7 February 2015

Attorney Mark Schwallie, Chairman Town of Westhampton Planning Board Town Hall Westhampton, MA 01027

Dear Mr. Schwallie and other Board Members:

To issue a Special Permit (SP) for Dave Cotton's (Cotton) proposed sawmill, the Planning Board (PB) must consider and abide by the Town bylaws pertaining to SPs. The following bylaws will be violated by the proposed SP of Cotton:

- $\underline{6.31}$ "The purpose of site plan approval is to reasonably protect visual and property values of Town."
- a) PB has been provided with real estate transaction data of abutters' homes and opinions of two licensed real estate professionals that clearly demonstrate that the visual and property values of the abutters are not reasonably protected. No data has been presented in opposition.
- b) At the 1/20/15 meeting Mr. Schwallie was recorded in the official minutes stating: "We have visited the sites and heard the noise and have thought about other homes that are next to not so nice locations."
- c) By describing the proposed site as a "not so nice location," Mr. Schwallie, after conducting his own due diligence and referencing the noise of Cotton's machinery, infers that the proposed sawmill does not reasonably protect property values of the Town.
- <u>6.20</u> "The SP review process is intended to insure a harmonious relationship between proposed development and its surroundings."
- 6.27 "That the use will not constitute a nuisance by reason of excessive noise."
- a) In his written application for the SP, Cotton admits that the only way to preserve the quiet enjoyment of the abutters' homes is to not operate the sawmill.
- b) Mr. Melnik reiterated this at the 1/20/15 meeting by proposing to further limit the operation of the sawmill to Tuesday-Friday, to be, in his words, "a good neighbor." When Mr. Melnik was asked how not operating the sawmill from Saturday through Monday would make Cotton a good neighbor, he refused to answer.
 - c) Also, abutters have consistently complained about the nuisance of excessive noise.
- <u>6.322</u> "PB shall obtain a deposit sufficient to cover any expenses connected with a public hearing and review of plans, including the costs of any engineering or planning consultant services necessary for review purposes. If consultant services are necessary or appropriate ..."
- a) Mr. Schwallie felt it "necessary or appropriate" to listen to the noise of the sawmill on 4/5/14.
- b) PB allowed Cotton, or his employee, to perform decibel (db) tests. PB did not hire an engineer to perform these tests at Cotton's expense as 6.322 requires. PB received copies of test results from Cotton according to PB meeting notes.
- c) These db test results must be deemed invalid. Cotton claimed a chainsaw emits 85 db. All available literature reports chainsaws emit 100-110 db and that chippers emit 115 db.

- d) Results provided by Cotton or his employee do not follow the logarithmic, scientific formula for db and distance because they are either fraudulent, recorded erroneously or the db reader was flawed. In short, the logarithm is: db decrease by 6 db per doubling of distance.
- e) When a subsequent test was performed at Mark and Sarah Challet's home in May, incredibly, the PB did not utilize any device to measure db nor did they hire an engineer to do the test at Cotton's expense. Instead of an engineer with a db meter, PB used their ears to measure noise which yielded no independent, quantifiable scientific data.
- f) PB has requested and been presented with independent, quantifiable scientific data of traffic type, frequency and speed at PB meetings regarding this SP.
- f) PB has not requested or been presented with independent, quantifiable scientific data of db emitted by the chipper and the db level at the abutters' homes and the property boundary.
- e) After determining testing was necessary or appropriate, it appears Mr. Schwallie and PB violated bylaw 6.322 by allowing Cotton, or his employee, to perform noise tests rather than hiring, at Cotton's expense, an independent engineer to do those tests. Mr. Schwallie and PB also violated bylaw 6.322 by using their ears to measure noise levels at the Challet's home.
- MA DEP Noise Control Regulation 310 CMR 7.10 "According to the MA DEP Policy 90-001, new equipment is not permitted to increase ambient sound levels by more than ten (10) db above the lowest measured community sound level at both the property boundaries and the nearest inhabited structure. In addition, new equipment is not permitted to emit tonal noise."
- a) It is anticipated that the proposed sawmill will violate 310 CMR 7.10 by increasing ambient sound levels by more than 10 db and emitting tonal noise. If PB had hired an engineer, at Cottons' expense, to conduct noise studies, as provided for through bylaw 6.322, rather than relying on Cotton's self-investigation or PB's ears, we would have those results today.

