

April 1, 2023

To : Jim Amaral, Chair , Alna Planning Board

From: Amy and Mike Preston, 36 Bailey Road, Alna

RE: Crooker Application to renew blasting permit for 2023-2024 year

When we bought our blueberry farm in Alna there was a small gravel pit up at “the corner” of Bailey Road and 218. This was known as Crooker Construction’s Whitefield Gravel Pit. Whitefield had an ordinance for gravel pit/mining operations. The thought was it might be active another 20 years average. We love our property with its 17 acres of farmed wild blueberries, additionally we have planted 170 fruit trees, and plan to make this our forever land through retirement. We have been watching the building /accessory dwelling ordinance as well, in the event we might build a small retirement house.

Today, after Crooker exhausted its resources/mining operation in Whitefield and changed ownership, the company has shifted its focus to land in Alna. This land is now the Alna Quarry. The first application for blasting (which sounded like it was a limited thing) is now in its third renewal -expanding the space, added blasting and mining out ledge below the original natural gravel pit operations. This level of rock being removed is also crushed on the premises (before it is loaded and removed)– a very loud constant machine operation Monday thru Friday, in addition to noise from gravel truck traffic, reverse beeping from the trucks, and the loading of the trucks- it all adds up to a lot of noise during the week.

The actual blasting is well documented, there is ample notification and it appears to be contained. But it is this continued blasting that creates all the additional unsettlement: noise, traffic, wear and tear on Alna’s roads, occasional dust, potential of water table disruption, tainting of personal home water (more debris build up in faucet filters than before), possibility of local buildings shifting, and the fear of the unknown accident involving air, water, or land -our town’s beautiful local environment.

The reason so many people have moved to Alna and Whitefield has been for the peace and tranquility of the area, the natural environment, and the slower pace of life. A happy healthy peaceful place to live.

Allowing continued blasting for expansion of mining land that will never be returned to its original beautiful landscape, tree growth, wildlife habitat and peaceful countryside seems wrong. With continued blasting and excavation of the earth there will only be a larger scar in Alna, reduction in real estate values, a shift in landowners, long term wear and tear on our roads, and the constant fear of an accident and irreversible harm to our land, water and/or air quality. We would like to see (and hear) the blasting cease, if not this year, then in 2024.

Submitted by Amy & Mike Preston, Windy Ledge Farm

Abutters who have paid more taxes to the town of Alna than Crooker Construction for the past 19 years.