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Underground mine? CABOOM opposed

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ANDERSON TWP. – Township zoning officials want more information from Martin Marietta Materials Inc. before deciding whether to allow the company to build an underground mining operation at Broadwell and Round Bottom roads.

The Anderson Township Board of Zoning Appeals asked the company on Thursday to provide more detailed plans and to answer the many questions asked by the board, township zoning staff and residents.

Many questions pertained to underground blasting, the storage of explosives on the site, and traffic, health and environmental issues.

The controversial proposal drew about 200 people to the board's meeting at the Anderson Center.

Some opponents of the mining operation wore stickers on their shirts and blouses with the word "Blasting" inside a circle with a line drawn through it.

The board will take up the issue again at its Oct. 2 meeting, which will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Anderson Center.

Resident Cathy Burger presented the zoning appeals board with petitions signed by 400 people against the proposed mining operation.

"This is a project you should not approve," Tim Mara, an attorney representing opponents of the mining project, told the board. "It would have a negative effect on public health and safety."

The opponents have formed a group called CABOOM (Citizens Against Blasting On Our Miami).

They have concerns about the project's possible impact on traffic, noise, air, water, health and safety and the Little Miami River.

Martin Marietta Materials wants to build an underground limestone mining operation on a 480-acre site that would involve blasting 400 to 800 feet below ground.

The company applied for a conditional use permit and variances that would allow establishment of the deep-mining operation and the use and underground storage of explosives.

Steve Raffensperger, vice president and general manager of Martin Marietta Materials, said this type of operation is "very safe."

The company has 16 to 18 underground mining operations in the United States, including one in the Indianapolis area.

Raffensperger said no blasting would be used to dig the two tunnels that would run 800 feet deep. The mining would take place between 400 and 800 feet below ground.

Dravo Basic Materials had previously mined the surface of the site.

Terrace Park Mayor Jay Gohman said he's concerned that the limestone dust in the air might cause respiratory problems and cancer.

Terrace Park is across the Little Miami River from the proposed site.

"I'm really worried about the dust and how it's going to affect my neighbors and area residents," Gohman said.

Jeffrey Neeley said the increased traffic, noise and dust from the mining operation would ruin the value of the two nearby houses he rents to families.

"Who's going to want to rent my property?" he asked.

Because of time concerns, the zoning appeals board cut off residents' comments after about two hours.

Residents with concerns not discussed at Thursday's meeting will have the opportunity to speak at the Oct. 2 meeting.