

Cathy Johnson Comments on Crooker Application 04/01/2023

Hi Jim – As you know, I will not be at the April 4 (or April 18) planning board meetings. I have not done a thorough review of Crooker’s revised application but I have a few questions and thoughts based on my quick review of the revised application and our site visit. These are things I would say if I were at the meeting. If you think it appropriate, please share with the other members of the PB. You could just consider it “public comment.”

Questions/Information needed:

1. What is the size of the area that was approved for blasting in 2022, and what is the size of the area being requested in 2023? (The PB needs this information to ensure consistency with the moratorium which limits the increase to one acre.)
2. Has any of the area previously approved for blasting been reclaimed? (If so, the moratorium directs that area to be subtracted that area from the total.)
3. Are there plans to remove any topsoil/over-burden in 2023?
4. Is the entire pond that was visible on the site visit in Whitefield or is some of it in Alna?
5. Have the water quality or the sediments in the pond been tested for pollutants? If so when and what were the results?
6. Has the water in Spring Brook been tested for pollutants and sediment? If so when, and what were the results?
7. What, if any, erosion control measures are used to manage run-off in the pit?
8. What happens to the water in the pond – does it seep down into the ground, evaporate, or get removed some other way?
9. Is there an aquifer underlying any part of the pit? If so, where? Is it possible to add the perimeter of the aquifer to the map?
10. What, if any, materials does the applicant plan to bring into and store for more than 7 days in the pit (e.g. asphalt, rock dust, etc.)?
11. What measures will be taken to ensure that any spills of gasoline, diesel, oil or other potential pollutants used by the portable rock crusher at the blasting location will be fully contained?

Thoughts:

If the PB receives the information it needs and decides that the application meets (or could meet) all the standards in the relevant Topsham and Alna ordinances, there are several conditions I would suggest including in any permit issued:

1. Best Management Practices (BMPs) must be employed to limit erosion and manage run-off in the pit.
2. The water quality in Spring Brook should be tested at least during both the dry season and the wet season (i.e. late summer/early fall and during spring run-off) and the results of the tests reported annually to the Alna Planning Board.
3. The location approved for blasting shall be marked on the face of the earth and recorded digitally and provided to the Alna Planning Board.
4. There must be a spill containment plan for the refueling area and any potential spills of pollutants by portable machinery.

Cathy