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Kristina Handt

From: Gene Yore [eey@eeyore.info]
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2012 6:53 AM
To: k.handt@ci.scandia.mn.us
Cc: Anne Reich; Doris DeVries

Kristina Handt,
Scandia City Administrator,

We would like to voice strong opposition the mining proposal before Scandia Planning Commission.

We have owned property on the river on the north end of Marine since 1974 and have seen and supported many changes. This is one which we vehemently oppose. I have paddle the river from the headwater to Stillwater and it is a very special native and natural place on the plant of ours. To risk damaging this and the area around it for short term (20~50 year) monetary gain is ludicrous. The wild and scenic St Croix may not have the national prestige and visibility as Yosemite, Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon and so on (thank goodness), it is just as special. We should do everything in our power to preserve it and not risk it for our grand children and their grand children.

We respectfully request that the Tiller-Zavoral Mine proposal not be approved.

Regards,

Gene Yore and Doris DeVries
801 Pine Cone Trail
Marine-on-St. Croix, MN 55047

Kristina Handt

From: Mary Fernstrum [maryfern@midco.net]
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2012 8:44 AM
To: k.handt@ci.scandia.mn.us
Subject: Tiller-Zavoral Mine

Please put first in your decision regarding the Tiller-Zvorall Mine site under consideration the well being of citizens of Scandia and the surrounding area. For the many reasons articulated by persons of merit, we would not like to see this mine opened for operation. As we are down stream in Marine, any operational fluke would have instant impact on our river community. The St. Croix River is known all over the world by scientists visiting to compare our river to their rivers, ours being a benchmark of quality. Please do not put us or St. Croix River habitats in jeopardy.

Peter and Mary Fernstrum
2183 Jackson Circle
Marine on St Croix, MN 55047 =



101 Judd Street
Marine On St. Croix, MN 55047
651.433.2445

December 4, 2012

City of Scandia
Attn: Ms Kristina Handt
City Administrator
Scandia City Office
14727 209th Street N
Scandia, MN 55073



Re: Marine General Store Comment on the Tiller Mine Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Application

Dear Scandia City Council and City Planning Commission:

As you consider the Tiller CUP, we assume you will be doing a detailed community cost-benefit analysis. Certainly an issue of this magnitude deserves that. Our understanding is that the City of Scandia may benefit from about \$72,000 in tax revenues over the life of the project. If there are other benefits to your community, we are unaware of them. On the other hand, it is obvious from the Tiller project environmental impact statement and extensive public testimony to date that the Tiller project will impose significant public and private costs by adverse effects on the environment, traffic, public safety, noise, and tourism.

If Scandia intends to be a good neighbor, when you do your cost-benefit analysis, you will consider the significant costs the Tiller project will impose on the surrounding communities, and in particular on the citizens and businesses of Marine on St. Croix. We have not heard one single benefit to our community from the Tiller project, but we would incur significant costs.

We have already had one serious collision between a gravel truck and two vehicles at the intersection of Highway 95 and the entrance to the Marine Village Center. Increasing gravel truck traffic on this highway will only increase the risk of such accidents. This is not an abstract risk; we have already experienced it first-hand. Once the project is allowed, the trucks can travel anywhere with nothing to prevent them from routing through Marine.

Our business, Marine General Store, and other retail and restaurant businesses in the Marine Village Center are very dependent on sales to tourists. Visitors to O'Brien State Park are frequent and very important customers for us. If the noise and traffic and pollution of the Tiller project reduce Park attendance, we will lose significant revenue. Again, this is not an abstract risk. We experienced this first-hand when the state government shutdown closed O'Brien State Park during the height of the

summer tourist season in 2011. Our sales were down over 10% for that short period. Even if attendance is only modestly reduced by the Tiller project, our margins are so thin that just a 1% loss over the course of the summer will have a big impact on our bottom line.

We and all the Marine Village Center businesses are even more sensitive to the overall levels of tourism during the summer months. Tourist customers come to us in the summer because they enjoy driving along scenic highway 95 and visiting its unique destinations and recreating on a wild and natural St. Croix River. The Tiller project can only have a negative impact on this tourism. Our store generates two-thirds of its total yearly sales in just four summer months. Even a minor decrease in those sales has a huge impact on our business. The same is certainly true for the other businesses in the Marine Village Center. When there has been a summer road project on highway 95 or when the economy has reduced summer customer counts, we have barely been able to break even for the year. The possibility of reduced tourism is not an abstract risk. We know it can threaten our very survival as a business.

