

Wright County NWQ Aggregate Resources Committee Meeting #6
August 14, 2008

Committee Members: Brad Arntson, John Jones, Ken Scadden, Tommy Thompson, Phyllis Latour,
Staff: Stacy Marquardt, Scott Deckert, Tom Salkowski
Audience: Ralph Douglas, Charlotte Quiggle, Dick Anderson

Deckert summarized the agenda and the three things they needed to accomplish. 1) Resolve the map boundaries as a recommendation; 2) Finalize the polices (there is a possible new policy that he would like to discuss); and 3) Discuss how we should handle informing the landowners. Deckert reviewed the maps Arntson submitted and some possible map changes. He discussed specific areas of the county where the good material is located.

Arntson questioned what these lines mean on the map. He would like clarification. Deckert stated we will be talking about this later on in the agenda. Salkowski asked Latour about the Town Board's review. She stated that Thompson went over his maps and the county maps. They would like to see his map (with more residential areas), meaning more 10 acre parcels (not smaller lots like 1-5 acre lots) and the rest Ag, 1 per 40. Salkowski stated we are working on the aggregate areas now so that is what we should be focusing on. Latour stated that they have not had that on the agenda at the Township yet. She would like us to meet with the landowners first before bringing it to the Township. She also commented she would like the area in red on Thompson's map to be 2 per 40. Salkowski stated the map was presented as it is R-1, which are 1 acre lots. Latour did not want that and was glad that was clarified.

Discussion on R-1, Thompson's map, the aggregate map and how they all relate. Salkowski clarified again what R-1 means and neither Thompson nor Latour were aware of that. Also noted that shoreland is 1000 feet from a lake and 300 feet from a river.

Deckert questioned if they were all in agreement on the proposed aggregate resource areas. Arntson stated it will ultimately go back to the policies that regulate these areas. Deckert reviewed the polices and #6 was changed to be in accord with the new laws. All agreed to the new wording.

General discussion on how the gravel tax works. Stating that now the County has more flexibility on how they use the fund. Also noted that the tax goes to the Township where the gravel came from. Also the amount the operators pay in now is more (was .07 per ton and now is .15 per ton).

Deckert reviewed the additional policy #7. Salkowski stated maybe this committee can work on some new rules or ordinance changes once we can get an idea of what we are trying to accomplish. We will need very specific rules to govern these areas. Arntson is concerned that these policies could be too strict. We may need to make the lines bigger (or contain a larger area) or possibly have more areas included in the map to encompass existing pits and the areas where there is gravel. Deckert agreed that this may need to happen depending on how strict the rules are. We may need to draw more lines outside the existing area at a later time once we start ordinance amendments/changes.

Salkowski stated that the state requires that the County plan for the protection of aggregate resources but provides little further guidance. Arntson is concerned that outside those lines we are not going to allow mining. General Discussion about "inside of the line versus outside of the line" and how this impacts the property owners along with the natural resources in the area. Salkowski envisioned it would be easier to get gravel mining permits inside the line meaning the "process" to get a permit would be easier than outside the lines.

Thompson questioned if the lines satisfy what the state requires. Salkowski answered yes. Deckert went on to say the state is rather vague and some areas have a gravel mining overlay zoning district or an overlay land use plan district. There was a general agreement and satisfaction on the committee on how far we have come and on the map itself.

Scadden questioned about the city annexing property in one of these gravel areas. Deckert stated if they annex the land it is then under their jurisdiction. Salkowski stated aggregate is important to the cities as well. It makes sense once it is mined out to annex the property, develop it, and put city services there. Scadden stated that the newly revised map for Monticello Township is much better and should be acceptable.

Deckert clarified that they are all in agreement then with #7 in concept. Salkowski asked a general question about mining in lake areas: Are there any other issues, other than the usual reasons that we have talked about, why people are against mining by lakes? Thompson stated the end use or reclamation destroys the land use forever (mostly due to the depth of the pit). General discussion on how we can overcome this. If it was "helped" along by being reclaimed properly and possibly became a natural forest or wildlife area would this be satisfying? Latour stated the biggest gripe is dust, traffic, and aesthetics.

General discussion on water quality and the impacts. The activity itself has no real impact to the groundwater depth unless there is significant dewatering. The only impact is from other factors such as machines leaking, garbage dumping, etc and this could potentially pollute the groundwater. Arntson stated the water is actually cleaner the deeper you go. It is common to mine to make lakes for developments. The issues are the "old pits". Most agreed.

Deckert asked if we should add something to #7 about shoreland since that is what we are mostly talking about? Noted to add in "shoreland areas" to the list.

Latour asked about Corinna doing their own gravel pit regulations outside shoreland areas. Salkowski stated that is what we have been told, but only outside shoreland areas. But they are still part of our land use planning process. They have to be as strict as or stricter than the County.

Deckert went over how the natural resource committee is presenting info to the property owners at their meeting. He was unsure how this committee would like to present this to the public. Deckert thinks there are less than 100 property owners. Salkowski suggested we have one meeting in Monticello town hall and another in the Southside town hall. These initial meetings are for the landowners in these areas only. Arntson stated if this were me I would want to know what the difference is by being inside the lines versus outside the lines at this public meeting. Salkowski agreed that we can come up with something to satisfy the committee before going to the public on what the lines mean. Just to clarify, for now we are only talking about the people inside the line for the first meeting and we will have a public hearing/meetings after we have the whole plan ready to present.

Deckert wanted clarification what the committee would like to see; a sample ordinance or more specifics and clarification on what we have in the plan? More clarification of the existing plan. "What it means to be in an Aggregate Resource Area."

Next meeting scheduled for September 11, 2008 1:30 pm