

June 5, 2022

To the Committee:

I have been a resident of 673 Center Rd., town of Rutland, for 22 years. I oppose this CUP and I would like to refute some of the statements made in the application.

1. The original pit was indeed here before residents bought or built their homes. But this **new site** has been a farm field since that time and **does NOT predate the homes in the area.**
2. Just because gravel is located here does not mean that it must be quarried. There is no law that states that a vein of gravel **MUST** be excavated. The ZLR review is meant to determine if the location is appropriate for this operation.
3. Contrary to the applicant's statement that there have been no complaints about the non-conforming pit, **residents have had problems with this pit since the current owner took over in 2017.** Documentation of this is provided.
4. **Opponents of the pit are residents of Rutland. Can the same be said of supporters?** Please check to see if supporters are Rutland residents, or instead, members of the lobbyist group Aggregate Producers of Wisconsin acting on behalf of a member.
5. The Chair of our Planning Commission has repeatedly suggested that we take conditions on both pits as a trade-off for accepting the new pit. **By far the majority of residents who spoke or wrote to the PC and Board did not wish to make this trade-off.**

These was my statement for the hearing:

First, the statement about housing and the assertion of acceptance by the neighborhood: Our town's Plan is a thoughtful, 58 page document that prioritizes quality-of-life, economic and development issues based on resident preferences. The CUP application greatly oversimplifies the description of residential development - the Plan discusses all of the factors and best-practices for locating housing within our self-described rural residential community. Almost every Planning Commission meeting discusses a request to use a split for a new home site. According to our clerk Rutland still has 300 "splits" within its boundaries, so we are growing more residential every year. The old grandfathered pit does have a large volume of resident complaints going back to 2017 contrary to what was said earlier, and a new, much larger pit greatly increases the likelihood of further conflicts with neighbors well into the future and greater incompatibility with the Comp Plan. As far as neighbor acceptance, in the files on your website there are letters of opposition from 34 residents. Among the 7 in support, 4 of those are not residents of Rutland. And although the applicant cites a passage from the Comp Plan about the differences between farming and newly rural or suburban residents, you'll see that the letters represent a cross section of residents. And to imply that residents don't understand agricultural practices and the rural way of life – this is why residents move here, and a gravel pit is not what most residents think of as an agricultural or rural area. It's also not a small rural business – it may only have a few trucks and employees, but when it's running at full volume hundreds of trucks per day run through our neighborhood, and they're going far outside the community as you can see from the map provided by the applicant.

This issue is also a conflict with the sections in both Comp Plans about economic development, because by far the greatest share of tax revenue to the town comes from residential taxes, which are much higher than the rate paid by the gravel pit. If this new quarry is permitted the splits located near it will not be desirable and that revenue to the town will be lost, and it would have far outweighed the gravel pit's contribution. In addition, the town's biggest expense is road repair and maintenance, and according to engineer Benjamin Jordan who specializes in road fatigue, gravel trucks do 100 times more damage to the roads than garbage trucks for example.

Goal 10 in our comp plan requires local businesses to have access to a state or county highway. This pit cannot meet that requirement without failing Goal 2 in the Comp Plan, "Reduce the amount of non-local traffic passing through residential areas".

The comp plan prioritizes road safety and encourages opportunities for bikes and pedestrians. In 2019 Mike Bakken, owner of Northwest Stone, made the following statement at a Town Boad meeting: **"Your town roads are not very conducive to having heavy trucks running up and down. Center Road is not a safe road. It has lots of steep grades and stop signs – not good visibility, low hanging trees in lots of places. Center Road is not a very good or safe road to begin with"**. This provides substantial evidence that the gravel trucks are hazardous to pedestrians and other drivers: Substantial evidence of the fact that gravel trucks are hazardous to bicycles is provided by the town when it asks the gravel pit owner to limit operations during the bike rallies. There are 21 driveways, 9 blind spots, and lots of pedestrians on Center Rd. and our other town roads.

No one who moves to a rural residential neighborhood expects sidewalks, but I do expect to be able to share the road **safely** with vehicles. A serious gravel truck accident occurred two years ago on the corner of Center Road and A, and a pedestrian was killed on Center Road just south of my driveway in a blind spot, even before the gravel trucks were running.

As far as property rights, we all have property rights, not just one person. People who advocate for their neighborhood are often called Nimbys, but what that means to me is someone who loves their neighborhood and wants what's best for everyone in it, not just one person. What it doesn't mean is opposition to change. There are plenty of changes that are positive, or at least not destructive, that we embrace. But I can't think of one good thing that this new quarry does for our town.

Gail Simpson
673 Center Rd.
Town of Rutland