

## Site Plan Review Standards

### 1. Preserve and Enhance the Landscape

a. By its very nature, gravel extraction is the very opposite of preservation of the natural landscape. It involves the removal of all trees, disturbance of all soil and all vegetation and the destruction of all habitat in the areas where extraction takes place. The applicant has proposed a detailed restoration plan, after project completion, to return the area to a natural state. The topography of the area to be restored, however will be a very different from the one which existed prior to extraction. This particular application proposes the extraction of an enormous amount of material, essentially removing one of the largest hills that has been part of the landscape of Lamoine since the glacier retreated thousands of years ago. No matter how carefully this extraction is done, the landscape will be profoundly altered.

b. The applicant has submitted studies indicating that environmentally sensitive areas such as identified wetlands will not be adversely affected by the proposed extraction. No significant wildlife habitats have been identified, though certainly all the birds and animals whose habitat will be destroyed perhaps, if they could speak, would argue that their habitat is significant to them. Obviously, a great concern with the proposal is the removal of the sand and gravel hill which lies entirely over the significant sand and gravel aquifer. I think it undeniable that this hill is a significant natural feature of the town, visible from several vantage points in the town and neighboring towns as well. In light of many years of gravel removal of other hills in Lamoine, Cousins Hill, or Miro's Hill as some now call it, can be claimed to be a unique natural feature. While it would be a stretch to assert that this hill is to Lamoine what Blue Hill is to that community or Tucker Mountain to Sullivan, I do consider it a unique natural feature which is an integral part of the Lamoine's sand and gravel aquifer geology and I am opposed to efforts to further destroy it by expanding extraction on the remaining portions of the hill.

I cannot, in good conscience, find that this application meets this review standard.

2. As no structures are proposed for this project, I find this standard essentially not applicable.

### 3. Vehicular access

I have a concern regarding the number of entrances to the proposed pit. There are three indicated on the site plan map. I think that at most two are permitted. Standard 3.b.2. says that the maximum number of driveways to a site with less than 1500 vehicles per day shall be limited to one two-way entrance. Standard 3.b.7. states that all lots of record legally existing at the time of adoption of the Site Plan Ordinance shall be allowed one direct access. Since the property in the application is comprised of two lots, two entrances seem acceptable, though I would prefer just one, as a safety concern for the drivers who would only have to be on the lookout at one location, rather than two. Three entrances are not acceptable.

4. Parking design requirements. I find this non-applicable.

5. Off-street parking requirements. I find this non-applicable.

6. Buffering and Screening

I find the appropriate setback distances recorded on the plan.

As regards screening, I appreciate the applicant's proposed plantings within the westerly buffer area to screen the operations from view along the traveled highway abutting the project. All other buffer areas shall retain natural planting.

7. Exterior light. I find this review criteria non-applicable to this project.

8. Municipal services. Given that the roads to be used are state and not municipal, I find that this review criteria is non-applicable.

9. Surface water. There are no ponds or streams within the proposed site. all evidence suggests that there will be minimal runoff, as soils are mainly highly permeable sand and gravel.

10. Groundwater protection.

The applicant has submitted extensive information from its hydrogeologist, Summit Environmental, which concludes that the proposed extraction will not adversely impact the quality or quantity of groundwater in the aquifer or any water supply system. As a result of a peer review by Ransom Consultants of Summit's study, the Planning Board requested additional hydrogeologic investigations by Summit. Their additional report recommended changes to their original plan. Subsequent review by Ransom recommended additional conditions which might be placed on the proposal.

We need to discuss status of these various recommendations with respect to the application currently before the board. Do we have an amended application which incorporates Summit's recommendations?

The board has also heard testimony from Dr. Willem Brutsaert who has challenged the conclusions of Summit and Ransom that excavation of gravel from the hill will not affect the deep water table groundflow and that the deep water table and the perched water table supporting Cold Spring are not hydraulically connected. He asserts that the inevitable consequence of removal the hill will be end of the water supply supporting cold spring

While I find the assertions of Summit and Ransom largely persuasive, I am not fully convinced and, therefore, I would suggest, were the project to be approved in some form, a condition so as to minimize potential impacts to the town's groundwater resources. I would propose that initial excavations be limited to a depth of, say, 120 feet (about 40 feet above determined deep water table level) and that wells old and new cited in the application be monitored twice annually for water table elevations. This would provide some data which could be used when evaluating impacts of extraction on the water table. Should no adverse impact be detected, excavation to lower depths could be undertaken. Without such monitoring of water tables in the early stages to act as a warning in the case of threats to water quantity, I am reluctant to take the risk which Dr. Brutsaert cites,

despite the findings of Summit and Gerber. (It may be that the appropriate place to put this sort of condition would be in Gravel Permit rather than the site Plan Review permit.)

11. Air pollution NA
12. Odor NA
13. Noise - ??
14. Sewage disposal NA
15. Utilities – NA
16. Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan of the town is listed as a review criterion in the Site Plan Ordinance and thus can and must be noted in the review of any project seeking Site Plan Review approval.

The comprehensive plan of the town describes Lamoine as essentially a residential community with residents enjoying features typical of a rural community, with perhaps many of them engaging in a variety of home occupations and with limited commercial ventures taking place. The bulk of the town is zoned Rural & Agricultural. Large scale industrial activity is normally not permitted in this zone.

The comprehensive plan acknowledges the existence of significant deposits of sand and gravel and states matter-of-factly that extraction of sand and gravel may take place within the Rural and Agricultural Zone. Thus, there is an expectation that the town as a residential community and as a source of sand and gravel will need to coexist in some fashion. For me, as a member of the Planning Board, the strategic question becomes the balance that needs to be achieved for the coexistence to be satisfactory to the residents of the community and the quality of life to which they are entitled as a rural community. I believe that the Planning board has the authority to make a judgment about whether or not any large scale use, such as this proposed sand and gravel extraction, is appropriate for the site on which it is proposed in the context of residential nature of the town.

The list of those whose properties lie within 500 feet of the parcel on which gravel operations will take place is long, well over 40 names. Most of these listed are along the northerly side of Lamoine Beach Road from the Corner to Mill Road, and then along the northerly side of Mill Road. If one were to add the owners of parcels on the southerly side of these roads who, in my judgment, will be equally as impacted as those on the northerly side, the list would lengthen to more than 60. For all of these residents, the proposed gravel operations would add yet another layer of noise to that already generated by the substantial gravel truck traffic which passes by their homes and neighborhoods on the way to other gravel pits further down Lamoine Beach Road. The Board has received much verbal and written testimony with regards to this adverse impact on the quality of life, including statements about the harmful impacts on property values.

The area of town where the gravel operations are proposed is the most densely populated area of town. I think it wrong to permit such a large scale gravel operation in that setting.

17-20 - NA