With this specific applicant, Cotton, the following must be taken into account by the PB when considering whether or not Cotton would comply with any orders or conditions of the PB.

- a) Cotton has been found to be in violation of a cease and desist order from the building inspector to remove all evidence of his commercial operation since 2012.
- b) At the 12/9/14 PB meeting, Chuck Miller, the building inspector charged with enforcement of the Town's bylaws stated "Yes if number trucks exceed (what has been represented by Cotton, it would be) impossible (to enforce).
 - c) When Cotton was denied twice by the ZBA, he sued the Town twice.
- d) Cotton has purchased two parcels of land assessed at nearly \$400,000 for \$2 from two octogenarians he is not related to. At the 1/20/15 meeting, Walt Challet, one of those elderly sellers to Cotton, addressed the PB and said if the SP wasn't issued soon, he, Walt Challet, would let all of the land go into escrow. Whatever he meant, that statement indicates that Walt Challet still feels he has some type of control over the land. No one from the PB asked him for clarification of his comment or pointed out to him that the land is no longer his land.
- e) Cotton and Mr. Melnik have, in both writing and verbally, materially altered the site plan they submitted during PB meetings. Mr. Melnik wrote on 1/20/15: "There is also not proposed to be any regular retail customer use of the site," but the site plan submitted for

approval has customer parking. Mr. Melnik continues "Cotton feels that there is no need for constructing a building with a permanent sanitation facility at the site". At the 1/20/15 PB meeting, Cotton said he would use one of the two homes he purchased for \$2 for sanitation. Those residential homes are not a part of the site plan the PB is considering and, if they were, have not been inspected by the health department for use as commercial sanitation facilities or for their compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

- f) <u>Bylaw 6.30c</u> states "No special permit shall be issued for any business use of a structure not previously used for business uses." Cotton's statement that he would use residential homes for sanitation facilities for his proposed business was not challenged by the PB even though it clearly violates bylaw 6.30c.
- g) Numerous residents of the Town, during PB hearings, have accused Cotton of lying regarding when he first started working on the property, the number of trucks going to the property prior to the cease and desist order and the days and times he has been observed working on the property.

Acquiring land for a commercial operation should be done with great care, planning and sound legal advice. This SP process was born of necessity because Cotton purchased the land and took control of it before verifying that he would be grandfathered under the Town bylaws or if other laws (namely the Right to Farm) would apply to his commercial sawmill operation. Instead of taking complete control of the land, one remedy in this case would have been for Cotton to form a legal entity with Walt and Mary Challet to benefit from grandfathering. But since Cotton bought the land the way he did, grandfathering has been lost forever. Cotton has also been informed by the ZBA that the Right to Farm does not apply to his sawmill.

We need to be mindful that no one forced Cotton to buy this land when and how he did. The fact that he will never operate a sawmill on this land can only be attributed to the actions and decisions of Cotton and his advisors. Cotton is a self-proclaimed expert on trees and one would assume, as a licensed attorney, that Mr. Melnik knows the law. It is not the purview nor the responsibility of the PB to solve the predicament Cotton and his advisors created for themselves.

All four of you on the PB must deny the SP because it violates Westhampton bylaws 6.20, 6.27, 6.30c and 6.31 and because the Building Inspector, Chuck Miller, has said that special conditions of this proposed SP would be **impossible** to enforce.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Silvernail

Mark Challet

William Seney

Sarah Challet

Enclosures: PB meeting notes, Bylaws, db testing data

Special permits are requested for certain uses, structures or conditions as specified in Section 3.0. Schedule of Use Regulations.

