

Gravel Mine On Rt. 201 Approved with Conditions on Hour, Usage Branford Company submits application

By Karen Kaplan - Day Staff Writer

North Stonington – the Planning and Zoning Commission approved a gravel mining application for a site off Route 201 Thursday night after spending nearly two hours debating conditions to be affixed to the permit.

Case Acquisitions Inc. of Branford submitted the application last summer for the five-acre site that is about a half-mile from the Stonington town line. Because the area to be mined – part of a 130-acre parcel – is within a densely populated area, the application had raised doubts and questions among residents who live nearby and among the commission members.

The commission finally agreed on a list of 12 conditions the gravel-mining operation must meet, including the stipulations that gravel cannot be mined and gravel related vehicles cannot be moved to and from the site outside the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., or on weekend or holidays.

“It’s only fair to let people get up,” said member Richard Cooper, acknowledging that most construction companies would prefer to begin work earlier than 8 a.m.

Conditions Set

The conditions also preclude any vehicles from being serviced on the site, and if there are any accidental fuel or gas spills, the must be immediately reported to the Zoning Enforcement Officer Rosalind Choquette and cleaned up. Operations may not resume until she approves the cleanup efforts, the commission agreed.

In an effort to reduce potential noise, the commission also agreed that the gravel screener should be no less than 250 feet from the property line. Some members wondered if the permit should even allow a screener, but the commission eventually decided it would be acceptable.

The commission also requires the operator to bury or otherwise dispose of all tree stumps on the site. The finished plans call for a landscaped pond.

Members spent much time discussing the period for which the permit should be issued. If the operation was not complete within a year, they wondered if they could add a six-month renewable tag.

“But we want to encourage them to get the stuff out and get out of there,” said Cooper.

“This is the most sensitive (application) yet,” agreed member Stephen Misovich. The commission eventually agreed that a one-year permit would be best.

Early on in the discussion, the commission agreed that this application, perhaps more than any other, raised doubts about whether the town should even allow gravel-mining anymore.

“You could own a \$1 million home with a gravel pit next door, and as long as they meet regulations, that’s it,” said member Paul Penley.

“Yes, we need to revamp our zoning regulations,” agreed member Diana Urban. “People who came in front of us were upset about this application, but we have regulations that permit.

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