

A 'new positive era' for San Rafael quarry

Marin County Supervisor Susan Adams, Marin Independent Journal, 10-8-10

We are beginning a new positive era for mining operations in Marin.

After many years of battling on a number of fronts between the Dutra San Rafael Rock Quarry and its Point San Pedro neighbors and after both sides agreed to the conditions, the Amended Reclamation Plan and Operating Permit were approved by our board unanimously on Sept. 28.

For the past eight years as the District 1 supervisor, I have been working with the residents and the Dutra family to identify, study, negotiate and reduce the impacts of a nonconforming heavy industrial mining operation on the surrounding residential community.

The Dutrass were required by the courts to undergo an administrative process for the reclamation plan, but they also agreed to open up an old and outdated permit to bring it into modern compliance.

Since 2004, interim conditions were instituted and adhered to as the process unfolded. The discussions were not always easy, but they were productive and led to some important mitigations being implemented even before the final permit was approved on Sept. 28.

The courts stated that the mining operators had a vested right to continue mining in the pit for a mineral of statewide importance. And although many on both sides may have had doubts about the final outcome, we all worked together to reach consensus on a very difficult land use issue and bring it over the finish line.

The Sept. 28 hearing demonstrated that both the Coalition and the Dutra family acknowledged the great many improvements have been made and that there are more to come, mitigating many of the noise, dust and air quality issues using best practices.

There are many people to thank, including Farhad Mansourian, director of public works and Eric Steger, principal civil engineer, from whom I felt unwavering support throughout the permitting process.

Tim Haddad and Rachael Warner guided us through the complex environmental review process. Tom Lyons provided legal counsel.

My fellow board members and Steve Kinsey, in particular, participated in the final push with the permit.

My aides contributed to the effort throughout the years.

The community should be proud to have been represented so well by the leadership provided by Denise Lucy, Bonnie Marmor and David Crutcher.

And last, but not least, the Dutrass worked hard to find areas where practices could be initiated, methods could be altered, capital investment could be made to mitigate against the mining impacts experienced by the surrounding community.

Aimi Dutra, in particular, stuck with it even in the final hours and refused to give up.

We have come a long way together, producing a result that I believe almost everyone feels is fair in the end. There is a renewed sense of community.

There is an understanding that working together we can achieve much greater success than working against one another.

I wish to acknowledge and express my gratitude for the dedication and commitment from the members of the community who expressed different views (in support and in opposition) and who contributed to the result in so many different and important ways, including coming out to the hearings, participating in the meetings and providing public testimony.

Your voices were heard and we all did the best we could to reach a positive outcome on the issues brought forward.

It took the village to make it happen.