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Councillors blast land freeze, quarries

Halton Hills and Milton regional councillors may seek a deferral of the passing of the controversial amendment number 6 to the Official Plan which would freeze large tracts of North Halton property for stone and gravel mining.

About 70 concerned homeowners, most in the rural area around Acton in Esquevas and Nassagaweya, packed the Halton Hills council chambers Thursday to learn about the proposal and hear Councillors Pam Sheldon, Russ Miller, Ross Knechtel and Dave Whiting rap the plan.

Miller predicted regional councillors from North Halton will join

forces at a council meeting near the end of this month to ask for the deferral until the new Niagara Escarpment Plan is approved and the province has aggregate legislation.

He warned the new Niagara Escarpment Plan to be approved next year could freeze as many as 14,000 acres of land and this proposal would protect aggregate would freeze another 14,000 acres, for a total of nearly 30,000 frozen acres.

Only about 1,400 to 1,600 acres of Halton Hills land has been mined in the last 20 years, Miller said, so there is no need to freeze as much as 4,000 acres. He

said this means land is being saved to produce a supply for 100 years or more. If any land is frozen in the Niagara Escarpment Plan then none should be frozen by the region, Miller said.

The province, region planners and aggregate industry were trying to "hoodwink" the public and this plan will cause the north a "lot of problems we don't deserve," Miller added the region planners were supposed to be "working for us", the residents of Halton, not the province or aggregate industry.

The proposal offered no protection that Halton Hills will be compensated by the province or aggregate industry for the pouncing Halton Hills roads will take from gravel trucks and if this area must supply

stone and gravel, provisions should be made for it to be transported out by rail.

The aggregate industry doesn't pay hefty taxes like other industries, Miller said, warning of a big loss in assessment and tax revenue Halton Hills will suffer because land is frozen and this loss won't be recovered by new taxes from quarries.

The main thing for planners to do was satisfy the people of Halton not the province, Sheldon declared. "The accountability is going the wrong way."

Development policies are so "restrictive" in the rural area now there's adequate protection for the aggregate deposits in North Halton. The ind-

ustry wants protection no other land use gets in Halton, Sheldon added.

She noted there will be "site specific studies" of frozen property, but no mention of studies for the acres of land surrounding sites, which will also be affected.

Another flaw of the proposal is no mention of "phasing", she said. There should be some provision for finishing extraction of aggregate in one area before mining starts in another.

The whole purpose of the province's moves to protect land for aggregate was an "exercise in opening up competition" in the industry, she declared. Sheldon warned the province wants "everything" (various local government and agency plans) in place before a new aggregate Bill is brought in this fall which will "legitimize" big quarry operations throughout the Metro Toronto area.

All mention of compatibility in the proposed amendment "goes the wrong way" she noted. If the amendment looks at what is compatible with quarries, but not what quarries are compatible with, such as Acton and heavily populated rural areas.

Hills Official Plan amendment before a quarry is opened could easily disappear, Sheldon warned, and then the only control the Town will have will be zoning and licensing, and the province will be able to direct the Town to licence the quarry. Halton Hills may not be able to decide if it wants a quarry or not in a particular area. "We'll only be able to decide where haul routes go, not if we will have haul routes."

Halton Hills and its citizens were getting a "snow job", Whiting declared, adding we're going to "end up with all kinds of pits and quarries."

He blasted the "reverse onus" which forces private landowners to pay for costly studies to prove aggregate can't be mined economically so the land won't be frozen.

Knechtel also criticized the provision that landowners must hire consultants to prove mineral can't be extracted economically. He urged the impact on Halton Hills' tax base of this land freeze be studied and added the region has protection for all sorts of sensitive land, but not "people sensitive areas."

THE LAZY-B
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West of Hwy. 25

ENTERTAINMENT
ALL THIS WEEK
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TUESDAY: Ladies' Night
WEDNESDAY NIGHT: Amateur Night
Wet T-Shirt THURSDAY NIGHT
8 till 1 Wednesday to Saturday

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OPEN FOR BREAKFAST 7 A.M.



COUNTRY IS KING AT THE LAZY-B No. 1 IN HALTON



Bella Maye Rozell was in charge of arranging the Thanksgiving display at Knox Presbyterian Church.



Ada Koeslag arranged the fruits, vegetables and flowers for the Bethel Christian Reformed Thanksgiving service.



The need for a Halton

The need for a Halton

Quarries . . .
(Continued from page 1)

couraged and there has been no impact on assessment or property values. However, as a number of politicians noted, there's a big difference in the new plan, now land will be frozen.

One resident said it was "ridiculous" to freeze enough land to supply aggregate needs from Halton for 100 years and warned their property will dive in value when word gets around about what the region has done. Mohammed countered the protection area only offers a supply of crushed stone for 35 years and gravel for 50 years.

Crushed stone and gravel will never be mined in 80 per cent of the protection area, Ted Harvey of the Ministry of Natural Resources told the audience. The municipality will have flexibility as to where quarries are located.

Another resident felt it was wrong to freeze land which might turn out to be unsuitable for mineral extraction. He said this gives "you guys (the planners) an out 'if you're wrong'."

Mohammed explained all information about mineral deposits comes from the province, the region doesn't have the expertise, and a resident suggested that was the region's "first mistake."

The same homeowner said this proposed amendment does "nothing for people", but he suspected it does a lot for the aggregate industry.

Former councillor Ed Wood, who is seeking a seat for Acton on regional council, asked why there was an expensive urban boundary study to prove Acton could grow with the addition of homes on the east side of town when the mineral protection area comes right up to the present eastern boundary of Acton.

Mohammed answered that as soon as the urban boundary adjustments are passed, which should be quite soon, the mineral freezing area will be adjusted eastward. Wood said such a method of making changes was a "waste of time" while the planner said it was only a "legal technicality."

An east side of Acton landowner said it was stupid to designate land which will be developed for housing as frozen and then lift the freeze later. He said it was hard to believe the planners work for the people of Halton. It sounded like the "tail was wagging the dog."

A Nassagaweya resident said the region wasn't providing enough protection from quarries and pits for wells.

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