



Project Review Committee Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday September 3, 2024 at 3:00 PM
via Zoom**

Members present: Jack Cunningham (Chair), Bob Bois, Eric Stevens, Stephan Chait, Jim Pinkerton, Ann Golob, Todd Davidson, Art Dufresne

Guests present: Morgan Wilbur (Grafton Town Administrator)

Staff present: Alyssa Sabetto

Called to order at 3:00pm with a quorum present and chaired by Jack Cunningham.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Group introductions. Art introduced himself as a new member, and Jack shared that Kathy Edgerly is another new member.

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of March 5, 2024 meeting were approved on a motion from Bob and seconds from Stephan and Jim. Ann and Art abstained because they were not present at that meeting. Minutes approved as distributed.

3. **Public Comment Period**

No comments were made during this opportunity for members of the public to comment on non-agenda items.

4. **Goodrich gravel pit expansion – Grafton – 2W1306-1 - Major**

Address: 1465 Eastman Road

Land Use District: Productive Rural

Potential Policies (pages 12-51): Land Use 12, Natural Resources 24, 25

Background: This project is the after-the-fact documenting of the 3.12-acre expansion area that was extracted under Executive Order 03-23 (for a total extraction area of 19.42 acres) and approval of the proposed reclamation plan for this expansion area. Chris Campany attended a site visit and hearing on 8/22 and shared feedback with Alyssa.

This gravel pit was originally permitted by Act 250 in 2013 and WRC did comment during that permitting process. The pit extraction area before the expansion was 16.3 acres. The 2013 permit indicates there is estimated to be 240,000 cubic yards of commercially usable sand and gravel. The annual average extraction rate over the life of the extraction phase of the project was expected to be 20,000 cubic yards of material with a maximum of 30,000 cubic yards in any given year. The pit extraction operations under permit 2W1306 expires on 12/1/2025 and there is a reclamation plan that requires reclamation to be complete by 10/15/2026. The 3.12 acre expansion done under Executive Order 03-23 was to provide material for July 2023 flood recovery efforts.

From the site visit and hearing Chris shared a few items that Alyssa relayed to the Committee: (1) there's a small forested area that was thinned out per the applicant's forest management plan but that wasn't coordinated with Act 250. (2) Historic preservation found a significant settlement on the site. House built in 1780s occupied until 1870, as well as what was likely the foundation of a cabin built to live in until the more formal house could be built. It's significant because this is relatively early settlement for the area. Buffer is established. During the hearing historic preservation staff noted how cooperative the property owners have been and how much they've spent for relatively little benefit to themselves. (3) Neighbor submitted written comments at the hearing about large trucks, dust they create driving, and fact that some of the trucks are leaving without tarps on beds. There is signage about covering loads but hard to regulate private haulers. Quarry has agreement with town that town will put down chloride to reduce dust and town will charge owners for the costs or trade in value of material.

Morgan Wilbur, of the town of Grafton, told the Committee that Grafton gets all of their gravel from this pit and thus the closing of this pit is a big deal for the town. The town does not have concerns about use of the pit or safety concerns with the pit. The pit owner and the Road Foreman have a good line of communication, especially around impacts to the access road during mud season.

Eric, who resides in Grafton, said that he has is not aware of issues with this project. Art brought up the fact that gravel sources are dwindling in and around Vermont and prices have increased. The dwindling availability of gravel is a regional concern.

Alyssa noted the hearing recess order asks for: an operational stormwater permit or determination that is not needed, and wetlands permit or a determination that is not needed, as well as a site plan showing the expanded archaeological buffer zone.

The 2013 WRC comments on the parent permit note that this project location is in compliance with regional plan land use district that it lies. On the current Regional Plan, the property lies in Productive Rural lands. The Committee understands the need for properly located gravel pits in the region and wishes to ensure that any outstanding permitting issues are handled to the satisfaction of permitting agencies. The Committee does feel that this project is regionally significant given the importance of the resource needs for towns in and around the region and the potential impacts that quarry operations can have on the environment.

ACTION: Committee voted that Alyssa draft and submit a comment letter aligning with their comments.

5. Recent Decisions and Updates

- Chila Barn redevelopment – Wilmington – 2W1336-1– permitted 3/13/24
- Faerie Camp Destiny improvements – Grafton – 2W1141-4 – permitted 3/27/24
- Wardsboro Newfane 500 kW solar installation – Wardsboro – 23-4369-NMP – CPG granted 4/5/24
- Barbers Park Solar 500kW – Rockingham – 24-0590-NMP – CPG granted 5/9/24
- Mount Snow Carinthia stormwater improvements – Dover – 2W1281-6 – permitted 5/24/24
- Stratton town forest trail expansion – Stratton – 2W0944-4 – permitted 6/4/24
- New England Power Substation #13 relocation and refurbish existing 69 kV A1 and B2 transmission lines – Vernon – 22-4900-PET – CPG issued 6/13/24
- Boulder Ridge construction completion extension – Dover – 2W1209-2B – administrative amendment granted 6/20/24
- Grafton Nature Museum pavilion – Grafton - 2W1388 – permitted 7/3/24
- Adam Walsh 50kW solar – Londonderry – 24-0032-NM – CPG granted 7/5/24
- Brady Sullivan – Snow Vidda second phase – Dover – 2W1221-3 – permitted 8/7/24

6. **Next meeting**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday, October 1st. Determination of a need to hold that meeting will be made closer to that date and the Committee will be informed either way.

7. **Adjourned at 4:15.**

Respectfully Submitted, Alyssa Sabetto, Senior Planner