

GET Council to oppose Hidden Quarry; Bonnette happy to have new ally

By **Melanie Hennessey**
Special to The IFP

The long-awaited verdict is in: Guelph/Eramosa Township Council will be opposing the Hidden Quarry application at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

At its meeting Wednesday evening, the local council unanimously passed a motion advising the OMB it's against the controversial quarry proposal from James Dick Construction Ltd. (JDCL). The lengthy resolution also directs the township's solicitors to attend all OMB hearings to fight the application unless JDCL addresses its outstanding concerns, which include impacts on the local environment, roads, farms, property values and more.

"Our residents have expressed a number of concerns related to the proposed quarry," said Township Mayor Chris White. "While some were addressed in technical assessments, a number still remain unresolved in our opinion, or have not been resolved to our satisfaction. In light of this, we are requesting that the Ontario Municipal Board not approve the application in its current state."

The JDCL quarry is proposed for 97 acres, situated at the north-east corner of Hwy. 7 and Sixth Line in Guelph-Eramosa Township, 2.5 km west of the Halton Hills boundary. The company is asking to extract 700,000 tonnes of aggregate annually for 15 to 20 years, operating from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday, excluding holidays. The application is heading to the OMB next month.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, who has been vocal about the impacts the quarry could have on his municipality, said he's

"delighted" that Guelph/Eramosa Township Council is opposing JDCL's plans.

"Halton Hills is pleased to have a new ally to join Milton, Halton Region and ourselves in opposition of this quarry," he said. "This should send a loud message to the OMB that all four municipal jurisdictions have very serious concerns about this proposal regarding haul routes, water, economic impacts, etc."

Milton Councillor Colin Best also applauded the neighbouring municipality's motion.

"I commend Guelph-Eramosa Township Council for their decision to oppose this application as it will have an even greater impact on Milton and Halton residents who are downstream, downwind and down the road from this site," he said. "I look forward to Regional staff's presentations at the hearing."

In an effort to address the township's outstanding concerns, the lengthy motion passed by council says its solicitors and consultants should develop detailed conditions that would be applied if the quarry is ultimately approved by the OMB. This measure has dampened the enthusiasm of the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC), which has been fighting the quarry plans for more than two years.

"We're ambivalent. While we do appreciate the position council has taken and we commend them for it, we're concerned that the discussion is focusing on conditions. We don't believe there are conditions that can make it acceptable," said CRC President Doug Tripp.

Key among the issues the CRC is deeming "irreconcilable" is the potential negative effect the quarry could have when blast-

ing below the water table— an uncommon practice that isn't currently being used in Ontario.

Tripp said the CRC will be taking part in the OMB hearing and is currently awaiting legal advice on whether they should register as a participant or party; the latter of which would give the group the ability to present its case and cross-examine JDCL's experts/consultants.

JDCL originally applied to Guelph/Era-

mosa Township for a zoning bylaw amendment in December 2012 to permit the quarry and then appealed its application to the OMB in June this year before the township's council had a chance to make a decision.

An OMB pre-hearing date has been set for Nov. 9. The pre-hearing gives the board a chance to understand the interests of the parties and participants. Dates will also be set at that time for a full hearing and the exchange of issues and evidence.



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