

SR Rock Quarry—What's next?

"Neighborhood Speak"-----by Steve Patterson—Federation of SR Neighborhoods

Recently the Board of Supervisors heard public testimony regarding the proposed operating plan for the Dutra group at the SR Rock Quarry. No decisions were made by the Supervisors, but there was hours of public testimony. The Quarry would like take the "pit" to -400' below water bay level. They would like to increase their hours of operations from 7 am to 10 pm to every day for the crushing and barging operations, except Sunday. Truck traffic is proposed for 250 one way trips per day (62,500 truck trips each year) and does not require tarping of all of the trucks.

Residents, both near and far from the actual Quarry operation, are impacted by the dust, particles and toxic substances that are generated by the blasting, crushing, truck traffic, noise and emissions. The Quarry will continue to crush, sort, and stockpile earth and rock, dock and load barges, and operate an asphalt batch plant. For many years the Dutra group violated the terms of their operating permit by expanding the scale of the operation, building without permits and generally thumbing their nose at the County of Marin. Keep in mind this location is outside the city limits of San Rafael so falls under the sphere of the County of Marin. Many of the impacted residents actually reside within the City Limits—Peacock Gap, Glenwood, Loch Lomond, etc. hence the City/County dichotomy.

While the County has generally failed to closely monitor, until recently, the Quarry operations, there have been no monitoring standards or procedures in place that can determine when Dutra exceeds to the terms of the operating permit. For example, noise is averaged over 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week, instead of measuring a 15 minute intervals to capture the episodic crushing and blasting noises. And while there are interim operating conditions that are in place with monitoring for compliance. The reality is that they are so permissive that Dutra is never in violation. The residents have never agreed that these conditions are appropriate, but Dutra wants them to be made permanent since they are so lax.

Many residents are also very disappointed with the City of San Rafael and the City Council. In a sense, they have abdicated any engagement in the issue because the Quarry itself is outside the City Limits and beyond their sphere. Residents feel there has been a complete lack of moral or resource support by the City. In the current City Council election campaign, several challengers in the race have attempted to be helpful and lend their moral support and make it a campaign issue.

But where is the current City Council regarding Quarry and the complaints of the nearby residents. This actually demonstrates why the public sector is so inefficient at times. Rather than having the City and County work together to create potential synergies and solutions to tightly manage this rock operation, the City has been risk adverse and refrained from making any risky statements or actions and remains wedged in its own myopic silo. As a result, residents are furious with City leaders and feel further changes must happen on the City Council this fall on Election Day in November.

While some would say the San Pedro Coalition, the organized group working to mitigate these many impacts on residents, want to see the Quarry closed for good. The fact is this is not true! People in San Rafael realized that the Quarry plays a vital link in the providing materials needed by the construction industry. What is missing is some real Corporate Social Responsibility by Dutra. What may also be missing is the political will to undo many past sins, violations, arrogance by the Dutra Group.

Later in October, the Quarry will need to submit a reclamation plan that will detail what the might be done with Quarry site once the site has yielded all of rock and material that resides there and they close down operations. That will involve a new set of hearings and a new set of issues/decisions by the Board of Supervisors. The County has already completed the Final EIR on the Quarry's Amended Reclamation Plan (ARP). It calls for blasting out the side of the pit and creating

a marina. However, the Draft EIR found significant environmental impacts that could not be mitigated and now the quarry has a come up with a plan they assert can provide circulation of the water. However, this would need to be assured *in perpetuity*.

The hearing on the Reclamation plan is on October 27; the decision on the ARP will be made the same day. The permits for this project will most likely take a decade of review: neither BCDC nor the Water Board have weighed in on this plan and, if they don't approve it, the permits cannot be granted. If not granted, then how can this land be reclaimed? The environmental impacts and costs to reclaim would likely make it impossible to fill the pit.

Some have framed this as an East San Rafael issue only, a Pt San Pedro issue only, and because of, it has been easier for the SR City Council to bow out of the fray. If this is enlarged to an issue that ALL SR residents should be interested in, this issues and the outcomes might be tougher for the Council to sit on the sidelines. We hope you follow this issue with interest.

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