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Thursday, October 24, 2019

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FROM

the rights of us, the ones that are impacted by the extreme mud when said. When you buy a home, you have an expectation to live in a quiet neighborhood."

Coleman said they founded their business on Highway B in the area. "I've never had to deal with this sort of operation," she said. "County is treating the area as if they're better off than elsewhere."

"I'm going to keep the peace I have. One of you wants this in the area," Coleman said. "I'm running a business."

### ive positive events

Warren County and the district leader said the public did not want changes to the Ridge CUP, but none of the events had been planned for their

van, assistant of the Jones Hill Fire District, said the mud caused any problems, including on Highway Ridge Motor and much of the area within Ed-district.

There had no accidents on any time. We



**MUD BOG** — A competitor races across a pit of mud during an event at the Hickory Ridge Motorsport Park on Highway B. The track for mud runs and truck pulls has been subject to legal challenges from area neighbors who believe it causes a disturbance. Submitted photo.

and vendors. In my opinion there is ample room for more spectators than is currently allowed," Vohsen told the planning commission.

Warren County Ambulance District Chief Tim Flake and Sheriff Kevin Harrison said their staff were either at the venue or in the area on event days, and had no reports of incidents at the events. Harrison said he later received two comments related to concerns about traffic and noise.

### Commission tables decision

As is common for the planning and zoning commission, the members voted unanimously Oct. 17 to postpone a final decision on the changes until their next meeting Nov. 21.

The commission debated the requested changes to the Hickory Ridge CUP, as well as some additions to the permit that members hoped could alleviate neighbors' concerns.

the facility.

As for getting rid of the renewal requirement, commission member David Heinlein said at the least, two years is too short of a time.

"From our experience, from this (CUP), two years is definitely not enough because it goes to litigation and then it runs out," Heinlein said. "I have a feeling here that either way we go, it's going to go to litigation, whether we approve or disapprove (the changes)."

Heinlein was referring to a court challenge to the original CUP approval in 2016. The Heaths had to renew their CUP before the track ever began operating. The Eastern District Missouri Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Warren County and MSA Heath LLC in June 2018.

To help alleviate some amount of concern from neighbors about noise, commission member Corey Johnston suggested a

## PROP J

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develop a curriculum," Kavalier explained. That way, the training provided by SCC is in line with the credentials local industries are looking for.

### How to justify taxes on the elderly?

One of the primary concerns surrounding any tax proposition, including Prop J, is that tax hikes are increasingly difficult to afford for senior residents who live on a fixed income.

"When I can't make my house payment, what am I gonna do?" demanded a man at Monday's forum.

It's a question that proponents of Prop J have struggled to address. Etcher said one of the primary benefits for senior residents is that people trained in skilled trades, such as electricians or plumbers, will become more common and available to provide services that seniors need. Many currently leave for better paying jobs to the east, he said.

### How many people would use training?

About 300 to 500 Warren County students commute to attend classes at SCC in St. Charles, Kavalier said. It's hard to say how that number would change if there were programs based in Warren County.

Kavalier said based on the history of growth in St. Charles, she predicts the need in Warren County will continue to

fordable. Ranken charges over \$600 per credit hour, while SCC's in-district charge is just over \$100 per credit hour.

### Why can't businesses offer apprenticeships?

Another common criticism of Prop J is that businesses who need skilled workers could just train those workers themselves.

"You can go a lot of places and they'll train you at no cost," pointed out one person at the forum.

"Actually, businesses are looking at community colleges and technical colleges to offer their apprenticeship programs," Kavalier replied. "We just received a federal grant this summer for \$1 million to work with businesses and industries for apprenticeship programs."

### What do businesses pay?

The reverse of that question is if businesses aren't doing entry-level training, how committed are they to paying for workers to get that education?

"There's a lot of companies that have tuition assistance programs. They will pay for their employees to get trained. They will pay off student loans if that's what it requires," Etcher said. "They're looking for talent. They're investing in their people."

He added that it's much easier to send a full-time employee to evening classes down the street after work than sending them on an hour round-trip to St. Charles.