

2/19/26

Dear Select Board Member,

I am sending my comments which arise from the February 5th public hearing on the proposed mining ordinance for Alna.

First, I want to again emphasize that the residents of a small town like ours depend entirely on our local select board to oversee creation of ordinances to protect the land in our town and their own interests regarding that land. We have literally no other recourse, no other governmental body to represent our interests. A few in town have considerable private resources, but the vast majority of Alna residents cannot hire lawyers to represent our interests. Therefore, the select board is hugely important to us as a guardian of our well-being.

The method for protecting the residents of Alna is the creation of ordinances that represent the interests of the town's residents. While progress has been made on the mining ordinance, there are still areas of great concern:

- The regulations concerning registration of existing mines do not require review by any party who is knowledgeable about either the particulars of the ordinance or land use and mining operations. It is simply a paper process recorded by a town clerk - with no review of the information in the form.
- The regulations concerning registration of existing mines do not require any baseline information about size - so there is no way to apply limits discussed in other parts of the ordinance in a meaningful way.
- Using a fixed percentage to control annual growth allows the relative amount of growth to increase in a way that becomes more and more disproportionate.
- The entire issue of size limits needs examination - as it seems that a mine could simply continue to expand across the landscape. If that is not the case, the ordinance needs to be more clear.
- Finally, a question: should the town tax commercial operations in an amount that at least covers the costs of road repair due to truck traffic from a mine and the costs of regulation? This does sound reasonable, doesn't it?

I hope these comments can help to address changes still needed for the ordinance.

Thank you,

Meredith Fossel

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