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## City and racetrack officials must work with residents to reduce noise

By JOHN T. FLICKINGER

I wish to comment on the issue of noise as it relates to the operation of the New Jersey Motorsports Park. There is a solution to this issue, and there are noise abatement actions that have worked and must be explored.

All you have to do is look at the measures taken by major airports in response to citizen complaints about noise. International and some domestic airports do not permit takeoffs or landing before or after certain times because citizens complained. In other instances, takeoff and landing patterns and power procedures have been altered so as to minimize noise impact. Modern aircraft are built with noise mitigation as part of the design process.

Noise barriers have been erected along interstate highways and turnpikes in order to reduce the level of noise experienced by those who live and work nearby -- no matter who was there first.

Expansions of airport runways and highways now consider realistic noise effects and their impact on citizens before final approval. The reason is simple: Noise of certain duration and frequency is a known public health issue, not to mention a basic quality of life concern.

But, some people urge us to ignore that by thinking we who find some of the noise produced by the racetrack to be a nuisance will just "get over it." Yep, just like we got over other public health issues that our leaders glossed over in the past, such as Love Canal, PCBs, lead, black lung, fly ash and other environmental health hazards. Yes, there are many who thought wearing hearing protection in our plants and foundries was "sissy" and these people now cannot hear the cries and laughter of their grandchildren.

There is the perception that Michelle Post (founder of [www.TrackRacket.org](http://www.TrackRacket.org)) is the only person who finds the noise from the racetrack to be a nuisance. Casting her in that light is just wrongheaded. I do not know if she will get over it, but I won't. I find the noise unacceptable at times and for hours on-end when it is a nuisance, and I live about three miles as the crow flies from the racetrack.

What has been asked for by many people in Millville is that people from the racetrack, city government and concerned citizens sit down and honestly try to devise a constructive solution to the issue of noise, which was anticipated before the racetrack began operation and largely ignored during its construction. As is so often the case, citizens are met with stonewalling tactics, publication of misleading information, and just plain ignorant comments from city and racetrack officials. It is not all about property values, it's about our health and quality of life. Nonetheless, the lack of serious concern by the city and racetrack officials has set the stage for an us vs. them contest from which no one will emerge satisfied.

The city and New Jersey Motorsports Park are missing an opportunity to work together and address

these concerns. So far the response from both entities has been disingenuous and unacceptable.

I want to see the racetrack succeed and provide benefits to the city and county, although I feel many of these benefits may have been oversold. If the citizens are forced to seek a legal remedy, the motorsports park is faced with the real probability of a shutdown of its operations until the noise issues are addressed and corrected.

I hope that both the city and New Jersey Motorsports Park stop creating an atmosphere that continues to encourage division, and choose to become part of a workable solution.

We should value all input and encourage the parties to address and correct the problems before we have to enter the courthouse.

**John T. Flickinger**

**Millville**

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