The bottom line is this: If you approve the Tiller CUP, the citizens and businesses of Marine on St. Croix will get absolutely no benefit, yet we will incur significant costs. As you deliberate, please be a good neighbor and carefully weigh the costs of your project to our community.

Sincerely,

Andy & Karen Kramer
Owners

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Kristina Handt

From: Anne Reich [reichmn@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2012 11:07 AM
To: Kristina Handt
Subject: Tiller Mine - citizen comment

Dear Scandia Planning Commissioners:

As residents of the St. Croix River valley, we are writing to ask you to deny the Conditional Use Permit for the proposed Tiller Gravel Mine.

The unique National Scenic River that flows through our communities is the reason our towns are here and why they remain so vibrant. The river brings tourists and residents who value the natural beauty of the region. Imagine the negative impacts on our local economy -- our stores, restaurants, gas stations, real estate values, tax base -- if the river is damaged by mining or the experience of being in the valley is compromised by noise, dust, and heavy truck traffic. Short-term financial gain for a very few should not take precedent over the long-term needs of our local residents, communities and the entire region. It is our responsibility to care for the St. Croix River--an irreplaceable gem--which serves as our centerpiece.

As a family with three children, we travel these roads daily, and are deeply worried about the increased truck traffic the mine would generate. Not only will these trucks bring major safety concerns, they also will impact our road infrastructure (added wear and tear), for which we all pay.

For economic, environmental, and safety reasons, we are opposed to the mine. We respectfully ask that you not approve it.

Thank you.

Anne and Peter Reich

P.O. Box 145
Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047

December 4, 2012

Honorable Planning Commission
City of Scandia
14727 209th St. N.
Scandia, MN 55073



Subject: Zavoral Mining and Reclamation Project

Dear Madame Chair and Honorable Planning Commissioners,

Our family currently owns two properties within ¼ mile of the proposed mining site – a home at 20851 Quint Avenue North and a home at 20919 Quint Avenue North. We are very concerned about potential impacts associated with the mining of the Zavoral property. The proposed mining use is incompatible with the surrounding residential uses and the nationally protected Wild and Scenic River – The St. Croix River.

Based on the information provided in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) we understand that the mining operations would negatively impact our property value and our quality of life. The values and our ability to enjoy our properties will be reduced due to the noise, dust and traffic generated by the daily operations of the gravel pit. As currently proposed, we do not believe that the City of Scandia can find that the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) meets the General CUP Criteria in the provided in the zoning ordinance. More specifically we believe that the project does not comply with General Criteria 1, 2, and 3 as discussed below.

General Criteria. As may be applicable, the evaluation of any proposed conditional use permit request shall be subject to and include, but be not limited to, the following general criteria:

(1) The conditional use will be in compliance with and shall not have a negative effect upon the Comprehensive Plan, including public facilities and capital improvement plans.

The proposed mining operation will have a negative impact on the public recreational use of the St. Croix River. The EIS states that the mining operation will comply with State noise standards for outdoor living. But, these standards are meant to be used in an urban environment and are not used to determine if a project will significantly impact a person recreating in the public wilderness. The level of noise that will be heard along the River will significantly diminish the quality of the experience for users of the public resource. In addition, the mining of this site is inconsistent with the Federal intent when this river was protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

(2) The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will promote and enhance the general public welfare and will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals or comfort.

The mining operation, as proposed, will not enhance the “general public welfare” and it will be “detrimental to the public ...comfort”. The environmental impacts associated with the mining operation such as noise, dust and traffic will significantly impact the wellbeing and comfort of those land owners and residents adjacent to the Zavoral property. Our properties are within ¼ mile of the operations and will be subject to all of these impacts and will significantly impact our ability to use and enjoyment of our homes and properties. The operation during the 6 months surrounding and including summer is particularly troubling given that this is the time we and other residents will be spending time in their outdoor living areas, recreating along the St. Croix, and leaving their windows open to enjoy the fresh summer air.

