

Go-karters are infuriated, says club past president

Editor,

It's a shame when a non-profit society can get screwed so badly by local government (Cowichan Valley Regional District) and a vocal minority, in this case less than one per cent of an area's population.

The area is - you guessed it - Youbou and the non-profit society is the Capital City Kart Club. For the last two years we have operated on the old Youbou mill site, a contaminated and industrially-zoned piece of land, for no more than 15 weekends of each year. Our original permit was issued on recommendation from the Youbou Advisory Planning Committee, for two years with an option on an additional two years, but no longer.

During that time the plan was to rebuild the membership and generate the revenues necessary to pay off our initial investment of new pavement and to build a new track at the now-defunct Rec Park. Now, having no Rec Park and having had our next two years pulled out from under us by a handful of selfish whiners and a director who screamed "lawyer," our club is now unable to generate the funds from racing this year to build elsewhere.

As 2003 president for the Capital City Kart Club, I sat down at a meeting of the APC in January, 2003 and addressed any concerns they had. In fact, we welcomed the APC to visit the track on a race weekend to show what we've done to improve things. When they arrived, we showed them around, pointing out the extra 2,000 tires we installed to extend the sound wall, as well as the new silencer setups which drastically reduced noise output.

We demonstrated how karting is a great family sport, where everyone develops a sense of respect and camaraderie. The APC members appeared to leave satisfied with the measures we had taken. Unfortunately, the one APC member not present who should have been was Brooke Hodson.

Being the largest whiner of the "Come play in our backyard, but not in mine" contingency, he was negligent in not attending and collecting information pertinent to his concerns.

On top of that, information was discovered at a CCKC public meeting (held in Youbou, January, 2004), which Mr. Hodson also did not attend, where residents were led to believe we could get permits beyond four years, which was completely false. Most didn't object to two more years, knowing that was as long as we could operate on the mill site.

Since Mr. Hodson was elected as director, he has done nothing but put his personal grievance with a political process in the way of good people having good fun. In fact, in a Gazette article in February, 2004, Mr. Hodson was quoted as saying, "Go kart people are good people and go karting is a good sport, I just don't like the process." He could have tried to target just the process, but instead took his frustrations out on a non-profit society that supported local businesses whenever it had activities at the track. Now the business owners that supported us are left to feel the loss of income from our members, as well as the teenagers that volunteered at the track, who were paid and fed lunch.

Mr. Hodson has also contradicted himself in a Cowichan Valley Citizen article from March 17, 2004, when he was quoted as saying, "It appears those issues (noise, garbage) have been addressed." Yet here he is in May complaining of noise, what's wrong with this picture?

At the CVRD meeting on May 26, director Allan presented the board with

correspondence collected over the previous week regarding the club and permit application. He stated that after filtering out all letters from outside Area "I", he had evidence of overwhelming support for approval of CCKC's permit application. To my utter astonishment, this correspondence was completely disregarded by the board chair and a vote followed that eventually denied the application.

It has also come to light that several of those who voted against us have admitted to never having attended a race, let alone been to the track. Call me blind, but shouldn't people who are voting on an issue be as informed as possible or at least make the effort to be informed?

The actions of the CVRD board, with the exception of directors Allan, Tansley, Beaudin and Spencer, were beyond reproach and reek of back-room political maneuvering. The greater good was definitely NOT served and the CVRD is directly responsible.

The kart club spent nearly \$40,000 to pave the site with the understanding that as long as we lived up to the terms of the Special Use Permit and the lease from TimberWest, that renewal of those documents was a foregone conclusion. In no way would the CCKC membership have approved such expenditures for only a two-year term.

The karting community is completely infuriated with the CVRD in allowing its decision to be based on the opinions of a miniscule group of selfish individuals and the self-serving agenda of one of their peers.

People like that need to loosen up and drop their anal attitude or all of that negative energy will eventually manifest itself into some form of cancer and then they'll have something to whine about.

Tim Rieberger

Victoria,

2003 CCKC President