



EXPERT INTERVIEW

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP

12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

10:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Richard L. Davis, Township Supervisor
Sean R. Miller, Township Clerk
Sarah Richmond, Parks and Recreation Director

RESIDENTS PRESENT: Amanda Gruzin
Kara Okonewski
Chris Todd

OTHERS PRESENT: Dave Van Haaren, Triterra Environmental, Director
Meredeth Crane, Triterra Environmental, Natural Resources Division
Gerald Fisher, Township Special Counsel
Julia Upfal, Giffels Webster, Township Planning Consultant
Joelle Talerico, Clerk's Assistant/Recording Secretary

Supervisor Davis led this meeting by summarizing the interview process, stating that Ms. Upfal will provide an overview, followed by questions from him and Clerk Miller, legal questions from Special Counsel Fisher, a natural features overview and questions from Director Richmond, and the resident committee will have a chance to ask questions also. The end work product will be given to the Planning Commission for them to be able to review clear and specific data for approval or denial of the Levy mine application.

Ms. Upfal began her overview by stating that part of the proposed gravel mine property is in the Natural Resource Overlay District, therefore the applicant will need to survey and refine those boundaries based on the location of the natural resources. The original boundaries provided were based on the 2000 MNFI and will need to be updated based on today's wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat, etc. Triterra's task will be to review what the applicant presents. In addition, the applicant provided a natural resource study that reviews the different wetland and soil conditions and endangered species that are impacted by the development. There are recommendations in the study, and an expert needs to review these recommendations and determine if there are legitimate protections for the wildlife that would be impacted and the effects of the changes to the natural resources' boundary.

Dave Van Haaren introduced himself and stated that Triterra is a Michigan based company established in 2008. Their main headquarters is in Lansing with various offices in central Michigan. They service sectors relating to brownfield development, environmental due diligence, investigation and remediation, industrial hygiene, and natural resources. He has 30 years of experience in environmental consulting by starting out his career in environmental due diligence which evolved into grant projects and with a current focus on brownfield development.

Meredeth Crane introduced herself stating that her focus is natural resources with a primary focus on wetland delineation, wetland permitting, threatened and endangered species, water quality and stormwater concerns, and compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), which covers a whole suite of environmental regulations. They are a pre-approved NEPA consultant for MISHDA and on their group-B list. They also handle environmental compliance for the MEDC.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that they welcome this process as they want to ensure they are the right fit for the township as well. They are going to look at the facts, look at policies, and see where they can best fit in.

Supervisor Davis asked if they have ever done work or been affiliated with the Edward C. Levy Corporation or Burroughs Mining.

Mr. Van Haaren stated no, as an individual nor as a company.

Supervisor Davis asked if they had been involved in any process where Levy was on the other side.

Mr. Van Haaren stated no.

Supervisor Davis asked how familiar they are with the unique environment in Springfield Township.

Ms. Crane stated that she doesn't have on-site knowledge of Springfield Township. Her group works within various natural communities and has more of Michigan's general natural community-based knowledge.

Supervisor Davis asked if she could still speak of the natural features in this community.

Ms. Crane stated yes, they are all within the MNFI natural community types which includes Prairie Fens. She knows that Springfield has a lot of unique features. She stated that one of the services they do provide, for example, when they are doing a wetland delineation, is a comparison to the MNFI to the township's natural community and map out the property for what each of those communities are and their basic boundaries.

Supervisor Davis stated that one of the concerns is that Springfield Township has a superfund site that has been tested for years. They are concerned about the proximity of the superfund site to the proposed gravel mining location. He asked if they could speak about any environmental impacts that a gravel mine would have on the superfund site.

Clerk Miller added that the superfund site sits approximately one mile southeast of the proposed mining site. From his understanding of reviewing EPA data, the water flows in a northwesterly direction from the superfund site to the proposed mine site.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that they could do a review of the superfund site to analyze groundwater contamination.

Clerk Miller added that the superfund site is historical, and it was originally thought it could be cleaned up within a short period of time but has now been going on for 50 years. He is concerned about any ground disturbance and the impact it would have on the aquifer.

Mr. Van Haaren stated this would be analyzed in a hydrology study but noted that they could be a resource to use when the township is working with a hydrologist from an environmental perspective. Ensuring that the mining won't exacerbate the conditions of the superfund site will be critical. How the mine is managed and how things are stored is important to note. This would also include excavations and mining and how this will affect ground water flow.

Special Counsel Fisher noted this mine will be dredging.

