

Council gallery is packed as town dumps gravel pits

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Mayor Pomeroy read aloud to a packed gallery Monday night also assures the town that regular vehicle inspections will be made, that loading times will be restricted to the hours between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. and stone crushing operations to between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Noting that Bot Construction Ltd., which won the new contract involving the Odorico pit, has been "most co-operative" in accepting MTC directions, the letter also pointed out there will be "severe penalties" imposed upon any contractor found to be contravening town bylaws or ministry regulations.

Sixth Line residents in attendance at the meeting groaned loudly when one ministry official announced that between now and 1995, some 2 million additional tons of aggregate could be mined at wayside pits in Halton Hills.

CONFLICTING REPORTS
Much of the two-hour debate on the issue centered on conflicting reports of the amount of aggregate remaining in the Odorico and other wayside pits, with the MTC and MNR officials maintaining that town council was made aware of the extent of resources here as early as last January.

King Paving and Materials Ltd., the contractor which hauled gravel from the Limehouse area pits for the Trafalgar Road reconstruction project, came under indirect fire because council members recalled hearing the firm's representative tell them that the Odorico pit was virtually exhausted.

Last week, councillors reeled upon learning that another 400,000 tons of gravel is to be extracted from the wayside pit. Some felt betrayed by the province and misled by contractors and other spokesmen. Nevertheless, enough council members balked at approving a motion by Coun. George Malby aimed at withdrawing approval for the Odorico application that one of the residents' spokesmen urged them to consider a more practical resolution which all could support.

Even if its rejection of the pit licence is eventually overruled by the MNR, Tony Harbour of RRI Limehouse told members, council's firm opposition to the proposed extraction would force the MNR and MTC to "come out in the open" and define their positions.

Mr. Harbour and neighbor Ron Johnson, bearing a petition signed by all 53 adult residents of the Sixth Line between the Pitutti pit and 22 Sideroad, outlined concerns ranging from the operations' effects upon groundwater tables to the noise of crushing and hauling activities.

PEACE, QUIET
Mr. Johnson told council he moved to the Sixth Line more than six years ago in search of "peace and quiet and a closeness with nature", all features of the rural countryside that have disappeared since the opening of wayside pits along the road.

Displaying enlarged color photos depicting the visual contrast between untouched areas of the Sixth Line and the wayside pit areas, Mr. Johnson quoted from the June 27 edition of The Herald in which council members were reported as assuring rural residents their troubles would soon be over once the "limited"

amount of aggregate in the pits had been removed. With estimates of the amount of available gravel being continually revised, he said, "those reasons (for endorsing the operations) are no longer valid".

Informed by Coun. Miller that the MTC expects another 65,000 tons of aggregate to be removed from the Odorico pit and one other wayside pit nearby during coming months, Mr. Johnson commented, "it's going to leave my house looking like Sudbury".

The petition circulated by Mr. Johnson and others sought council's support for a 50 per cent tax reduction for affected homeowners - an effective noise control bylaw and another bylaw to allocate general revenue funds for the extension of municipal water services to the area.

LOWER WATER
"If operations will continue to lower the area water table, reducing or completely stopping flow of existing wells," the petition stated.

The residents also asked council to have damaged street signs and guard posts replaced, to have a geologist appraise the amount of available aggregate in the area and to use an audio recording device to gather 24-hour-a-day "legal proof" of noise levels and duration for use in enforcing environmental bylaws.

"We have done our share for the community...in putting up with the noise, inconvenience and exploitation from the pit operations," the petition continued. "We strongly urge you, Mr. Mayor, to take immediate and positive action to close the pit operations forthwith and to take a stand against granting permission for further pit operations on the Sixth Line."

Council's failure to openly oppose the use of local pits for provincial projects, regardless of any reluctance which might be shown, will always be con-

strued as consent by the MNR, Mr. Harbour pointed out. Without council endorsement to back them, private citizens will never be able to fight such operations in the courts or elsewhere, he said.

"There is no reason Halton Hills shouldn't follow the example of 30 other Ontario municipalities in forcing the MNR or the ministry of investment to provide a special inspector, Mr. Harbour said. Such an official could do what municipal enforcement officers and local police might be unable to do, he said, by imposing \$1,000 fines for first-time offenders and \$5,000 fines for repeat offenders.

REAL POSSIBILITY
There is "a very real possibility" that mining operations will affect the area's water table, Mr. Harbour continued, an accident for which only the contractor, and not the province, is liable. Water flows should be monitored, he advocated, and, if affected, the MTC should be held responsible.

Once the MTC realizes that it will save no money by mining on the Sixth Line because additional policing is needed, reserve and time limits must be adhered to and any damages must be recovered, it will likely deem the operation uneconomical and look elsewhere for aggregate, Mr. Harbour contended.

Despite the stated belief of MTC official Don Thrasher that local mining operations have yet to strike the water table, Mr. Johnson's photos showed clear, spring water at the bottom of drilled holes on the Sixth Line, where no rain had fallen in weeks.

Mr. Thrasher assured the residents that any water supplies deleted by the operations would be restored by the ministry.

Mr. Thrasher also told Coun. Miller that it is within regional council's authority to impose lower speed limits

along the road and on 17 Sideroad, where gravel trucks have reportedly been observed speeding, passing on upgrades and hauling uncovered loads.

PROVINCE'S REACTION
Asked what the province's reaction would be if the town withdrew its support for the use of the wayside pits, Dale Scott of the MNR conceded that such a confrontation has never before occurred. His ministry would appraise all pertinent aspects of the matter, he said, including the reasons behind the town's opposition, and then decide whether to accept the town's stance or over-ride its decision.

