

Metamora

COMMUNITY VIEW

June 16, 2016

Published By: **VIEW** Newspaper Group

Effort to halt new gravel mines rolls on



Photo by Jeff Hogan

Metamora Township officials Monday evening voted to deny a request by the Levy Company to rescind the township's moratorium on gravel mine applications. The company seeks to mine sand and gravel from a 500-acre parcel on the D-bar-A Boy Scout Ranch. Public entrance to the camp is off Sutton Road, about one-and-a-half miles east of Metamora Road. Above, a gravel driver waits to make a left-hand turn off Sutton onto northbound Metamora Road after leaving with a load from the Forrest Aggregates yard.

Metamora Township officials deny Levy bid to rescind gravel mine application moratorium

By JEFF HOGAN

810-452-2640 • jhogan@mihomepaper.com

METAMORA TWP. — The Metamora Township Board is likely to adopt new ordinance amendments at its July meeting in a continued effort to stave off an application to mine gravel from a portion of the D-bar-A Boy Scout Ranch.

The township board on Monday agreed to introduce ordinance amendments drafted at the request of its plan-

ning commission designed to make it more arduous for the Levy Company and future applicants to mine gravel and sand from within the township and put hundreds of gravel haulers on local roads. Township residents may drop by the township hall to get a copy of the proposed changes for their review prior to the board's July 11 meeting.

The board on Monday, at the recommendation of its legal counsel consisting of Mike Nolan and Gerald Fisher, also unanimously rejected a motion by the

Levy Company to rescind its original six-month moratorium established on Dec. 15, 2015.

Monday's action by the Metamora Township officials assures the battle to block the Levy Company from gravel mining at D-bar-A will go well into the summer. Eventually the township will have to consider the gravel mine application, but that may not happen for another couple months at the earliest, at which time there will be public hearings at future meetings.

Meanwhile Levy's contingent of attorneys, public relations and other corporate officials are in attendance at every township and planning commission meeting to keep abreast of their two-stalled gravel mine application. On Monday, company representatives didn't contest the board's actions or make any public comment though they've stated in recent past their continued objection to the township's attempt to block their

GRAVEL on page 7

GRAVEL from page 1

application by tossing obstacles in the path of their intention to extract gravel necessary for road and new building construction in southeast Michigan they contend is legal under state law.

Township officials are attempting to backfill their zoning ordinances to make it more difficult for gravel and paving companies they argue the state law was written to benefit over the interests and objections of local municipalities.

The township board Monday introduced a two-part amendment to its zoning ordinance that creates a new zoning classification known as a Transitory Extraction Planned Unit Development.

In Levy's application to the township, it sought a rezoning change for the property it seeks to mine from recreation to agriculture that does allow gravel mining. A planned unit development (or PUD) allows for mixed uses on a single parcel. In Levy's case, the company would also have to apply for a special land use permit to mine gravel from the Metamora Township property.

Under the new zoning amendment, the Boy Scouts of America or its corporate applicant, Levy, would have to apply for a rezoning request in which it would have to demonstrate a need for the gravel from that particular site.

Under Michigan's gravel statute, it states that townships cannot prevent gravel mining unless the applicant can demonstrate there would be "no very serious consequences" to the community as a result of their operations. Township officials, business owners and residents have been complaining for months should large-scale gravel mining

At right is a sign to the D-bar-A Boy Scout Ranch off Sutton Road in Metamora Township where the Levy Company seeks to mine sand and gravel from a portion of the sprawling property. The company proposes to have a truck entrance off the property onto Dryden Road that would bring upwards of 100 gravel trains per day through the villages of Metamora and Dryden.



Photo by Jeff Hogan

be allowed at D-bar-A the subsequent heavy truck traffic put onto Dryden Road would ruin the peace and charm of Metamora and drive down property values along the truck route.

The township's proposed new ordinance language states whether there are "very serious consequences" is a question ambiguous on its face, and as a result requires additional standards and must consider local conditions and circumstances.

Additional ordinance amendments would require the Levy Company and future applicants to pay a fee to cover

the township's costs and expenses incurred in the review and evaluation of the new application.

The township board meets the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at the township hall, 730 W. Dryden Rd.

Metamora COMMUNITY VIEW

June 16, 2016

Published By: **VIEW** Newspaper Group