

State Lottery: Unwanted 'Elephant'

IT MAY have been someone else but I think it was Josh Billings who said "An elephant is interestin' to look at but I wouldn't want to own one." That sort of aloofness prevails in our attitudes toward many aspects of life.

Everybody knows that such places as sewage plants, garbage dumps, hazardous waste sites and prisons are needed but not many of us prefer to live near them.

Any kind of business or institution that may become a nuisance or adversely affect property values tends to arouse objections by neighbors. Included are liquor stores, night clubs, beer taverns, pornography stores, etc.

A lot of people who voted to legalize liquor-by-the-drink and race track gambling may not want those businesses operating in proximity to their homes or businesses.

Proposals have been made to build a race track near the zoo or

just off the Broadway Extension in residential neighborhoods of north Oklahoma City. They may encounter resistance from property owners who don't want to live near an "elephant." Its activities would overflow miles in all directions.

Race tracks, if profitable, generate a great deal of heavy traffic, including long vehicles transporting horses, feed, equipment, as well as automobile traffic. They also attract touts, peddlers, prostitutes and drifters.

Horses are stabled at race tracks mainly during racing seasons but also may be kept there at other times for training or trading. Oklahoma City ordinances prohibit keeping of livestock within city limits. If this rule is broken to accommodate race track gambling, shouldn't it also be bent to allow families to keep milk cows and chickens for food purposes?

(When Oklahoma National Stockyards was established it was across the river and some distance from

the city. It is now surrounded by the city but a long-standing agreement has permitted this valuable industry to remain outside city limits.)

Where gambling is legal it tends to permeate the atmosphere and dominate the landscape. Visitors to Las Vegas, Nev., are seldom out of sight of slot machines at the airport, hotels, grocery stores, restaurants, etc. Runners carrying bets make it easy for diners to gamble even while eating.

It is a relief to learn that the legislature is not going along with Gov. George Nigh's proposal to create another gambling elephant in the form of a state lottery.

If this had been added to other vices being implemented as state projects Oklahoma soon might be "wide open" as some people want it to be. But a lot of us don't want to live near a race track and we wouldn't want state lottery tickets shoved at us at every shopping center by politically appointed sweepstakes peddlers.

Oklahoma City, Okla.
February 1, 1985

Ferdie J. Deering:Editor
Oklahoman & Times
4th. & Broadway

Dear Mr. Deering:

Your article Friday January 1, regarding Race tracks and Lotteries was excellent. I commend you for stating the real concerns and facts of what really happens in the area that would be impacted by Race tracks adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

I am sure you will agree that is exactly what would happen in the case of the West-Bypass-a 6 lane super highway, that would no doubt make a race track for heavy auto/truck traffic, excessive noise and trash as well as a potential for contamination of the drinking water supply in Okla. City. Many of us are opposed to having our residential area blighted by a race track called the "West- Bypass"!

Thanks, for telling us what would really happen with two "Unwanted Elephants" in our City and add the third, 'The "Unwanted West-Bypass".

Sincerely,

Veta C. Minderman

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P.S. Enclosed some real facts concerning the West-Bypass.