6.20 <u>Purpose</u>

Special permits are intended to provide detailed review of certain uses and structures which may have substantial impact upon traffic, utility systems, and the character of the

town, among other things. The Special Permit review process is intended to insure a harmonious relationship between proposed development and its surroundings, and insure the proposals are consistent with the purpose and intent of this Bylaw.

6.27 **Criteria**

Where a special permit may be authorized by the Special Permit Granting Authority under this Bylaw, said Authority may grant, upon written application, such special permit if it finds, among other things:

- 1. That the proposed use would be suitably located in the neighborhood in which it is proposed and/or the total town.
- 2. That the use will be reasonably compatible with the character and scale of other uses permitted as of right in the same district.
- 3. That the use will not constitute a nuisance by reason of an unacceptable level of air or water pollution, excessive noise or visually flagrant structures and accessories.

SPECIAL PERMITS WITH SITE PLAN APPROVAL

6.30 Projects Requiring Site Plan Approval

No special permit or building permit shall be issued for any of the following uses:

- the construction or exterior alteration of business, manufacturing or industrial structures or accessory uses;
- b. any expansion or change in use of business, manufacturing or industrial structure;
- c. any business, manufacturing or industrial use of a structure not previously used for business, manufacturing or industrial uses;

6.31 <u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of site plan approval is to further the purposes of this bylaw and to ensure that new development is designed in a manner which reasonably protects visual and environmental qualities and property values of the Town, and to assure adequate drainage of surface water and safe vehicular access.

The Planning Board shall obtain, with each submission, a deposit sufficient to 6.322 cover any expenses connected with a public hearing and review of plans, including the costs of any engineering or planning consultant services necessary for review purposes. If consultant services are necessary or appropriate, the applicant shall, prior to the determination of Site Plan Approval by the Planning Board, pay the Town for the full cost of services. An application is incomplete without the full payment of these services. The Planning Board may request the posting of bond instead to cover consulting service expenses.



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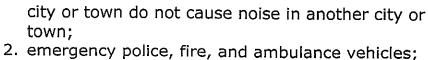
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Massachusetts Noise Regulations

The Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
Department of Environmental
Protection (DEP)
Noise Control Regulation 310 CMR
7.10

310 CMR 7.10 Noise

- (1) No person owning, leasing, or controlling a source of sound shall willfully, negligently, or through failure to provide necessary equipment, service, or maintenance or to take necessary precautions cause, suffer, allow, or permit unnecessary emissions from said source of sound that may cause noise.
- (2) 310 CMR 7.10(1) shall pertain to, but shall not be limited to, prolonged unattended sounding of burglar alarms, construction and demolition equipment which characteristically emit sound but which may be fitted and accommodated with equipment such as enclosures to suppress sound or may be operated in a manner so as to suppress sound, suppressible and preventable industrial and commercial sources of sound, and other man-made sounds that cause noise.
- (3) 310 CMR 7.10(1) shall not apply to sounds emitted during and associated with:
 - parades, public gatherings, or sporting events, for which permits have been issued provided that said parades, public gatherings, or sporting events in one



- 3. police, fire, and civil and national defense activities;
- 4. domestic equipment such as lawn mowers and power saws between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M.

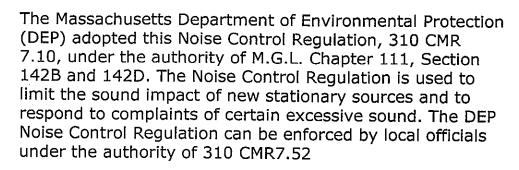
(4) 310 CMR 7.10(1) is subject to the enforcement provisions specified in 310 CMR 7.52.

The DEP has established a Noise Level Policy for implementing this regulation. The policy specifies that the ambient sound level, measured at the property line of the facility or at the nearest inhabited buildings, shall not be increased by more than 10 decibels weighted for the "A" scale [dB(A)] due to the sound from the facility during its operating hours.

