

The Berkshire Eagle

By Derek Gentile

Zoning Board limits quarry operation

WEST STOCKBRIDGE— The town's Zoning Board of Appeals has upheld a cease-and-desist order leveled against John S. Lane Inc. of Great Barrington Road.

The ruling means the gravel quarrying business is not allowed to blast or excavate specific areas near the company's northern and eastern borders.

"The building inspector issued a very specific cease-and-desist that outlines where he has to stop blasting and quarrying," said ZBA chairman Randall Thunfors. "We agreed with that decision."

The quarry has been in business in various incarnations for more than a century. Owner John Lane could not be reached for comment last night, but he has contended that the quarrying and digging his company is doing on his property is a natural extension of the operation.

However, a number of residents near the quarry say that in recent years the blasting and excavating have been coming closer to the more heavily populated neighborhoods that ring the business.

"To their credit, my clients have emphasized that they don't want to shut the business down," said attorney Alexandra H. Glover, who represented several neighbors.

But, said Glover, the dust clouds generated by the most recent blasting "were striking. Parents were literally bringing their children indoors."

The issue came to light several months ago when a group of neighbors approached the Selectman to complain.

Thunfors said last night that the ZBA listened to testimony during three separate meetings from various sources before rendering their final decision.

"We had three weeks of listening to neighbors tell us about blasting, and rocks thrown onto their property, as well as dust clouds on their lawns," said Thunfors.

The decision does not shut the quarry down, but limits the areas of operation. If the business wishes to expand into those areas, it will have to apply for a special permit.

Lane can appeal the decision to Superior Court within 20 days. Thunfors said the board has not heard officially that there will be an appeal, but that Lane has indicated he will do so.

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