Ms. Crane stated this will probably show up in surface water, as Michigan has a lot of shallow ground water, so as they are excavating, they will create surface water of small lakes. This could be concerning in regard to contamination. She stated that having no knowledge of the elevation of the contamination she can make an inference that if the contamination is shallow then surface water will become contaminated.

Supervisor Davis asked if they could review the information that the township has regarding the superfund site and confirm validity of the information. He also asked if they looked at the hydrology report that the township will be receiving, could they connect the dots to the impact of the environment.

Mr. Van Haaren stated yes. He also suggested that the applicant construct an environmental management plan, which will include how they will implement and construct the mine and what kind of environmental patrols they will have in place to prevent any impacts.

Supervisor Davis asked Ms. Upfal if she could review what's missing in these reports, beyond what was already identified.

Ms. Upfal stated that she would recommend the experts to provide recommended revisions, and she could compare it to the township's zoning ordinance, that way they could work together to ensure they are giving the right feedback, but noted that their expertise is needed because it is beyond her scope.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that they want to respect the hydrologist and stay in their lane, but they are willing to be a resource. He asked if the proposed mine site has had an environmental investigation and if it is a clean site.

Supervisor Davis stated that Levy began testing the site in the 1970's and purchased the property in the 80's. They have done evaluation of the property both in the valuation of the minerals and have installed drop wells to evaluate the aquifers. In their application they have a lot of information about what they

have done. At this point, the township has an idea of what is missing and is trying to put the dots together.

Supervisor Davis asked if the experts could speak on the topic of dust that would be generated from the proposed mine.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that Triterra has an industrial hygiene group, which is a group that oversees asbestos abatement and demolition projects. As part of a health and safety plan, they can put together measures to control and mitigate dust and if needed, they can monitor air quality with their equipment, which can give real-time data. He stated that he can bring more information if needed.

Special Counsel Fisher asked if these air monitors would work with silica dust.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that he believes so but can verify.

Supervisor Davis asked if prudent, could they monitor existing mines and what kind of cost would be incorporated if they did this.

Mr. Van Haaren stated this could be done and he could come up with a cost for this service.

Clerk Miller agreed that this could be a critical service, because right now the township is in the preliminary review stage. He would rather have the information about how other mines are operated to better inform them of their decision.

Supervisor Davis stated if there is already vetted data regarding air quality of surrounding mines, could this data be analyzed by them and would they know if it was unbiased data.

Mr. Van Haaren stated if there are established criteria for mining then this could be compared to data that is already out there.

Ms. Crane stated that getting access to current operations could be very difficult. DNR does a lot of permitting with mining sites and she stated she could reach out to her contact to find out what the best managing practices are.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that what may come into play when talking about air particulates and dust is for the township to hire a certified industrial hygienist. Triterra has an industrial hygienist group, but none that are nationally certified.

Supervisor Davis stated that since there is overlap in work from the experts that the township is working with, from an environmental standpoint, would they be able to look at the work from these various experts to see if there is missing data regarding impact to the environment.

Mr. Van Haaren stated yes.

Special Counsel Fisher noted that the dust issue wouldn't necessarily just be dust on-site. It would include impacts of dust around the site and beyond.

Supervisor Davis noted this would include gravel trucks on the road and dust blowing from the site.

Mr. Van Haaren stated this would fall into the work of a certified industrial hygienist.

Supervisor Davis stated that the township wouldn't be as interested in modeling of this data, they are looking for real case scenarios, if there are any out there.

Clerk Miller asked Mr. Van Haaren if they do any work with noise and vibration.

Ms. Crane stated that they don't currently do any noise studies. The closest to noise studies that they get are for NEPA compliance for residential and estimates for communal noise for airports and roadway traffic. Measuring noise is not currently in their expertise realm.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that he will clarify whether noise issues would fall under the expertise of a CIH.

Special Counsel Fisher asked if the water quality they would be working with is surface water or ground water.

Ms. Crane stated ground water, surface water, and storm water. They don't get into aquifers because they don't have the drilling capabilities. This would be in a hydrologist's scope of work.

Special Counsel Fisher asked if they could potentially study the aquifer.

Ms. Crane stated if there was existing data, she could make inferences.

Mr. Van Haaren noted that they do have a hydrogeologist on staff that could review data.

Supervisor Davis asked if they could review a hydrology study and determine if it would impact the temperature of surrounding water or cause any environmental changes to surrounding water.

