



November 10, 2025
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Tony Ward, *Town Manager*
Town of Casco Selectboard
635 Meadow Rd., Casco ME 04015

RE: Pre-Application Submission – Zoning Map & Text Amendment
P&K Sand & Gravel – Heath Quarry: 90 Indian Acres Road, Casco

Dear Mr. Ward & Members of the Selectboard,

On behalf of Cory Mitchell, President of P&K Sand & Gravel, Sebago Technics, Inc. is pleased to submit this letter and attached mapping exhibit for a Pre-Application consultation review with the Town of Casco's Selectboard. The intent for this submission is to provide the Town Selectboard an introduction to our proposed Zoning Map & Text Amendment application which will be submitted to the Town Planning Board for consideration.

This process will include the rezoning of properties to a Commercial Zoning District, along with a text amendment to Chapter 215 Zoning Ordinance to establish performance standards for mineral extraction and processing based activities. Please see the information contained herein which provides historical context, an explanation behind the zoning map amendment and zoning text amendment, benefits to the Town of Casco, potential concerns that the Board might encounter.

Historical Context:

P&K Sand & Gravel has been a successful local business, with Heath Quarry being a productive part of Casco's landscape since 1997. The quarry included in our project has operated since under successive contract zoning agreements for nearly three (3) decades. Throughout this time, P&K has cooperated with neighboring properties, and operated without significant controversy. Each renewal period has demonstrated P&K's commitment to staying responsible for quarry operations and maintaining neighborly behavior.

Because P&K is subject to a renewal period of the contract zone every decade, this presents the business with the issue of uncertainty in future operations, as it remains reliant on the prevailing political climate. This means that regardless of track record, a single election cycle could change and present potential challenges in renewal. Therefore, this proposed project aims to permanently rezone the property to the Commercial District to provide clarity, consistency, and certainty to P&K Sand & Gravel's future, as well as outlining a clear future with the Town of Casco. While the contract zoning mechanism has functioned adequately to date, there are several considerations that impact both the quarry's operations and the Town of Casco. Listed below are points for the Board to discuss:

1. Uncertainty in Long-Term Investments:

The 10-year renewal cycle is largely preventative from allowing P&K to make significant, long-term capital investments on the property. Back during the quarry's initial approval, it was estimated that, based on the subsurface conditions of the property and overall scale of the quarry, that it should be operational for a lifespan of approximately one hundred (100) years.

Modern-day equipment for processing facilities and environmental controls often have expected lifespans of twenty (20) to thirty (30) years, or more. No prudent business owner can justify such an investment when their operating authority may expire in only a decade. Given that the renewal can depend upon the political composition of future Town boards, it remains difficult to predict if their quarry operation will be renewed. This uncertainty effectively limits the current quarry operations from strategic growth and potential job creation.

2. Operational Limitations:

Under the current contract zoning agreement, the quarry is limited to mineral extraction and processing facilities. Undergoing a rezoning to the Commercial District would permit processing uses by Site Plan Review, and allow P&K to pursue logical business expansion operations. On-site processing activities would significantly improve operational efficiencies, whereas, if the contract zone was not renewed, vehicular truck traffic would significantly increase as material would need to be hauled to off-site processing facilities. This is another potential consequence under the current contract zoning restrictions.

3. Inconsistency in Zoning:

The way that the current contract zone is set up means that, if the contract zone were not renewed, the zoning would revert back to the underlying Residential District. This situation creates a significant disconnect between the property's actual use from its underlying zoning designation. This inconsistency could complicate future planning decisions and introduce legal vulnerabilities. Proper zoning should reflect the land's actual use, rather than perpetuating a mismatch that requires future corrections.

Proposed Zoning Map Amendment:

This permanent rezoning would place P&K's properties as shown on the attached mapping exhibit, as well as the two (2) adjacent Casco Timber Company properties, to Casco's Commercial District. We are currently in discussions with Casco Timber Company on receiving their consent to be included in this process, and are working to outline the benefits this offers to those properties. This establishes a zoning designation that accurately reflects the site's existing and established use, and is appropriate for its character. The properties subject to this rezoning are located along Route 11, offering an excellent destination for potential future growth. This also places the quarry on equal footing to other commercial operations in town, subject to the same regulations and oversight.

Proposed Zoning Text Amendment:

Concurrently with the map amendment, we propose to add specific performance standards to Casco's Land Use Ordinance to govern the site's extraction and processing activities. These standards would align with Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) statute, in that activities would need to meet noise limitations, dust control measures, hours of operation, setbacks, reclamation, and compliance with other local standards. It is important to note that P&K currently already meets and exceeds these State-mandated standards. This proposed effort does not seek to reduce regulatory oversight, but codifies existing responsible practices to protect the Town and neighboring properties.

