has done their due diligence. Council Member Ries stated the fire department can handle fuel situations on the track. They have the equipment and have been well trained. He also stated there is a misconception that this track will increase cost to the city. Instead it will diversify the tax base which will be beneficial to the city and its residents.
- Administrator Bromeland explained that a negative declaration from the council would mean that no EIS would be needed.
- Council Member Ries moved, seconded by Council Member Short to approve Resolution 2020-21 based on the findings of fact. The City Council has determined that the Mankato Motorsports Park Project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects and that preparation of an environmental impact statement is not mandated in this instance and that the Eagle Lake City Council hereby approves the distribution of the Record of Decision, Findings of Fact and Conclusions documenting this decision.
- Council discussion included Mayor Auringer stating he has a couple of environmental concerns and would like to pursue these further. He also stated he does not know what an EIS would look like but that he wants to do make sure due diligence is done. Council Member Steinberg stated the lake's designated status should be investigated more. Council Member Ries stated he feels the DNR has reviewed the EAW and found no issues with it and asked what another study would accomplish and that he feels this is a delay tactic. Council Member Terrell stated the sound committee can handle noise concerns and this could be included in the developer's agreement. Council Member Short stated that in seconding this motion, it in no means indicates that he is not concerned with environmental impacts, but that he puts weight into the Third Party Reviewer's findings in that it does not rise to the level of an EIS.
- Jeff Lutz explained there is no specific template for an EIS and that it would focus in on study areas and that it is hard to predict what those studies would look like. It would be a more detailed document on mitigation processes.

- A roll call vote was taken with Council Members Ries, Terrell, Short, and Steinberg voting in favor. Mayor Auringer was opposed. Motion carried.
- The next steps include the EQB will publish the record of decision within 1-5 days and the developer will move forward with permitting and the developer's agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

- Council Member Short moved, seconded by Council Member Terrell, to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Motion carried with Council Members Ries, Terrell, Short, Steinberg, and Mayor Auringer voting in favor.

Tim Auringer, Mayor

Kerry Rausch, Deputy Clerk