

# Planning commission approves Carp Lake mine proposal

PNR 4-14-22

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The Petoskey News-Review | USA TODAY NETWORK

**CARP LAKE** — Last Thursday, the Emmet County Planning Commission approved a permit for a gravel mine owned by Reith Riley, a construction company based in Goshen, Indiana.

Due to resident concerns, the motion was passed under the conditions that the water of the three nearby residents be tested before the project begins, two years after, every five years the site is active and at the conclusion of each project phase.

The company also agreed to a 100 foot setback on the west and south of the parcels owned by the Russ family and to limit operations to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The company also agreed to all conditions recommended by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council in comments the council left on the application

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# Mine

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The mine will be the 10th within a 1.5 mile radius in Carp Lake. Several residents who live near those mines attended the meeting to express their concerns about the approval of the Rieth Riley mine. The primary concerns were noise, speed of trucks, dust, potential water contamination and impact on property values.

Emmet County Director of Planning and Zoning Tammy Doernenburg said she reached out to the sheriff's department and asked that they monitor the mine sites, especially early in the morning and in the evening. She also advised residents to call 911 to report speeding trucks.

Other possible solutions were discussed during the meeting, including

splitting the properties into two separate projects. At one point, commission chairperson John Eby suggested to Carp Lake resident Angela Russ that she sell her property to Rieth Riley.

"No, it's not for sale. It's been in the family for generations," Russ said.

Russ lives directly next to the new mine site and she brought photos of her property to show the commission because she believed the photos used by Rieth Riley in the proposal didn't show just how close the properties are.

"I was telling them, just imagine sitting on my deck," she said. "Where do you drink coffee on Saturday mornings? I sit on my deck at 8 in the morning. So I had pictures because they falsely represented the area at the first meeting and so I kind of went through the pictures with them and told them this is how close it is to my property. And so that was my biggest point, letting them know that it was that close to my prop-

erty."

Russ and her brother-in-law, whose property also borders the mine site, agreed to the 100 foot setback and water testing.

Aliana Knapp-Prasek, another resident of Carp Lake, stood up during the meeting and told the commission that her partner began using oxygen 24/7 five years ago and was diagnosed with COPD; the illness came on quickly and seemingly out of nowhere. She told the commission that after learning about the health impacts of silica dust, they began looking into getting a B-reader test, a type of X-ray that looks for exposure and disease caused by silica and asbestos.

"It may not be related, it may be related. But I'm really interested to know if his COPD was caused by the dust in the air because we live in Carp Lake Township where there are so many gravel pits," she said.

Knapp-Prasek said she thought the commission asked good questions during the meeting, but felt like the decision was rushed.

"So basically what I learned is that a neighbor can sell their (land) to a corporation who, yes, might employ local people, but it's not based out of Michigan, or a local family doing it and they can turn it into a gravel pit," Knapp-Prasek said. "And you can go to your township meeting, and you can go to the county meetings and a whole community can say 'No, we don't want this' or 'We have a concern,' and this and that and yet, it still goes in the opposite direction and the board and the county votes for it."

Doernenburg said the commission approved the application that was presented to them based on the facts of the case.

Rieth Riley did not respond to requests for comment.