Benefits to the Town of Casco:

The proposed rezoning and ordinance amendment efforts offer substantial benefits to the overall community. One of the primary benefits relates to economic stability, and in turn, growth. The quarry represents a significant property taxpayer, which provides stable revenue to support municipal

services, and reduces the burden on residential taxpayers. Currently, Heath Quarry consistently employs around twelve (12) to fourteen (14) individuals, and as a company, P&K employs about fifty (50) people. A permanent rezoning would provide certainty to this business, and allow for greater potential in job creation. These positions range from equipment operators to administrative staff, with potential for additional on-site processing to allow for additional opportunities for job creation. The quarry's current operations also support other local businesses, in that they purchase maintenance services, fuels, and equipment. Future growth of the quarry operations would continue to contribute to the local economy's multiplier effect. Furthermore, the quarry currently provides sand, gravel, and stone which is utilized for road maintenance, construction projects, and infrastructure development throughout the region. These essential materials remain in steady demand, to which a permanent rezoning would offer consistent, local, and quality products to the Town of Casco.

Another benefit to the Town is that P&K can justify long-term investments knowing that uncertainty behind the contract zoning is removed. Since processing activities are permitted by Site Plan approval within the Commercial District, this would also aid in reducing truck traffic along Indian Acres Road and Route 11. Currently, operations dictate that materials be hauled off-site to processing facility locations. However, by allowing on-site processing, vehicular trips dedicated to this would be reduced. Because this would require a Site Plan review by the Town, local residents would still be provided the opportunity for public comment and input for Board consideration, similar to how the current contract zone operates. Additionally, more recent standards in relation to screening, buffering, and stormwater management would also need to be met, ensuring that any future growth meets current standards.

Potential Concerns and Solutions:

We anticipate that there may be some concerns related to these proposed efforts. Nonetheless, below we have broken down some potential concerns and suitable solutions.

“Will permanent rezoning remove Town oversight?”

No. Should the proposed efforts pass, the quarry and included properties would remain subject to Casco's Commercial District regulations and performance standards. Any future potential expansion of operations or modifications would need to seek Town administrative or Board approval. For larger projects, applications would be publicly discussed with Boards and would still have the opportunity to voice their feedback via public comment.

“Why not renew the contract zone again?”

After three (3) decades of successfully operating, we believe it is time to acknowledge this business as a permanent, legitimate, commercial use. The current arrangements create unnecessary uncertainty, and prevent strategic investments that can benefit the Town of Casco. The performance standards proposed to be added to the Town's ordinance also provide a basis for addressing regulatory concerns.

“How might this impact property values?”

This is a challenging question to answer, as property values are complicated to compute. Under these proposed efforts, the quarry will be increasing protections to adjacent properties. By aligning performance standards to current MDEP regulations, the Town receives codified standards that quarries are required to meet. Currently, P&K already meets or exceeds these

state-mandated standards. However, this provides the Town of Casco a mechanism for enforcement should any violations of provisions occur.

The proposed performance standards provide greater protection to adjacent properties rather than the current contract zone arrangement. Under a contract zone, neighbors must trust that future contract renewals will maintain adequate protections, whereas this proposal adds regulatory standards up front. These standards include noise limitations, dust controls, setbacks, and operational restrictions become permanent, enforceable provisions of the Town's ordinance. With the potential for processing operations, P&K might invest in more modern equipment. Generally, newer equipment contains better dust suppression mechanisms and noise dampening technologies that might potentially improve rather than hurt adjacent property values.

Often times, properties near commercial operations, including quarries, farms, and industrial sites, typically maintain stable values when those operations are well-regulated and professionally managed. Property values can be damaged under uncertainty, poor management, lack of regulatory oversight, and unsafe conditions. However, this proposed project aims to provide clarity, performance standards, and protections for adjacent properties. Through these proposed zoning map and text amendments, no physical changes or operational changes will occur. The quarry has been operating for thirty (30) years, and could operate under stronger, codified performance standards. Adjacent property owners also gain enhanced protections through the proposed ordinance provisions.

Conclusion:

This proposed project represents a balanced approach to challenges that have accumulated over time. P&K is an existing and established business within Casco, providing jobs, material, and tax revenue. By rezoning the properties subject to this application, we are effectively able to provide certainty to this business, as well as bolster the Town's ordinance and protect adjacent properties from adverse impacts. Through this, the Town can enable P&K long-term strategic investments, and grow together.

We thank the Selectboard for the opportunity to discuss this project. Should you have any questions, please contact me at bwiemken@sebagotechnics.com or by phone at (207) 482-6323. We look forward to collaborating with the Town of Casco throughout the duration of this project.

Sincerely,
SEBAGO TECHNICS, INC.



Brett Wiemken
Planning Consultant/Project Manager



James R. Seymour, PE
*Senior Project Manager
Lakes Regional Manager*

Cc. Cory Mitchell, *President (P&K Sand & Gravel, Inc.)*

Enc. Proposed Zoning Plan