

Racetrack Noise Ordinance Review

Timeline of Orange County BCC events and Bithlo SpeedWorld Regulation

- **1965:** A Special Exception was granted on the property zoned A-2 for a drag racing strip. The races were run “usually once per week between 7 and 10 at night and sometimes during an afternoon
- **1972:** request for a new Special Exception to add an oval race track, provided a guard rail was included. Also allowed for rodeos and circuses
- **1978:** (January 5th): BCC met to reconsider the Special Exception. Owners stated they “tried to be finished by 11 P.M., but sometimes stay open later”, when asked about noise, the owner stated that “it is near the highway which is also noisy”, stating hours of operation is “early as 9 am and closes sometimes as late as midnight”. Motion was carried to continue the request on February 2, 1978.
- **1978:** (February 2nd): discussion about the 80 signatories to a petition to remove the special exception for the race track. Motion was carried to make no changes.
- **1981:** (September 1st) BCC heard an appeal from Garold Atwood of the 1978 motion. Atwood argued the original use of the land had changed. The board agreed and implemented a series of restrictions on the exception:
 - reorient sound of pa systems away from residential
 - hours of track activity limited to 6 - 11 P.M. M-F, 1 - 11 P.M. Saturday and Sundays, with sound to cease 10 minutes after closure
 - jet cars limited to afternoon hours
 - no concerts
 - no camping by race participants, including crews
- **1981:** (September 3rd): the board rescinded the September 1st order, and scheduled a new public hearing on October 20th to consider the special exceptions
- **1981:** (October 20th): The BCC voted to leave the special exception as is and previously approved in 1965, 1972
- **1986:** Despite the ordinance in place, the speedway had a special exception, thereby no longer making it zoned as a residential zone
- **1996:** (January 1996) The BCC votes unanimously to exempt Orlando Speed World from noise ordinance: **“Sec. 15-185. - Exemptions. (18)**
 - *Any motor vehicle engaged in a professional or amateur sanctioned, competitive sports event for which admission or entry fee is charged, or practice or time trials for such event, at a facility being used for such purposes as of October 15, 1995.”*
- **2021:** (July 1st) The BZA had recommended approval for an amendment to the special exemption to add accessory structures with added conditions, including a set hours of operation
- **2021:** (October 26) Speedworld objected, specifically to the hours of operation, the BCC moved the issue to November 9th
- **2021:** (November 9th) Speedworld withdrew their application before the BCC hearing

Example Ordinances from Surrounding Counties

Polk - Polk County is home to Auburndale Raceway and Circuit World. Both locations are located in unincorporated Polk. Polk county sets a "Conditional Use" restriction on Vehicle Oriented Recreation Uses ([Ord. 12-030](#)). Two of these conditional use restrictions limit the hours of operation "2. All structures and associated activities located in or adjacent to residential districts shall be limited to operation from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m." and a decibel level restriction, "10. outdoor activity that may exceed 90dB at any residential property line shall be a Level 4 Review."

Volusia - Volusia County has New Smyrna Speedway located in unincorporated Volusia. The space is zoned B-5, Heavy Commercial with no special exemptions for sound. The hours of operation are M - F 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., S 12 - 11 P.M. and they are closed on Sundays. Volusia county code limits noise ([Sec. 50-476](#)) from Commercial to 65 decibels between 7 A.M. and 10 P.M., and 60 decibels after 10 P.M.

Citrus - Citrus County has Citrus County Speedway & Track located in unincorporated Citrus. The track is only open on Saturdays from 2 - 11 P.M. The track is not exempt from noise ordinances and follows the county's regulations. Specifically the county states in [Sec. 21-27](#) that "(b)

Competitive racing events. No person shall construct, alter or expand any installation or facility for competitive racing events without first providing documentation and assurance for compliance with this article, and without first receiving approval from the board of county commissioners. The documentation and assurance above shall include, but not be limited to, the use of sound barriers, use of muffler devices, control of direction and volume of loudspeakers, and provisions for monitoring"

The county's stated regulations for commercial use is 7 A.M. - 10 P.M 65 decibels, and from 10 P.M. - 7 A.M, 60 decibels.

Florida Statute

Florida Statutes [320.01](#), [316.293](#), and [316.272](#) regulate motor vehicles and motor vehicle noise ordinances and exempt racing vehicles from operating noise limits and muffler requirements. This does not apply to noise limits placed on properties, nor does it limit the ability of municipalities to set time or noise restrictions on racetracks themselves.

Conclusion

This analysis finds the BCC can set regulations on both operating times or noise limits, and the Florida statutes do not exempt Racetrack facilities from ordinances limiting either.