

Halifax Zoning Board of Adjustment
Regarding the proposed Pratt/Denison Stone Quarry

When analyzing a project of this importance, my hope is that the Board will evaluate from three perspectives.

First to examine would be a comparison of NEGATIVE IMPACTS VS BENEFITS. At this point, I think it's pretty clear that the list of negatives is long, and in my mind they fall into five (5) categories:

Financial and Economic Loss

- * Significant reduction in property values ... who wants to buy a house near a quarry?
- * Severe ongoing road maintenance costs ... \$100,00 per year? ... \$5 million over project life?

Quality of Life Damage

- * Relentless noise ... rock does not cut quietly
- * Industrial truck traffic on formerly bucolic roads

Health and Safety Threats

- * Unknown well water incursions ... are we willing to bet on this one?
- * Perilous encounters with large trucks on steep, winding and narrow roads ... picture yourself pulling a stock trailer up Stark Mnt.
- * Air dust ... where will it land?

Environmental Damage

- * Habitat loss ... bear & bobcat will be first to go, quickly followed by moose, fisher and raptors.
- * Stream Sedimentation & Pollution ... Deer Park Brook and the Green River are pristine.

Town Plan Incompatibility

- * Does Conservation District designation mean anything?
- * Would this be the last quarry in Halifax or just the first?

Having sat through every Act 250 and Conditional Use Permit hearing to date, I have listened hard for benefits which this project might generate. The list is short.

Jobs

- * Any job which might result is merely seasonal, with no guarantee that any would go to Halifax residents.
- * Any other benefits would go to two individuals from out of state

Second to examine would be the risks involved with either permit denial or permit approval.

- * If the permit is denied, the town remains as it is ... peaceful, quiet and friendly
- * If the permit is approved, the town inherits 50 years of industrial blight, an abrupt end to peace and quiet, and a decidedly unfriendly and contentious atmosphere.

Third to examine would be the Property Rights issue, for there are those who staunchly oppose having the town (or any other body) tell a landowner what he/she can or cannot do with his/her property. Well, the issue is important to me too, as well as to every other landowner in town. But the property rights issue is a two-edged sword, and every property owner in Halifax has the right not to be faced with:

- * Financial & economic loss
- * Degraded peace and quiet
- * Threats to health & safety
- * Environmental damage in a Conservation District

In closing, as a strictly volunteer board you are confronted with a hard task, for in the face of pressure from a commercial enterprise, it takes courage to say NO. But when you evaluate Negative Impacts VS Benefits, examine the risks involved, and consider the rights of property owners throughout the town, the decision that does the most good for Halifax is clear. Have courage; do the right thing; say no to a poorly conceived and ill-considered quarry project in the town of Halifax.

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