

February 13, 2012

Dear Zoning Committee Members,

I'd like to urge you to consider, again, a moratorium on the granting of frac sand mining permits so we have a chance to learn more about their effects on the citizens of the county, the quality of life, and the overall effects on the economy of the county.

I would like to see this on the agenda of your meeting - not the next meeting, February 23rd - but at a March or April meeting.

This is such an important issue, that I'd like to see the people of the county, as well as you, the committee members, and the rest of the county board, have more time - to think hard about the issue, and prepare thoughtful testimony. Since the implications of the issue are so far reaching, to every person in this county, I would like to see an effort to notify everyone possible that this discussion is happening. It would be wonderful to have the input of a large proportion of the people on whom it will have such a profound impact. Then, maybe we can come up with some solutions that will be fair to everyone.

It seems to me that one of the problems we have is that we don't really know what it's going to be like to live with these mines. 4 mines have been granted permits, but only one is actually digging or transporting sand, and it's just beginning.

So many of the big questions we face are difficult to answer.

- How will we like – and how will tourists react – to having hundreds more trucks on our roads?
- Will there be more issues with safety on our roads?
- Will there be environmental problems with dust from the mines, or chemicals contaminating our water supply?
- Will there be nuisance problems from noise and/or lights from the long hours of operation of the mines, and the long hours of trucking.

So I suggest that you stop granting permits for a year to see if we can learn the answers to some of these questions. I think by that time, once more of the mines are actually operating, we'll have a much better idea of how they're going to affect our lives, and people will have more of a chance to learn about the issues the mines present.

What I'm afraid of, if we continue to grant permits without taking the time to consider the consequences, is that it will be too late to draw back. A year from now we may decide that we hate it, but if we've already granted 50 permits, it will be too late to do anything about it.

One other concern I have is that when the Board of Adjustments considers these Conditional Use Permits it seems to only look at the interests of the miners and the mining companies.

According to the law, the Board of Adjustments, when considering a conditional use, is also supposed to consider:

- Its harmony with the future development of the district
- Its relationship to the public interest, the purpose and intent of this ordinance and substantial justice to all parties concerned.

It seems to me that this isn't happening – the Board of Adjustments doesn't seem to be considering any interests except the miners', or any development except mining. A moratorium would give them time to hear from other constituents and get other points of view about these issues.

I hope you will consider slowing this process down so we have a chance to learn how these mines affect our landscape and our lives.

Sincerely,

Marcie O'Connor