The ambient sound level is the sound from all sources other than the particular sound of interest; also known as the background sound level. The ambient sound measurement (A-weighted sound level) is taken where the offending sound cannot be heard, or with the sound source shut-off. The ambient sound level is rarely found to be constant over time, and is usually quite variable. The ambient sound level is considered to be the level that is exceeded 90% of the time that the noise measurements are taken. The ambient sound level may also be established by other means with the consent of the DEP.

The dB(A) unit of sound measurement is altered (or weighted) to reflect human sound sensitivity. For instance, for those frequencies of sound which humans hear very well, the actual reading is enhanced, or increased, in the weighting process. The "weighted" reading therefore emphasizes the frequencies best heard by humans, and likewise de-emphasizes those sound frequencies which are less well heard.

The guideline further states that the facility shall not produce a pure-tone condition at the property line (or at the nearest inhabited buildings). A pure-tone exists if the sound pressure level, at any given octave band center frequency, exceeds the levels of the two adjacent octave bands by three (3) or more decibels.



310 CMR 7.52 Enforcement Provisions

"Any police department, fire department, board of health officials, or building inspector or his designee acting within his jurisdictional area is hereby authorized by the DEP to enforce, as provided in M.G.L. c. 111, S 142B, any regulation in which specific reference to 310 CMR 7.52 is cited."

Noise is defined in the Regulations as "...sound of sufficient intensity and/or duration as to cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution."

Community Sound Level Criteria

A source of sound will be considered to be in compliance with the DEP noise regulation 310 CMR 7.10(1) if the source does not:

- 1. Increase the broadband sound level by more than 10 dB(A) above ambient, or
- 2. Produce a pure tone condition.

The material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Regulations continually evolve and are subject to change. We do not warranty this information and remind any users of this information to research the current validity and applicability.

1/20/15 PB MEETING NOTES

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4/15/14 PB MEETING NOTES

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Comparative Examples of Noise Levels

Comparative Examples of Noise Sources, Decibels

& Their Effects

Noise Source	Decibel Level	Decibel Effect
Jet take-off (at 25 meters)	150	Eardrum rupture
Aircraft carrier deck	140	
Military jet aircraft take-off from aircraft carrier with afterburner at 50 ft (130 dB).	130	
Thunderclap, chain saw. Oxygen torch (121 dB).	120	Painful. 32 times as loud as 70 dB.
Steel mill, auto horn at 1 meter, Turbo-fan aircraft at takeoff power at 200 ft (118 dB). Riveting machine (110 dB); live rock music (108 - 114 dB).	110	Average human pain threshold, 16 times as loud as 70 dB.
Jet take-off (at 305 meters), use of outboard motor, power lawn mower, motorcycle, farm tractor, jackhammer, garbage truck. Boeing 707 or DC-8 aircraft at one nautical mile (6080 ft) before landing (106 dB); jet flyover at 1000 feet (103 dB); Bell J-2A helicopter at 100 ft (100 dB).	Į.	8 times as loud as 70 dB. Serious damage possible in 8 hr exposure
Boeing 737 or DC-9 aircraft at one nautical mile (6080 ft) before landing (97 dB); power mower (96 dB); motorcycle at 25 ft (90 dB). Newspaper press (97 dB).	90	4 times as loud as 70 dB. Likely damage 8 hr exp
Garbage disposal, dishwasher, average factory, freight train (at 15 meters). Car wash at 20 ft (89 dB); propeller plane flyover at 1000 ft (88 dB); diesel truck 40 mph at 50 ft (84 dB); diesel train at 45 mph at 100 ft (83 dB). Food blender (88 dB); milling machine (85 dB); garbage disposal (80 dB).	80	2 times as loud as 70 dB. Possible damage in 8 hr exposure.
Passenger car at 65 mph at 25 ft (77 dB); freeway at 50 ft from pavement edge 10 a.m. (76 dB). Living room music (76 dB); radio or TV-audio, vacuum cleaner (70 dB).	70	Arbitrary base of comparison. Upper 70s are annoyingly loud to some people.
Conversation in restaurant, office, background music, Air conditioning unit at 100 ft	60	Half as loud as 70 dB. Fairly quiet
Quiet suburb, conversation at home. Large electrical transformers at 100 ft	50	One-fourth as loud as 70 dB.
Library, bird calls (44 dB); lowest limit of urban ambient sound	40	One-eighth as loud as 70 dB.
Quiet rural area	30	One-sixteenth as loud as 70 dB. Very Quiet
Whisper, rustling leaves	20	
Breathing	10	Barely audible

