

DEBRA FOSTER

JUNE 20, 2015

HALIFAX QUARRY NOISE IMPACTS: INCOMPLETE

I feel it is important to remember as we review noise impacts that many residents, who have purchased large lots in the Conservation District where the quarry will be located, expected to enjoy peace and quiet. We sought a tranquil mountain town with large swaths of natural forests, clear streams and ponds and abundant wildlife.

We also pay a major portion of town taxes for this privilege. Residents impacted by the potential quarry were not planning to subdivide our property for profit or creating more traffic and roads to maintain thereby raising higher taxes for us all.

The fact that a major commercial quarry could be plopped down in the middle of the Conservation District was a shock. Especially when the Town Plan states that the heart of this area should be left undisturbed. In addition, the recently adopted Town Plan does NOT list quarries as a use in Conservation Districts.

The attached decibel comparison lists state that a typical rural area emits about 30 decibels. So as you look at these noise impacts, please keep in mind the increase from 30 decibels that all our residents currently enjoy.

Another important issue that should be considered is the many studies, too numerous to list, that have proven noise is one of our top environmental impacts and stressors.

Noise causes increased blood pressure, heart problems due to released hormones that may be damaging to the heart over a prolonged period, lack of concentration, and negative mood changes.

These impacts are not what residents in the Conservation District had expected when they invested emotionally and financially in Halifax.

A recent submission by the applicant to the Act 250 record dated January 27th, 2015 includes data testing of noise impacts coming from the site that will impact nearby neighbors. The C.U.P. is NOT COMPLETE until this report is added to the record.

A "hand" rock saw and drill plus generator were tested.

The reported decibel levels of 113 to 116 are disturbingly loud. On a scale submitted by the applicant to the Act 250 Commissioners, it is similar to a loud rock band!

Another noise comparison chart (attached) indicates that any noise over 90 decibels starts to lower hearing acuity and is categorized as VERY LOUD.

The application is also NOT COMPLETE until decibel numbers are converted to what you or a judge can compare to real life impacts and are added to the C.U.P. application.

In addition, another engineer pointed out that in the Act 250 application, Mr. Pratt gives three different answers as to the amount of total cubic yards that will be trucked out. (160,000, 246,000, and 482,000 cubic yards)

The application for a local permit is NOT COMPLETE until a clarification of this concern is added to the C.U.P.

You cannot accurately model the amount of noise generated by trucks used by the quarry until these numbers are adequately clarified and the weight, exact type of trucks to be used and brakes are tested for noise.

Note a previous quarry denial in 2008 where a Vermont court decision set a high standard for both the town and the applicant to be accurate so that any decisions should not be made on “impermissible vagueness.” (RANDOLPH CENTER, VERMONT QUARRY DENIAL)

In conclusion, this conditional use permit application is not complete and no decision should be made on the current submission until the above concerns are addressed with facts and figures.