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# Noise, golf course

By PAUL STUART

Frontiersman reporter

PALMER — The owner of the Northstar Speedway says proposed regulations coming before the borough assembly Tuesday night could put him out of business.

Heated testimony on an ordinance to regulate race tracks is expected at the public hearing, which begins at 7:30.

Also that night, a second public hearing on the proposed Homestead

golf resort in the Butte is slated.

The race track ordinance, sponsored by District 3 Assemblyman Jim Colberg, would amend existing borough code on conditional land uses, to provide for regulation of race tracks, including criteria for the transfer and termination of permits.

As worded, Colberg's ordinance would allow grandfather status for the Northstar Speedway, which opened Memorial Day weekend. But a memorandum accompanying the ordinance,

if acted upon favorably by the assembly, would require Northstar to get a permit within 90 days of enactment, and could jeopardize the raceway if conditional-use terms were not met.

What could be of greater concern for Northstar is a detailed report by an acoustical engineering firm that conducted sound-level tests in the vicinity of the race track. The results describe average sound levels as sufficient to have "a dramatic negative impact, and would be expected to prompt com-

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plaints in virtually any mixed land use situation."

Track owner A.J. Schwichtenberg said Wednesday the conditional use terms, if imposed on his business, could ruin him financially, and force the closing of the track. Schwichtenberg said, as he understood them, the conditions would require him to pave his parking lot, at a cost of \$1 million, and to put up an additional 10-foot fence.

Schwichtenberg said he has already

invested \$1.8 million in construction of the track and buildings.

"The borough gave me a permit to build my track, and they'll destroy my business now if those conditions are forced on me," he said.

Schwichtenberg also said noise levels are always open to interpretation, and some experts might not set excessive levels at the same number of decibels as others.

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"A Cadillac running on the street makes more noise than what that (acoustical report) says is excessive noise by my race track," Schwichtenberg added.

Schwichtenberg also said he can produce residents living very close to his track who will testify they are not disturbed by the sound.

"I've done everything I can," he said. "I try to be a good neighbor."

The July 3 noise report, prepared by Earl Mullins of Mullins Acoustics in Anchorage, indicates acceptable noise levels in residential areas are between 50 and 70 decibels, depending upon the time of day. The report says the noise from Northstar Speedway's operation exceeds those levels on the average by 18 decibels.

One official who received the report said Mullins' report also cites music and announcements over the track's speakers as a bigger problem than the actual race car sounds.

He said people block out constant background noise, but tend to tune in voices.

Mullins suggested a partial remedy might be achieved by realigning the speaker system, and adding an additional fence between the track and its neighbors.

Mullins' report concludes, "I am unaware of any commonly used noise standard or ordinance that would permit race-track noise levels at a residence.

Industrial property adjoining other industrial property would be the only case where such intrusive noise levels would generally be acceptable."

On the Homestead Resort issue, top design experts representing Jack Nicklaus' golf services company will give a presentation regarding local developer Victor Trygstad's resort plans during public hearings Monday at 6 p.m. and Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

But vocal opposition is likely to be heard, too.

Trygstad has struggled for months with opposition from Butte residents, where he wants to build the 18-hole golf course, lodge and residential subdivision. The last official barrier is the assembly ordinance conveying a 320-acre parcel of borough land to him for use in the Homestead Resort.

The Mat-Su Planning Commission this spring, after initially balking, recommended conveying the land to Trygstad, but attached more than a dozen performance conditions, and called for a lease with an option to buy, instead of an outright sale.

Appeals by the Butte Community to the Board of Adjustment and Appeals failed when the appeals board affirmed it did not have jurisdiction over the planning recommendation.