



Kraemer Mining and Materials in Burnsville.
Photo by Christine Schuster

Kraemer Mining & Materials to expand mining footprint

By Christine Schuster cschuster@swpub.com Aug 21, 2020

BURNSVILLE — The mining operation responsible for providing Savage's drinking water will expand its mining footprint by 72 acres under a plan approved by Burnsville city officials this week.

The request approved by the Burnsville City Council on Tuesday allows Kraemer Mining & Materials Inc. to conduct mining on 26 acres located to the southwest, and 46 acres to the east, of the existing limestone quarry.

Kraemer's permit also allows some of the mining operation to occur within the Minnesota River floodplain.

Limestone mining operations have taken place on the property since the 1950s, and Burnsville City Planner Deb Garross said it's expected to continue until at least 2040.

Kraemer and Burnsville officials have long been united around a concept plan to clean-up the Freeway Landfill, which neighbors the quarry.

Under the proposal, Kraemer's private roads would be used to haul the waste excavated from Freeway Landfill over to the Burnsville Sanitary Landfill.

Kraemer would later mine the bedrock underneath the waste — eliminating the possibility of leftover contaminants while also unearthing valuable limestone.

The end result — dubbed the "Gateway to Burnsville" — would eventually be a massive redevelopment project of parks, businesses and residences along the Minnesota River with a 100-foot-deep quarry lake at the center.

John Rivisto, Kraemer's Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, told the Planning Commission there are agreements in place between Kraemer and the Burnsville Sanitary Landfill, which will be a part of their bid package if the clean-up project moves forward.

"We are still very engaged with that," he said, adding there are no agreements with Freeway Landfill's owners.

The quarry lake is expected to be about 100-acres larger than Crystal Lake, Burnsville Planning Commission Chairperson Robert Timmerman commented during a meeting earlier this month.

But some of the mining approved in this month's expansion will be back-filled for future development, according to Garross.

The additional southwest area will likely be used as a lake shore park, she said, but the eastern acres near Interstate 35-E will eventually be filled to aid redevelopment.

Burnsville Planning Commission Chris John thanked Kraemer representatives for their role in keeping groundwater levels below the hazardous waste at the Freeway Landfill.

"You don't have to go any further than Flint, Michigan to know how bad things can get very quickly, so we very much appreciate that you have been willing to do that for us," he said.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency officials have credited Kraemer's water pumping operations with keeping the area's water table below the landfill waste.

The MPCA claims the water table will rise and saturate the waste — thus contaminating Savage and Burnsville's drinking water — if the quarry reaches the end of its life before the landfill clean-up occurs.

Freeway Landfill's owners argue other independent studies have disputed these claims.