Mr. Scott admitted that the MNR itself is "disappointed with the way we used to handle things". Licensing applications were processed and approved without any consultation with the affected municipality, he recalled, largely because it was felt the Niagara Escarpment Commission controlled the aggregate areas.

"We always do contact the municipalities now and always will," he said. "So will the MTC. We hope there won't be problems like this in the future."

Much of the problems disturbing Sixth Line residents stemmed from the fact that two different ministries were approving operations at the same wayside pit, Mr. Scott explained. Some of the operations were subject to no time limitations, he added.



ESCAPE PRACTICE

Last week was bus safety week, and schools across Halton practised bus evacuation safety drills. These students were practising Friday morning at Stewarttown Senior Public School. The drills are designed to give the students practise at getting out of the bus in a hurry, should they be involved in an accident, or if the bus were to catch fire or stall on the train tracks. The drills are to show students how to evacuate the bus without panic in an emergency.

(Herald photo by Lori Taylor)

ICG continues battle against corridor

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"It's taken them three months to decide that they aren't going to make a decision," he added. "The courts certainly haven't helped the people."

The ICG will continue to oppose the corridor, Mr. Minns said. As well as seeking a meeting with Mr. McCawley, the group plans to take at least one of the legal routes open to them, although Mr. Minns wouldn't specify which one. The group has until October 9 to appeal this latest decision.

Other avenues of appeal still open are an appeal of the OMB decision and taking Ontario Hydro to court to seek to require them to state their intentions.

At the meeting of the landowners Monday, Mr. Minns said the group voted to "take the mayor at his word regarding the \$10,000 grant from the town."

Mr. Minns said in a discussion with the ICG executive officer, Mayor Pete Pomeroy assured him that the money would be used to fight the corridor.

Mr. Minns said the ICG doesn't expect to get any more money from the town, but he said the group expects the town to stand behind its commitment for the \$10,000. The ICG has spent about \$143,000 during its seven-year fight for an independent study of the corridor, much of it out of the members' pockets, Mr. Minns said.

Regional planning board chairman Roy Booth said he would be "disgusted, disappointed and surprised" if the town supports the ICG in a further appeal.

"We fought the good fight," he said. "I was in full support of the ICG and I really thought they should have a proper hearing. The town has its bylaws, and there's no way a corporation should walk all over them. I supported the ICG to the OMB, but no further."

"I believe in due process of

I can walk in and go to the new chairman, who must be very politically sensitive, and test his good will," Mr. Reed said. "I'm going to appeal to him to once again open his mind."

"The only other avenue is the political avenue, in other words, to change the government," he said. "Our party made a commitment for an independent study as to where the line should go, and it won't be built until then."

"We'll start with the new chairman and the new minister, but I think any change will have to come from the new chairman," Mr. Reed said. "I've come to the conclusion that the energy minister is a paper tiger."

"The Minister of Energy is totally impotent when it comes to Hydro," he continued. "The only control is through an order-in-council. There is nothing in the Power Corporation Act that obliges Hydro to enact government policies."

Mr. Reed said Ontario Hydro is a "state within a state", and "the sooner people realize it's an empire, the better."

Mayor Pomeroy said the council will listen to what the ICG wants to do "and weigh it in the balance with other factors and make a decision". He said he hasn't seen a copy of the court decision, but "if the decision says what I'm led to believe it says," he would expect a resolution will be brought to council to direct the clerk-administrator and the mayor to make the amendments necessary to permit the construction of the corridor.

NO ALTERNATIVE
"There doesn't appear to be any other alternative," he said.

"I don't want to be defeatist, but whatever happens to this hydro corridor, Ontario Hydro will be in litigation over their use of the land for the next 10 to 15 years," Mr. Minns said.

Liberal energy critic Julian Reed, MP for Halton-Burlington, is also seeking a meeting with Hydro chairman Hugh McCawley, who was appointed early in July.

GOOD WILL
"I feel this is one area where

the law, but once you've had your day in court, you take your licking and go home and forget about it," Coun. Booth said. "That's the process of democracy."

John Mr. Minns said the landowners continue to be resolved to fight the corridor to get their proper "day in court". He said they don't regard this as a proper hearing because the judges refused to make a decision.

"We're not totally optimistic and blind to the fact that there may be a hydro line," Mr. Minns said. "The people realize that while they're not going down with the ship, they intend to go on fighting."

Thieves rob local homes

Neighboring houses were broken into last week, and two motorcycles stolen.

Both houses are located on R.R.2, Georgetown. A mobile motor-assisted bicycle, commonly known as a moped, was stolen from one of the houses. Value of the vehicle was estimated at \$250. A Kawasaki motorcycle valued at \$650 was stolen from the other house.

Two men have been arrested in connection with a break-in at the Silver Creek Shell station. A tool box and various tools valued at \$2,000 were stolen as well as \$50 in cash.

A tool box valued at \$300 was stolen from the Texaco gas station in Norval in what police believe was a related break-in. An estimated \$500 worth of tools and equipment was taken during a break-in in a driveway on a farm on Steeles Avenue.

A quantity of drugs was stolen during a break-in at Young's Pharmacy on the weekend. The kind of drugs taken is not known. Their value is placed at \$117.

A car parked at the GO train station was broken into, and a cassette stereo and two speakers stolen.

A car parked at the Georgetown Golf and Country Club

was broken into, and a Pioneer tape deck was stolen.

Vandals punctured two five-gallon drums of paint in a barn on the 8th Concession. Damage was estimated at \$350.

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