

Quarry: supervisors pass

Brian Wilkinson

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Operations expected to begin next spring

The open-pit rock quarry proposed on 121 acres near the intersection of Daulton Road (406) and Road 209 was given the green light by the Madera County Board of Supervisors Tuesday.

Developer Jack Baker, owner of Jackson Enterprises of Redding, said Tuesday was his fifth appearance before the board since 2003 and that he has spent a lot of time and money to assure the project is done correctly.

"We have worked hard to address the issues that have been brought up including a year-long water study and test pumping," Baker said. "Surrounding wells were monitored during that testing and it was concluded that the quarry operation should cause no adverse affects on those wells."

Baker has estimated the quarry operation will use 55 acre feet, or 18 million gallons of water a year.

Madera Quarry, Inc. plans to process and transport of a maximum of 900,000 tons of aggregate material annually for up to 50 years.

Baker's proposal estimates 300 truckloads of material per day in and out of the facility on an average workday and 680 loads per day during a maximum workday. The quarry will employ 15 to 25 people and night shifts could be worked as needed according to Baker.

Neighbor Jay Dibble is adverse to the proposal due to it's size and asked the board to consider the property rights of the surrounding neighbors and deny the project.

After the hearing, Baker said required improvements to Road 209, estimated at several million dollars at his expense, will start in the fall and the quarry will begin operation by next spring. "We hope to start road improvements as soon as we renew our encroachment permits from Caltrans."

Surrounding neighbors have voiced opposition to the quarry that has been going through the approval process for more than seven years.

After the Madera County Planning Commission gave an endorsement of the project on March 16, supervisors heard objections to the proposal during a two hour hearing on April 13 and scheduled Tuesday's hearing to receive additional information about the project.

An attorney for surrounding neighbors, Tamara Galanter, said at the earlier hearing there were flaws in the Environmental Impact Report, the project was contrary to the county general plan and the proposed water monitoring plan is inadequate.

Supervisor Vern Moss made the motion to approve the project and the motion passed 4-0. District 1 Supervisor Frank Bigelow excused himself from Tuesday's hearing due to ownership of nearby property that will, along with a third property, be considered by the county for rock quarries.

Tuesday's board approvals included rezoning a portion of the property, mining permit, conditional use permit and certification of the revised Environmental Impact Report.

The two additional quarries are being planned in the area by Granite Construction and Vulcan Materials. Granite has a 323 acre site west of Roads 208 and 209 and Vulcan has a 356 acre site on the south-west corner of Highways 41 and 145.

Granite plans to process 3 million tons of rock annually at their proposed Hildreth Creek Quarry and Vulcan plans to process 2.5 million tons annually at their proposed Austin Quarry.