(3) The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values or scenic views.

As noted above, the operation of the gravel pit will be injurious to the “use and enjoyment of other properties in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted”. These surrounding properties have been zoned for residential and recreational uses for several decades. In fact, the new Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that mining should not be allowed in this area due to the sensitive nature of the surrounding uses.

As stated in the EIS and in the comments on the EIS, the property values of the surrounding land uses will be negatively impacted somewhere between 5-25%. The values will be diminished due to the daily operations of the mine and associated the noise, dust, and traffic. It is unreasonable to expect the surrounding property owners to bear the brunt of the financial impact of the gravel pit. Based on the current proposal our property values would be diminished during the 10 year mining process and it is unclear if they will ever return to their present values.

As demonstrated above, the proposed CUP cannot be found to be consistent with the General Criteria outlined above and therefore cannot be approved by the City of Scandia as presently proposed.

In addition to the General Criteria that decision makers must consider when approving a CUP, the Zoning Ordinance also includes performance standards that apply to conditional use permits. These standards are applied to ensure that the conditionally permitted use does not negatively impact the surrounding uses. More specifically, Performance standard 8.5.12 states the following:

(12) The hours of operation may be restricted when there is potential negative impact upon the surrounding area or neighboring uses.

There is definitely a potential for a negative impact on surrounding areas and neighboring uses. However, we believe that if the hours (or months of operation) were restricted, the potential negative impacts on the surrounding area and neighboring uses could be significantly reduced. As we noted in our comment letter on the Draft EIS, we understand that Tiller could mine the site in a much shorter time period. If the CUP limited the mining operation to one to two years and during the months of November to April the negative impacts to the surrounding residential and federally protected recreational uses would be reduced. This is the case because during the late fall, winter, and early spring residents are not spending time in their outdoor living areas and the use of the St. Croix River is reduced during these months. In addition, people keep their windows closed during these months thus further reducing the impacts of the noise and dust impact associated with the mining operation.

Furthermore, if the mining permit were limited to a one to two year permit, the length of time property values would be reduced would be limited to this shorter window versus the 10 year period proposed by Tiller. We believe it is unreasonable to expect that the adjacent landowners suffer financial hardship due to the approval of this gravel pit while the Zavorol's and Tiller will be making a profit over this 10 year period. We ask how the City can justify this negative impact? This project will not even bring in significant revenue for the City of Scandia so we ask ourselves – where is the public benefit?

In conclusion, we believe that as proposed, the project does not meet the City's General Criteria for CUPs and therefore cannot be approved. We also believe that this site is inappropriate for any mining activity. However, if the City were to modify the proposal through a performance standard that limits the mining operation to a one to two year period (operating from November – April only,) the impacts would be reduced to a level

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that might be palatable to the residents of Scandia, and it may be possible to make the appropriate findings.

It is also critical that the Commission recognize that once a permit is granted, it would be an extremely lengthy and expensive process to withdraw or modify the permit. It is imperative that the Commission consider very seriously the impact of this project on the community and those that love and enjoy the St. Croix River.

If you have any questions regarding these comments please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Plowman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Lisa Plowman
20851 Quint Avenue North
805-729-5956

Pam and Michael Smith
20919 Quint Avenue North
208-720-0228



Kristina Handt

From: jojane@juno.com
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2012 3:58 PM
To: council@ci.scandia.mn.us
Subject: please protect the St. Croix River Valley environment

Dear Scandia City Council,

I am writing to ask that you act to protect the environment of the St. Croix River Valley as your first duty to the broader community.

The Tiller Corporation has a history of neglecting their environmental commitments. Please be extremely cautious and skeptical about claims and promises they may be willing to make in order to get what they want from the City of Scandia.

I'm sure no one needs to tell you about the immeasurable value of the St. Croix Valley - the outstanding beauty as well as water quality, air quality, habitat protection and the health, safety, and quality of life for residents from miles around will be impacted by the decisions you are being asked to make. We are all counting on you to weigh the evidence and the issues, and make the wisest decision you possibly can.

Thank you for your consideration of this email letter.

Jo Haberman
949 Quarry Road
River Falls, Wisconsin

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