

More gravel pit concessions sought

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Halton Crushed Stone (HCS) is under pressure to make more concessions to residents in its plan to extend a gravel pit just south of Erin village.

James Parkin of MHBC Planning gave council an update on developments since a public meeting in November 2016, saying "good, steady progress has been made" and that the application is ready for the town and county decision process.

The proposed expansion has faced significant opposition, especially from residents of Aspen Court and McCulloch Drive near County Road 52. The current pit is 300 metres from the road, but originally the expansion could have come within 30 metres.

HCS has made a series of changes to its plan, and now says it is willing to increase that buffer zone to

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– James Parkin, MHBC Planning

60 metres in both Concession 10 (west of Tenth Line) and Concession 11 (east of Tenth Line). The section closest to the homes would be the first phase of the expansion.

"The 60-metre buffer is probably inadequate for the community," said Coun. Jeff Duncan at the meeting.

"It is the intent of HCS to complete extraction as soon as possible within Concession 10 so that the lands can be rehabilitated back to farmland," said Parkin.

"Large areas of the existing pit in Concession 10 have already been rehabilitated and are actively farmed. The wash plant is

proposed to be relocated to Concession 11. The main processing area would then be approximately 1.2 km from the subdivision."

Duncan raised the possibility of a "sunset clause," by which the company would have a deadline to complete Phase 1, with no further extraction near the subdivision allowed after that date. He also urged HCS to reconsider adding the pit to the Cornerstone Standards program, which promotes best practices in the industry.

HCS has completed several studies and had them peer reviewed by county consultants or other agencies. There was also a visual impact study and a re-

quest from some residents for an independent review of that study. Residents are concerned not only about the view from Road 52, but also the view from higher elevations further north on Tenth Line.

In response, HCS proposes to limit stockpile heights and increase berm heights in several areas to make the pit less visible. The company plans to plant a mix of coniferous trees and shrubs on the berm.

"We understand that this is an important travelling route, and agree that it should be something that leaves a positive impression - not ending up looking like some eyesore," said Parkin.

HCS says a study shows the expansion will cause no harm to local wells or the West Credit River, and that Credit Valley Conservation supports the findings.

In response to a peer re-

view of a noise study, HCS has agreed to further restrictions on processing areas, revised sound source limits and an acoustical audit.

Hours of operation will change so there will be no extraction on Saturdays or before 7 a.m. on weekdays.

Shipping could still start at 8 a.m. Saturdays and 6 a.m. on weekdays, with a traffic study estimating 14 truck trips per hour during peak hours, and about 20 trips between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m.

There will be a trucking policy with a complaints process. Truckers will not be allowed to stop or line up on area roads, and those who violate the policy will not be allowed in the pit, according to Parkin's report.

Extraction is to be planned so that the pit faces a sound barrier. During early morning shipping when it is dark, strobe lights are now being used as a truck backing alarm,

instead of the loud audible warning beepers that can disturb residents' sleep.

Coun. Matt Sammut declared a conflict of interest at the Dec. 12 meeting, since his home is close to the pit, and left the chamber for this agenda item.

Town council will receive a report from Wellington County planner Aldo Salis before making a zoning decision.

In its application for a provincial license, HCS has included the possibility of temporarily closing the Tenth Line between the pit areas and mining the gravel in the road allowance. T

his would be the last phase and would not happen for about 20 years. This would require an agreement with a future town council.

The Town of Erin could be entitled to a large quantity of free gravel for road maintenance as part of such a deal.

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