Mr. Van Haaren stated this would fall under the scope of a hydrologist.

Supervisor Davis rephrased his question. He asked if a hydrologist concluded that the mining activities would have an impact on ground water, would they then be able to review studies that Michigan State has done regarding Springfield's prairie fens, and make a correlation between a change of temperature of the water when it reaches the fens and the impact that it could potentially have on that environment.

Director Richmond stated that Springfield has the long lake fen complex and has worked continually with MNFI, MSU, CMU, DNR, and US Fish and Wildlife on doing reports with this complex. Because this is such a rare ecosystem, they have concerns about the impact the mine will have. Any changes to the water flowing into the fen could impact the species and their critical habitat. She asked if they could make inferences and review data that could show potential impacts.

Ms. Crane stated that this would not be in her immediate capabilities. She stated that she could dig into this topic and reach out to her contacts in the various departments that she works with and fan out from there.

Supervisor Davis stated they are looking for her expertise and because of the area that she works in, her ability to reach out to other experts.

Ms. Crane stated that she has a good network for finding solutions to problems that she doesn't have specific knowledge of. This is something she would be willing to dig in to.

Director Richmond stated that because Springfield already has a lot of reporting that has been done, she asked Ms. Crane if she could review these reports and reach out to other experts for them to review also.

Ms. Crane stated absolutely. She has never gotten the opportunity to do this before, and she is absolutely willing to do this.

Clerk Miller asked Ms. Crane if she has any experience with gravel mines and their effect on ground water-fed prairie fens.

Ms. Crane stated she does not.

Director Richmond asked if they have worked with prairie fens at all, in the state of Michigan.

Ms. Crane stated that she has delineated them but has not done anything regarding restoration or anything in that scope of work. She is aware of the importance of them as a rare and in peril ecosystem.

Director Richmond noted that Springfield Township has the number one prairie fen in the state of Michigan, and they are very protective of it and the species that it has. She asked Ms. Crane who she works with when working with MNFI.

Ms. Crane stated that she just did a herpetology study, working with Yu Man Lee, who is a conservation scientist at MSU. They also partnered with MNFI to conduct a bat survey. She works with Jenny Wong and Carrie Tansy from US Fish and Wildlife and Mike Sanders from MNFI. Triterra doesn't do any specific species surveys but will farm these surveys out to MNFI.

Supervisor Davis asked Ms. Crane if she would be willing to consult with alternative people about the areas that she has no experience in.

Ms. Crane said absolutely.

Ms. Upfal stated at Giffels Webster, there are landscape architects who have helped with the application review, and while there are township ordinances for landscaping, there are some questions regarding tree replacement, as the applicant will be taking out tree canopy for the proposed mine.

Ms. Crane asked how much of the tree canopy they are removing and asked if they are removing any on the west side of the property.

Ms. Upfal stated the west side is protected and they will not be removing that, but there will still be a lot of tree removal from the mine area itself.

Ms. Crane stated if they are removing 10 or more acres, then a survey must be done for the Northern Long Ear and Indiana Bat species. This would also be the case if a connected habitat is broken up. This rule covers the whole state of Michigan, but in certain areas where bat species are less prominent, there is only a limit on when trees can be taken down during the year.

Ms. Upfal stated that this property wouldn't be considered as woodland, but there are trees throughout the property that will be removed. She thinks it would be helpful for Ms. Crane and the landscape architect at Giffels Webster to come together and discuss terms of replacement as the applicant noted only two species of trees on their landscape plans. She feels any tips would be helpful and noted it would not only be for existing conditions but also future conditions with what they are proposing to plant on the site. She also stated that overburden soil storage is a big issue when it comes to mining operations and she would like to have extra opinions on Giffels Webster's recommendations for this.

Ms. Crane asked if the township has a tree species ordinance.

Ms. Upfal stated there is a landscape ordinance that has recommended species for deciduous and evergreen trees, as well as prohibited species.

Special Counsel Fisher asked Ms. Crane, in her experience with wetland delineation, does she look at any potential sub-surface connections.

