

ERAC Meeting Minutes October 10, 2019

Meeting held at Town Hall

Attendants:

John A. Picariello, Cabot Dodge, Chief Kevin Breen, Ted Smith, Gary Barden, Laura Spathas (Select Board), Sean Fitzgerald (Town Adm.), John Dube (resident), Matt Therkelsen (resident), and Jarrett Temple and Kirk Hind from Aggregate Industries (AI).

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.

John Dube, a resident, opened the meeting commenting that AI was blasting on overcast days, and that street sweeping of material on the bridges was not being done. He said that his parents' home on Sampson Ave. had the front steps pulling away from the house, and that on an occasion the doors in his house are racked from the blasting this year. The doors being shaken and moved have set off his house alarm. The air blast on October 3rd sounded like his neighbor's house blew up.

Matt Ciplton, a new resident of three months on Fisher Ave. had concerns over the dust, the vibrations of the blasts, and the health issues of living so close to the quarry. He wondered if he will come home and find his house still intact from the blasting. He worries about planting a garden and the health effects of eating the vegetables.

Kirk Hind from AI presented an update of the blasting. The typical bench height is 50 feet, the new sump area at the bottom of the quarry is being blasted to a depth of 80 feet. He pointed out on the quarry plan where the blasting is taking place next week. He said that because of the data results they would evaluate how to change the blast to reduce the PPV (peak particle velocity) to a lower reading level. Kirk said that he got a quote for a Buffalo Monsoon misting sprayer to contain the dust cloud when blasting.

The town administrator, Sean Fitzgerald, said that ERAC should put forward an amendment to the current permit dealing with air quality and testing, pre blast surveys for neighbors, and mitigation to blasting. ERAC should look at the best practices of other communities and develop changes it can recommend today. Sean suggests limiting the number of blasts to two per week, possibly restricting also the number per month. The impact on neighbors is too great to ignore. The town also needs more data to confirm whether the results are acceptable. The permit states that operation needs to be acceptable and reasonable to the community. The standards for blasting may be unreasonable for the density of the community we live in.

Kirk thinks that the community meeting in the early spring would benefit the town to understand what the plans are for the coming year.

John Dube states that new people are moving in and are not aware of the operation, can't hear the blast siren and/or are not informed of the blast schedule. He asked why AI is blasting so much and if the demand is there or are they stockpiling for winter. Kirk explained that this month is one of their busiest of the year.

Cabot states that he has a garage floor with third cracks in it from the August blasts. The blasting is worse now and doesn't seem to affect Lynn or Marblehead, just Swampscott.

Laura says she is looking at walls that are cracked, and that AI is not taking the complaints seriously.

Motion made by Gary to put forward a short list of recommendations to present to the Select Board of changes that will take place now that will improve the affects of the quarry on the town. Motion approved by all members.

Kirk stated that the email list of notified residents has gone from 25 to 80 for the blast schedule. Also that AI will be monitoring seismograph at the Weiss property in the future. The dust testing company has been notified and has given AI a quote for a dust study, it's composition and quantity collected.

Sean questioned if the towns clay pipes in the ground are also being impacted by ground vibrations from blasting. ERAC should investigate limiting the depth of the holes, quantity of holes in a single blast, and the amount of explosive per blast. Other communities have set similar parameters and Swampscott should too.

John Dube stated that it is nice to have a permit, but that there's no enforcement, no consequence for causing the complaints and/or damage to residents' property.

John Picariello said that a group of students from Northeastern cored the bottom of Fosters Pond and will create a report of the composition of the material collected. Mr. Dube says that the pond has never looked the way it did 10 years ago, now the vegetation almost covers the entire length of the pond.

Ted Smith was asked if anything on the suggested list of changes stood out to him. He says that the dust is a major concern as well as the pre-blast surveys. He asked who is going to decide, from what is in the permit, whether AI can blast in relation to the weather, wind, etc. Sean states that the fire dept. has jurisdiction of when they can blast. Chief Breen asks for parameters that he can use to make those decisions, ceiling height, wind speed, etc.

Gary brought up the fact that the residents don't have a place to register complaints to AI and that the company should have a Facebook page that residents can register complaints on about the operation pertaining to dust or vibration damage. Kirk has brought this up to the management. John Picariellos? Or Dube? asks if it is possible to list the blast dates in the Swampscott Reporter for the following week much like the town lists the meeting schedule for upcoming events. Sean is not sure if that would be accurate and that blasts would be limited to two blasts a week.

When asked if the Monsoon mister is going to be a reality, Kirk says he needs to have someone explain if it is feasible for their operation.

The siren was then discussed and Kirk said the intention of the siren is to notify the people in the blast area, confined to the quarry. Several attendants said they want to hear the siren, gives them advanced notice. Sean wasn't as convincing that in today's technology there aren't better means of notification other than the disturbance of the siren. A message on a phone might be more affective and less intrusive. AI intends to send out a letter questionnaire asking residents if they want the siren, if blast information is getting out, and if they have the information needed to notify the quarry management of complaints.

The question was brought up about setting up a fund for community development and past damage to residents, a thought to look at for the next permit.

Motion to adjourn approved, 8:30 pm.