

Town of Lee Ad Hoc Racetrack Committee Meeting Minutes February 26, 2015

Attendees: C Brown, W Lehman, A Lelio, T Loureiro, B. Callen, T Dronsfield, D Cedarholm, Eric Reuter (Reuter Associates)

1. Tom L opened meeting. Group approved minutes from Jan 21 2015 meeting.
2. Group introduced themselves to Eric Reuter of Reuter Associates. Eric introduced himself to group.
3. Tom L stated purpose of this meeting is to hear Eric's initial impressions of existing section 21A ordinance language, and then discuss steps for gathering sound data.
4. Eric emphasized that his approach will be to establish measurement procedures which can then be used by Town officials to take accurate and enforceable sound measurements without his presence and without any special expertise.
5. Eric's goal is to establish measurement locations where racetrack noise may be isolated from other noise sources, or to establish measurement locations with known and predictable correlations to isolated measurement locations.
6. Dave reviewed list of past measurement locations, including on property lines along route 125 and on south side of track (at bottom of filled embankment), and at border of green common area in Tamarack neighborhood. Dave mentioned that no measurements were taken from property line on north side of track.
7. Chief Dronsfield joined meeting.
8. As group discussed possible measurement sites, Eric stated that it might be wise for him to begin work right away on a sound contour map, as that might help him establish likely measurement sites. Group agreed with his assessment. Eric passed out a sample sound contour map for the group to review. Dave asked how the geographic features were mapped, and Eric confirmed that he uses info from GIS survey. Eric stated that foliage/vegetation is added by viewing Google maps and making site visits.
9. Tom D emphasized a need for a measurement procedure which is accurate and defensible. Cary suggested the sound contour map may help Lee USA Speedway focus on areas of their property where noise transmission is an issue.
10. Eric mentioned that although measuring track noise is not like measuring noise from a stationary noise source, since racing traffic is defined to an oval racetrack, an interval measure over time (example: 5 minutes) will allow him to average the noise and treat it like noise emanating from a stationary noise source.
11. Eric said the existing 21A language references a max sound pressure level without specifying the distance from the sound source. Eric said that he will have to do some research on measuring racetrack/racing noise, but he used examples of measuring each race car and certifying that the car has pass/fail a dBA test. Eric asked about original source of 97 dBA threshold. Dave explained that the 97 dBA threshold was in the existing ordinance as a muffler standard, but the ordinance was rewritten several years ago to add specific measurement instructions (36" off ground, at property line, etc.). Andy mentioned that the 97 dBA threshold was originally added to the ordinance in 1989. Andy mentioned that when section 21A was rewritten several years ago to add the measurement instructions, the committee at that time initially considered applying the 97 dBA threshold at the exhaust pipe (the original Ordinance seemed to imply this location), but all of the cars tested actually exceeded 97 dBA when measured at the exhaust pipe. Dave also mentioned that other noise ordinances (example: Town of Lee's Wind Turbine Noise ordinance) use property lines as the point of measurement.
12. Tom D asked Eric how noise level would be impacted if there were 10 cars on track, each of which measured 97 dBA at their individual exhaust pipes. Eric said noise level would be higher, but how much higher would depend on how cars were grouped on track, as well as the sound absorption rates of the surrounding terrain.

13. Eric mentioned that taking sample sound measurements during race events will help him validate the dBA limit and time interval that is currently referenced in the ordinance.
14. Tom L stated that there are actually two parts to the process of adjusting the Lee Racing Ordinance: the technical part, where the Ad Hoc committee researches potential new procedures/language and recommends changes; and the political part of the process (Select Board review/warrant articles/ballot box) which then codifies any of the changes in the ordinance language.
15. Tom D mentioned that there have been very few noise complaints lately, mainly due to the fact that the track has been working hard to remove loud cars on their own (he mentioned that Bill has forced all cars to direct exhaust downward vs. sideways in the weekly series races). Tom L mentioned that racetrack noise is still an issue in Lee, and group should not assume it is not just b/c fewer people are lodging formal complaints to the Lee police dept, especially since citizens know that monitoring efforts were stopped due to problems with enforcement of existing 21A language. Dave mentioned that the activities of this Ad Hoc committee as well as the previous committee have also contributed to reduced complaints by showing residents that the Town is serious about limiting racetrack noise in Lee.
16. Dave asked Eric about his previous experience with racetrack noise work. Eric mentioned that he was involved in an OSHA-related investigation at the New Canaan track near Hanover, which has since closed per Bill.
17. Tom D asked if Eric would propose who should be taking measurements going forward. Eric restated his point in item 4 above, and said the LPD should certainly be capable of taking measurements as the process is not technically difficult. Tom D confirmed that the town does have a sound meter. Cary pointed out that regular calibration of that meter is important.
18. Tom D asked about section 21A's reference to mounting the sound meter 36" from the ground. Eric stated that measurements are typically taken at a height 60" from ground to approximate ear level.
19. Eric asked about potential dates for taking sound measurements. Bill asked that he consider monitoring a regular weekly race, the first one being scheduled for May 29. Andy asked that Eric take sound measurements at the ACT race on April 12, as those race cars tend to be louder than the weekly series racing cars. Eric reviewed his schedule, and April 12 looks fine, and May 29 may or may not work depending on his travel schedule. Tom L mentioned that if Eric can't measure on May 29, he would then be able to take measurements at the next scheduled weekly race after the 29th, as those races occur on a regular basis.
20. Eric agreed to begin work on the sound contour map, and will present the initial map (without sound data) to the Ad Hoc committee on Tues April 7 at 6 pm. He will then add sound data taken from the April 12 race into the sound contour map.
21. Meeting adjourned, next meeting set for Tues April 7 at 6 pm Lee Public Safety complex.