Ms. Crane stated yes, she must do this but it's hard to prove it. Most of the time they are looking for surface level connections. If there's reason to believe there is a connection, then she would lean towards a more conservative Memorandum for the Record report. MR reports formally delineate wetlands and make the determination if they should be regulated. Her group is not conducting borings deep enough that it would be running into the water table, so they are limited and must make inferences. If historical records show patterns of saturation that show connection, or if there is an upland swale, or if the topography looks like there could be a connection, she will make the instance that they are regulated based off hydrological connection. She stated that she always recommends

getting a level 3 wetland identification program review from EGLE to verify boundaries and review of her determination. She noted that EGLE won't do a wetland delineation over 5 acres, but they will do thousands of acres of review of someone else's wetland delineation. They will agree or disagree with boundaries that she has identified, and they will agree or disagree if a certain wetland is regulated under the state of Michigan. They will then write a report, and this report will be good for 3 years for the determination of that specific wetland.

Special Counsel Fisher stated this would be better for the applicant also to answer those questions.

Ms. Crane stated she would push to have the applicant do that.

Ms. Upfal stated that if the applicant's current wetland delineation is done by one of the qualified wetland consultants on the list from EGLE, does this mean that it is automatically approved by Michigan's Wetland Identification Program (WIP).

Ms. Crane stated there is no requirement for anyone to go to EGLE and do this, but it is a good idea as it is the end all for regulated versus not regulated wetlands by the state.

Ms. Upfal noted that she had previously called EGLE and was told this would be a 6-month process.

Ms. Crane stated it is not an easy process, as there is only one person that will conduct these reviews. Typically, she submits her application at the end of the year, and she will usually get these reviews at the beginning of the year (May 1st).

Director Richmond asked Ms. Crane if she could go through her method and process and who she typically reaches out to.

Ms. Crane stated that it depends on what her scope of work is. Typically, when she is doing a wetland delineation, specifically for a fen, she is looking at potential threatened/endangered species, cross referencing with state threatened/endangered species lists, and recommending additional investigations if a wetland is going to be impacted. She stated that she is generally looking at this from the standpoint of working with an applicant who owns the property and wants to do something with the property.

Residents' questions:

Kara Okonewski asked for clarification in that they don't do work in the sense of secondary in-direct impacts.

Ms. Crane stated this is typically not something people ask for. They generally work with commercial or landowner properties and help guide them through environmental laws. She stated if the township wants to know secondary impacts this would be a scope she is willing to work towards.

Ms. Okonewski asked if she had worked with someone previously who was not the property owner or a government body looking for data.

Ms. Crane stated that NEPAs essentially do this, but on a broad scale. She stated that generally her projects don't have issues and are very limited as far as their impacts or they are mitigated. She stated that this project sounds much bigger. She stated this is exciting to her.

Director Richmond asked Ms. Crane if she has ever recommended to an applicant "don't do this because..." does she give a reason as to why this could be a potential issue.

Ms. Crane stated she would note the environmental laws to the applicant as to the why.

Director Richmond asked if she conducted a wetland delineation of a smaller wetland, would she be able to say, "if A happens, then this will cause B, C, and D to happen".

Ms. Crane stated this is usually not in her scope of work.

Supervisor Davis asked if she knows someone who could do this.

Ms. Crane stated that this would end up becoming a team of people.

Director Richmond asked if she would feel comfortable gathering that team to review data.

Ms. Crane stated she could pull people together, but she questioned how a secondary impact could be made without a major number of studies being done. She could make inferences.

Ms. Okonewski asked if she would be able to scale these potential impacts by risk level.

Special Counsel Fisher clarified to Ms. Crane that the task for this project is whether this mining will result in a very serious consequence to the community. He stated that she could think about risk in that context.

Ms. Crane stated that she could give a level of risk, but her concern right now is that she doesn't know the details of the applicant's site plan.

Supervisor Davis stated this will be reviewed at a future time. He wants to ensure that she has the expertise to evaluate the data that has been given and the expertise to guide the township on what needs to happen. Or be able to make recommendations of an expert that could be helpful to the township.

Ms. Crane stated that she has an excellent partnership with EGLE, and she is always open to working with others, as long as the township is open to her contacting various people. Cost would be the limiting factor.

Supervisor Davis stated the township is looking for what is missing and what they should be looking at. This would include her recommendations as to who the township should contact if something is not in her scope of work.

Ms. Upfal noted that the very serious consequence mentioned by Special Counsel Fisher is statutory law from the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. For mines, the Planning Commission's number one task is to determine if there are or are not very serious consequences associated with this mine. The township needs her to say that they either need more information, or she thinks there are/are not very serious consequences from the information that the applicant has provided in their application.

Supervisor Davis clarified that they need this information to be proven.

Ms. Crane stated that environmental compliance is what she does. She can look at the site plan and make determinations about what needs to be done.

