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Communities band together to fight mine

By Lisa Wakeland

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Local communities have spent close to \$300,000 of taxpayers' money to keep an underground limestone mine out of Anderson Township.

Opponents have argued that the Martin Marietta proposal, on 480 acres of land near the intersection of Round Bottom and Broadwell roads, will have a detrimental effect on the Little Miami River Valley.

The case has been before the Anderson Township Board of Zoning Appeals since August 2008 and has generated thousands of pages of testimony.

Newtown was one of the first neighboring communities to oppose the Martin Marietta proposal and has spent \$30,937 for village solicitor Doug Miller's work on the case.

The village was primarily concerned with increased truck traffic and Newtown Mayor Curt Cosby said Miller has recently only attended meetings as necessary.

Cosby said Miller is in constant communications with the other attorneys involved in the case so that he's not charging the village for work he doesn't need to perform.

"He doesn't duplicate what the others are doing there," he said.

As for the likelihood of either side appealing whatever decision Anderson Township makes, Cosby said it will be up to the entire Newtown Village Council, which recently swore in two new members, to decide if the village continues to fight beyond the impending January decision.

Other communities that have spent taxpayers' money opposing the mine include Indian Hill, which has spent approximately \$130,000 on legal fees in the last two years, and Terrace park, which has spent \$127,121 for village solicitor Bob Malloy's work on the case.

Cathy Burger, an Anderson Township resident and chairwoman of the group opposed to the mine, Citizens Against Blasting on Our Miami (CABOOM), said the group has more than 2,000 members from multiple jurisdictions.

Burger said she is surprised at how much CABOOM has grown since its inception and has raised more than five figures in donations for mailings, signs and attorney's fees.

"I'm just happy that we had community and public support ... because we were able to give insight to the BZA that they wouldn't have received," she said.

Martin Marietta's attorney Dick Brahm could not be reached for comment.

- Reporter Rob Dowdy contributed to this story.

Additional Facts

What's next?

Closing arguments for the case are scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25, at the Anderson Center, 7850 Five Mile Road.

There will not be an opportunity for public comment.

Paul Drury, assistant director for Anderson Township's Development Services Department and liaison to the Board of Zoning Appeals, said discussions about the Martin Marietta case will likely follow closing arguments.

Drury said the board has tentatively scheduled further discussion, if needed, for Jan. 26-28.

It is unknown if the township Board of Zoning Appeals will conduct discussions in executive session or not, Drury said.