



11/24/08

Mr. Tom Rogers  
Gallatin County Planning Department  
311 West Main, Rm 108  
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Mr. Rogers and Members of the Gallatin Planning Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts regarding the recent request to increase operations at the TMC/Storey pit on Norris Rd. My property falls within the 1000' impacted area shown on the vicinity map.

The current operation with "rolling reclamation" is a sound practice and I have no objection to the applicant continuing their operation within the confines of the existing permit, but to expand the use to include asphalt mixing will definitely exert a negative impact on surrounding property values.

With the recent rapid decline in real property values both nationally and locally, the addition of more intense mining operations will prolong the stabilization and eventual return of higher property values. Therefore, I oppose the addition of an asphalt batch plant.

To extend the permit for an additional 20 years will ultimately have a negative effect on real property values and subsequently on county tax revenue. The staff report states that if a "catastrophic" illness or death forces a resident to sell their home within the next 20 years, the pit may have a negative influence on the sale price. This assumes that everyone lives in their homes for a lifetime and, statistically, this isn't true. Nationwide studies indicate that most homes experience a turnover every 5-7 years with most people downsizing; moving into condos or closer to medical facilities as they age.

At the time the impacted properties were purchased, they were bought with the understanding that mining operations would cease in 2010 and the purchasers were willing to accept the negative impact for a few more years. To extend the permit for an additional 20 years makes the mining operation a permanent fixture instead of a temporary inconvenience and the fiscal impact on surrounding properties would never be recovered during the tenure of the typical property owner.

An asphalt batch plant already exists approximately 1.25 mi to the north on River Road. The staff report states that it becomes economically unfeasible when these operations exceed 20 miles from the need for the product. There is no need to have two batch plants within 2 miles of each other. While I respect the applicant's pursuit of a profit, I see no need for such redundancy.

In addition to the requirement not to use engine brakes within the confines of the subject property, I respectfully request that the applicant be required to petition the state to install signs prohibiting engine brakes for 1 mile in each direction of the pit entrance and that the signs be installed and enforceable prior to expansion of the mining operations. Since the pit entrance is located halfway down a rather long hill, this request seems reasonable since this noise is much more obvious than any noise in the pit itself. The owners have done an excellent job of mitigating any noise at the actual site.

In the event the planning department makes a recommendation to approve expansion, I urge both the planning department and the county commission to exclude any asphalt operations from the final approval. If expansion is approved, I ask that it continue to be in the existing manner of rolling reclamation and that no more than 10 acres of disturbed ground be visible at any time. In addition, I ask that the preceding paragraph dealing with engine brakes be adopted.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of these requests and concerns.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Sidders  
9343 River Rd  
Bozeman, MT 59718  
406-580-3000