Ms. Upfal noted that she is unsure if the applicant has done environmental studies of the property but stated that they do have monitoring wells to evaluate the presence of the natural resources.

Kara Okonewski asked how far out in terms of boundaries Triterra typically goes in a project or do they work strictly within the confines of a parcel.

Mr. Van Haaren stated that this project sounds unique, but typically they are working with property owners or some type of real estate transaction. On isolated sites, they must sometimes go off-site to install wells and delineate and are familiar with accessing sites where permission is granted by the property owner.

Kara Okonewski noted that this will be important regarding the superfund sites. She continued by saying with dust, there is a challenge with mining because it's not considered industrial, it's agricultural, which has its own challenges. She wants to ensure if they are reviewing existing studies that they keep the comparisons consistent. She asked if they have any experience with arsenic, sulfates, or nitrates.

Mr. Van Haaren stated they are constantly sampling and testing for arsenic in soil and ground water. Sampling for sulfates and nitrates would involve their investigation remediation group.

Amanda Gruzin noted that she loves the idea of conducting air monitoring and air quality at a different mining site. She asked if MNFI would do a flora and fauna study for the township.

Ms. Crane stated yes.

Ms. Gruzin stated that she also likes the idea of bringing in a Certified Industrial Hygienist.

Mr. Van Haaren noted it's not someone that will be easy to obtain, but for this project he recommends it.

Chris Todd thanked Mr. Van Haaren and Ms. Crane for their work.

Supervisor Davis thanked them for coming and asked that they prepare a cost proposal for review.

Ms. Crane asked if the mining company has any other mines in the area and if there are any issues with those mines.

Supervisor Davis stated yes and noted that he has been told there aren't any issues, but he has concerns about loose regulations. When the mine first started, there were different zoning and mining regulations and ordinances. He is working on these issues.

Ms. Crane asked if the mining company would show good faith to the township and let them conduct on-site dust monitoring and testing.

Supervisor Davis stated that this has been discussed.

Ms. Okonewski asked Ms. Crane and Mr. Van Haaren if they had ever been an expert witness in litigation.

Both answered no.

Interview with Triterra concluded at 11:16 AM.

Supervisor Davis stated that part of this process includes the Township Board granting authority to the supervisor, Special Counsel Fisher, and Attorney Need to interview candidates. He asked Special Counsel Fisher and Clerk Miller for their thoughts on Triterra.

Special Counsel Fisher stated that he thinks they would be good team players. He noted that they would have to carve out the specific areas that Triterra would be involved in, as would be the case for many other expert candidates.

Clerk Miller agreed and stated that they seem to have a good network of resources.

Supervisor Davis asked if they feel comfortable with Triterra's level of services and asked Special Counsel Fisher if he feels confident that they would provide the level of expertise that he needs.

Special Counsel Fisher stated that they have expertise in a few areas, and he is very confident in the areas of expertise that they do have. The areas that they aren't familiar with, such as fens, they would have to partner with someone else, therefore the township would be receiving someone else's work.

Clerk Miller added that the township will be hard pressed to find anyone that has true on-point relevant experience that hasn't also worked with Levy or another mine company. This will be the biggest hurdle that the township will encounter in their search for candidates.

Supervisor Davis asked if they would be comfortable hiring Triterra.

Special Counsel Fisher stated he would like to review their proposal of work.

Clerk Miller stated he would like to know more about the contacts they have that would assist with the prairie fen and watershed.

Supervisor Davis agreed that it will need to be defined as to what work Triterra will be doing for the township and what contacts they will be working with.

Special Counsel Fisher stated that it's important to note that Ms. Crane has a good relationship with EGLE, which not everyone has.

Ms. Upfal noted that in her review of Levy's application, she feels Triterra has the capability to review what Levy has submitted. Levy has not done initial investigation, such as in-direct or secondary impact, which is the additional information that the township is seeking. They have not provided these studies to the township for review; therefore, it is hard to ask candidates to review data that is unknown to the township. The first step would be to ask Levy to provide these studies.

Supervisor Davis stated that it was discussed with Special Counsel Fisher and Attorney Need on what the township is legally able to compel Levy to provide versus negotiations items. He asked the resident committee if they noticed anything that isn't heading in the right direction or anything that could have been done differently in the interview process.

All stated no. They thanked Supervisor Davis for letting them be a part of this process.

Supervisor Davis noted that Levy just dropped off the escrow money.

Next study review: Traffic Study, October 16th @ 12:00 PM

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 AM.