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## Developers unveil Minnesota Speedway Park proposal for Elko New Market

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More than 120 people, including elected officials, planning commission members and interested residents, attended a meeting at Eagle View Elementary to view plans for the proposed Minnesota Speedway Park near Elko New Market Tuesday, Nov. 29. (Patrick Fisher Photo)

By Patrick Fisher, Staff Writer

Minnesota Speedway Park (MSP) is the name of the major motorsports complex proposed for the Elko New Market area.

That was just one of the answers provided to more than 120 people during a Tuesday, Nov. 29, informational meeting at Eagle View Elementary School in Elko New Market.

Attending were members of the Scott County Board of Commissioners, Elko New Market City Council, the city's Planning Commission, the New Market Township Board and area residents. The public was strongly encouraged to provide feedback for the complex, which is being proposed by International Motorsports Entertainment and Development Company (IMEDC).

During the course of the presentation and questions from the various representatives and public, IMEDC spokesman Elwyn Tinklenberg explained the project would be located in the northwest corner of the interchange of Interstate 35 and Scott County Road 2. The area is currently in New Market Township, but would be annexed into Elko New Market. It would cover approximately 400 acres, and cost an estimated \$400 million to develop.

While the project would be privately funded, IMEDC would seek help from the local government for such things as infrastructure and traffic, Tinklenberg said.

It is hoped construction would begin in 2013 with the speedway operational by 2014.

MSP would consist of a 7/8-mile oval racetrack with seating for up to 65,000 spectators, a quarter-mile drag strip to seat a crowd up to 35,000, a hotel, conference and exhibition center. Eventually there would be other events such as concerts, auctions, motorcycle and snowmobile racing and car club meetings.

IMEDC had chosen the area because of its racing history. Also cited was the partnership between the city and the county. The complex would also benefit the area with construction jobs, an estimated 1,330 net new permanent jobs and \$2.1 million per year in property taxes.

During questions, Tinklenberg said they would work to coordinate with the present race track, Elko Speedway. When asked what made Elko New Market different, he said it had a significant advantage with its close proximity to other amenities such as the Mall of America and Valleyfair and the access to the freeway was important. As to mitigating the noise of the track, IMEDC would address several issues as to where they would put the grandstand and how deep would the track be put into the ground. He stressed they would meet the noise standards of the area.

"I like the sound of it," said Steve Samuelson of Prior Lake. He noted he is a drag racing fan and came for the information.

"I'm a race fan. I've always been a race fan," said Joe Chlan, who owns 60 acres in the area proposed for the complex. He uses the land for farming and has mixed feelings about the project. "I want to learn more before I get too excited."

"I think it's a tremendous opportunity," said council member Tony Gabriel. The public input he heard before the meeting was overwhelming positive. He also realizes there's a lot of work to be done. He noted as a community and a council they have to understand the challenges with this project.

A statement from the city read, "The IMEDC Minnesota Speedway Park concept has the potential of significantly advancing the city toward its vision and goals through tax base expansion, job creation and serving as a catalyst for additional economic development. However, a development of this scope and nature will be subjected to an extensive review process before any final decisions can be made."

IMEDC has proposed similar projects near Big Lake and Lino Lakes, which did not materialize due to local opposition. At Tuesday's meeting, there were no opposing voices to the current concept.

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