

January 27, 2022

Mayor Jack Bradley
200 W Erie Avenue - 7th Floor
Lorain, OH 44052

Dear. Mayor Bradley:

I am writing regarding the proposed sale of the Cromwell Park property to McCrone Motor Sports for \$1/acre, for the development of a kart racing track. I would like to offer you some reasons to reconsider this decision in favor of it remaining 'green space' for the citizens of Lorain and nearby communities.

The citizens of Lorain need a place where they can connect with nature and find peace and relaxation, especially during the pandemic. Looking at Google Maps, I don't see many areas like that in the city of Lorain. Cromwell Park has the potential to be such a place. Nature has begun the reclamation process for you. With guidance from an organization like the Lorain County Metro Parks, area garden clubs and nature organizations like Black River Audubon, it could become a showcase of habitats for birds and wildlife, as well as native plants and pollinators, with walkways and picnic sites for families. An example of this is the site formerly known as Dike 14 along Lake Erie in Cleveland. Today it is the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve, largely because it was left undisturbed for many years so nature could reclaim the site. Today it is one of the premier birding locations in Ohio, especially during migration in spring and fall. Cromwell Park could get to that point sooner with some help, especially if it were offered for the price of \$1/acre to responsible parties.

Habitat loss is a major reason for declining numbers of birds and insects in our country. Today we have 3 billion fewer breeding birds in our country than just 30 years ago, in large part because of habitat loss or alteration. We are destroying the natural legacy that belongs to our children and grandchildren because of a short-term bet on tax dollars. What if the bet doesn't pay off? You always 'win the bet' when you side with nature, especially if you leave much of it alone!

Personally, I think the kart track has the potential to become an environmental liability once it opens rather than a commercial asset. It may become more headaches than it's worth. Has an environmental impact study been done for this project?

In the Morning Journal article of December 7, 2021, Mike Bossetti, consultant for Sortis Designs, is quoted as saying: "It's a beautiful piece of land out there. It's really pretty." Does the Lorain City Council want the stigma of essentially giving away (\$1/acre) this wonderful asset so it can be destroyed, paved and polluted with oil, noise, bright lights and exhaust fumes? That is the legacy that will follow the sale.

Page 2.

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Has anyone asked US Steel if they would still forgive the city's \$850,000 mortgage if the city sold the land for \$1/acre for preservation to the parks rather than for commercial development? What interest does US Steel have in the project that they would make such a generous offer?

I doubt I would be writing you if the development were a community center, homeless shelter, healthcare facility or similar community asset. But a motor sports track is such a sad use for this "beautiful piece of land". And the sale price of \$1 an acre seems impossible to reconcile for a facility that will only operate a few months every year.

I beg you to reconsider your vote in favor of this transaction and instead work toward preserving Cromwell Park as a natural area for our children and grandchildren.

Respectfully,

Matthew Valencic
Member – Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

Cc: Sanford Washington, Safety Service Director
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