[modified from http://www.wenet.net/~hpb/dblevels.html] on 2/2000.
SOURCES: Temple University Department of Civi/Environmental Engineering
(www.temple.edu/departments/CETP/environ10.html), and Federal Agency Review of Selected
Airport Noise Analysis Issues, Federal Intersgency Committee on Noise (August 1992). Source
of the information is attributed to Outdoor Noise and the Metropolitan Environment, M.C.
Branch et al., Department of City Planning, City of Los Angeles, 1970.

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How Loud Is Too Loud: Decibel levels of common sounds



Noise is measured in units called decibels (dB), on a scale from zero to 140. The higher the number in decibels, the louder the noise. The louder the noise, the greater the risk of hearing loss. Hearing loss can occur with regular exposure to noise levels of 110 decibels or more for periods longer than one minute. No more than 15 minutes of unprotected exposure to 100 decibels is recommended. Long-term exposure to 80-85 decibels or over can cause hearing loss.

Here is a list of common noises and their decibel levels:

- · Aircraft at take-off (180)
- Fireworks (140)
- Snowmobile (120)
- Chain saw (110)
- Amplified music (110)
- · Lawn mower (90)
- Noisy office (90)
- Vacuum cleaner (80)
- City traffic (80)
- Normal conversation (60)
- Refrigerator humming (40)
- Whisper (20)
- · Leaves rustling (10)
- Calm breathing (10)

Noise levels of 130 decibels or over will be painful and is very likely to cause immediate hearing damage.

Perceptions of increases in decibel level

The list below gives you an idea of how noticable a change in decibel level will be to you:

- 1dB Not noticable
- 3dB Barely noticeable
- 5dB Clearly noticeable change
- 10dB About twice as loud
- 20dB About four times as loud

Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale, which means that the difference between values increases as the values get larger. For example, the difference between 10dB and 20dB is smaller than the difference between 10dB and 11dB. Logarithmic values are used to make reading what would be large number much easier. If decibels were rated on a linear scale, i.e. the difference between 10dB and 20dB would be the same as the difference between 10dB and 11dB, then instead of writing 10dB we would have to write 1000000000dB.

Similar articles that you might like:



Deutsche Version 🚟 💻

<u>Damping</u> of <u>sound level</u> (<u>decibel</u> <u>dB</u>) vs. <u>distance</u> ●

Distance law - Distance damping - Noise - SPL

This is an approximation when the venue is a direct sound field or an anechoic chamber

How does the sound decrease with change of distance?
How do we calculate the distance drop of the noise?
How is the sound reduction in dB with distance?
How does distance affect sound (pressure)?
Sound and noise propagation and the level damping.
How far can sound travel? No frequency dependence

"<u>Damping (attenuation) of air of high frequencies (dissipation)</u>" is really a different fact.

Don't mix it up with the normal damping (decreasing) of sound with distance.

How do high frequencies affect sound? Frequency dependence. How does distance affect sound? No frequency dependence.

There is no <u>noise decrease</u> (<u>sound reduction</u>) or sound <u>drop per meter</u>.

We get a sound level drop of 6 dB per doubling of distance.

Sound power or sound power level has nothing to do with the distance from the sound source.

