

## Wright County NWQ Aggregate Resources Committee Meeting #8

October 16, 2008

**Committee Members:** Ken Scadden, Tommy Thompson, Phyllis Latour, Joe Holthaus, John Jones

**Staff:** Stacy Marquardt, Scott Deckert, Tom Salkowski

**Audience:** Ralph Douglas, Charlotte Quiggle

Deckert started off discussing that the main purpose of this meeting was to finalize general regulations and implications on mining inside the mapped area versus the outside the mapped area.

### “Inside the area” items that seemed to be a consensus last meeting :

1. New pits will still require a CUP.
2. We will administratively approve accessory uses in a permitted pit, no CUP will be required.  
\*\* We need a list of accessory uses in the ordinance if we are not going to require a CUP.
3. There could be more leeway on screening requirements.
4. An entitlement on the property would not be required to mine.  
\*\* Latour noted that Arntson did not want the entitlement required anywhere, and was unsure a consensus was reached.

### “Outside the mapped area” items.

Only temporary or short terms mining operations allowed (3 years maximum). There was general discussion on what feasibly can be completed in three years in a gravel pit. Deckert reviewed some of the road projects and stated most projects can be done within two years but County Road 17 project will be closer to three years. Thompson was concerned that we should not leave the rest of the County wide open to mining, especially if we designate mining areas. Latour was concerned that there are no real regulations to stop them from continuously reopening “temporary” pits. Deckert asked if it is realistic not to allow long term pits outside the area. Holthaus asked if we can get some of these operations cleaned up before we open more. There was general discussion on old pits and how large and ugly they are. Salkowski stated that we can only really discuss what we can do going forward.

Deckert asked if it is fair to small operators who may only have access to scattered sites outside the main mining areas. Jones stated that you have to draw the line somewhere. Latour agreed and said that establishing a map is to set guidelines. Holthaus thought the purpose was to distinguish areas to allow mining, but if we allow all the people outside this area to open pits as well, then what is the difference? We should get all these pits cleaned up before we start opening new pits. Thompson did not think that transportation should be the only factor; just because the gravel is closer does not mean we should have to allow new pits to open. General discussion about allowing pits at all outside these lines on the map.

Thompson asked if Salkowski thought that Arntson and Ferrell agreed to the maps. Salkowski answered generally yes, but not if they cannot mine anything anywhere else. Thompson suggested this is meaningless if you can mine in both. Deckert stated we can make it more restrictive and regulated to mine outside the area with policies and rules than inside. Latour would like the proposed policy #3 to apply to all pits outside the area (not long term only). She noted if we adopt #1 then they can still mine anywhere. Salkowski suggested limiting the outside areas to temporary operations could be more acceptable to most people. The primary complaint is “when is this mining operation ever going to be done?” He also stated that Holthaus has a good point that people can come in up the road and open a short term pit and undercut operators with major investments in long-term pits. Deckert stated that the operator on the current County 17 project did not identify sources, and then the Office faced pressured to re-open reclaimed pits within the County after the bids are let and work ready to begin. This situation directly

addresses the current discussion. The group asked why we should let them open more pits when we have pits already open from other bidders.

Deckert said there is a fundamental difference between gravel mining and borrow pits adjacent to a project. Salkowski stated that we need to better define borrow pits, as there is little or no objection to them. Salkowski summarized that we are down to no gravel pits outside the area or very temporary pits outside the area. He would like to have the Highway Department here to help discuss this. He also requested input on hours of operation, since future state projects on busy highways may require night operations. We could have a separate permit for that or we could say to the state these are the regulations for Wright County and you have to abide by them. There were no objections to off-hour operations under certain circumstances.

General discussion on how many pits are open now and how do we utilize those without allowing new pits. Discussed different areas of the county and what type of supply they currently have with these existing open pits.

Overall Salkowski felt we had an agreement on the maps but we still need to work on the policies outside the area. There was a general agreement on the lines of the mapped areas. A question arose if active pits could expand if they are located outside the lines. Salkowski answered there are legal cases on that subject and we probably would have to allow them to expand since they are an existing active pit.

Next Meeting November 13, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.