Thinking helps: A 100 watt light bulb is emitting constantly the same power. That is really the case - no matter if in 1 m, in 10 m, or even in 100 distance. These emitted watts don't change with distance. They stay in the source. Sound power is the distance independent cause of this, whereas sound pressure is the distance-dependent effect.

Changing (decrease) of sound pressure level ΔL or sound pressure p with distance r in a free field (direct field), like in anechoic chambers Conversion: Distance values \rightarrow dB level changing - The 1/r law for sound pressure With sound level ususally a level of a logarithmic ratio of sound pressure is meant.

These calculations are meant only for sound engineers and the distance from point sources, like musicians or loudspeakers

to a microphone in a direct field - No air damping and frequency dependency of e.g. the thunder in a distance.

Avoid using the psychoacoustical terms loudness perception and volume. This subjective sound-sensation is not clearly measurable without ambiguity. The term "loudness" or "volume" is a problem because it belongs to psychoacoustics and this personal feeling is not correct definable.

Loudness as a psychological correlate of physical strength (amplitude) is also affected by parameters other than sound pressure, including frequency, bandwidth, spectral composition, information content, time structure, and the duration of exposure of the sound signal. The same sound will not create the same loudness perception by all individuals (people).

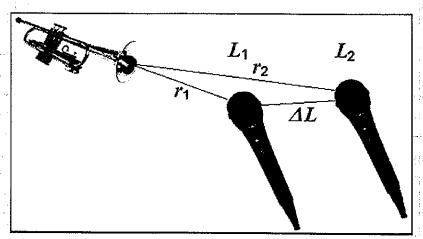
As psycho-acoustic parameters to describe the "loudness" there is the "loudness level" with the unit phon and the "loudness" with the unit sone.

Incidentally, the sound pressure p doesn't decrease with the square of the distance

from the sound source $(1/r^2)$. This is an often-told and believed wrong tale.

Sound pressure level SPL depending on the distance for point-shaped sound sources in the free field

Distance-related decrease of sound level



Enter the three gray boxes and get the answer in the white box.

Sound is here the sound level in decibels, no matter if it is the sound pressure level or the sound intensity level – but not the sound power level.

Calculation of the so	ound level $L_{ m 2}$, which is fo	und at the distance r2
Reference distance r ₁ from sound source m or ft	Sound level L_1 at reference distance r_1 dBSPL	Search for $L_{\scriptscriptstyle 2}$
Another distance r ₂ from sound source m or ft	at another distance r2	Sound level difference $\Delta L = L_1 - L_2$
m or it	55 dBSPL	60 dB

Calculate the dista	ance r_2 , where the sound level L_2 is to find.
	Search for r ₂



JavaScript Decibel Calculators

Inverse Square Law * Power Ratios * Voltage Ratios * T and H-Pads
Combining Decibels * Atmospheric Absorption

Decibels and Distance

This calculator requires a JavaScript capable browser

This calculation will give you the amount of attenuation, in decibels, you can expect with a chardistance, in a free field (outdoors). For example if you were standing 10 feet from a noise source move 100 feet away from that noise source, you would expect to see a drop in level of 20dB. So radiated from a point source drops in level at 6dB per doubling of distance. If you start at 50 fee and move to 100 feet from the source you will have a 6dB drop in level. If you move from 500 you will have a 6dB drop in level. For the record, the formula to calculate this level drop is: Dec Change=20xlog(distance 1/distance 2), and you can calculate it on any scientific calculator.

Reference listening distance in feet or meters, from the noise source	New receiver distance in feet or meters, from the source	Calculate	This is the number of decibels of level drop/rise you would find -53.97884302
	Ja	HELP avaScript Help	

This information is provided with no warranty of its accuracy, or applicability, and any information is done so at the sole risk of the user.

MC² System Design Group M^c Squared System Design Group, Inc 323 - 901 West 3rd Street North Vancouver, BC V7P 3P9 Phone 604 - 986 - 8181

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12/9/14 PB MEETING NOTE

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