

Environment group is questioned

Local Environmental Group, Ecology Awareness Group - Landscape and Environment, (E.A.G.L.E.), is taking the wrong approach in its attempt to stop United Aggregates from expanding its quarry operations to the south side of Sideroad 22, just west of Limehouse, says at least one planner for Halton Hills.

"Personally, I don't think the group's request (that the Niagara Escarpment Commission, (NEC), amend its plan to prevent further quarrying by United Aggregates), will achieve what the applicant, (E.A.G.L.E.), intends, said town planner Glen Wellings.

The town's planning staff is currently reviewing E.A.G.L.E.'s request that the NEC amend its land use plan so that the area under question is redesignated from Mineral Resource Extraction Area to Escarpment Natural and Escarpment Protection areas.

EAGLE argues the amendment, if approved by the NEC, would force United Aggregates to give up its plans to expand its quarry operation from the north side of Sideroad 22 to the south side of the road. The group explains in its proposed amendment, if the company expands its quarrying operations it could cause irreparable damage to the wetlands and tree coverage in the area.

The proposed amendment affects approximately 300 acres or 75 per cent of the lands south of Sideroad 22 which United Aggregates under its provincial license, is currently allowed to quarry.

Mr. Wellings explained only the province's Ministry of Natural Resources has the authority to stop United Aggregates from quarrying. The MNR is the provincial body responsible for issuing and revoking quarry licenses.

That means a NEC decision in favor of E.A.G.L.E. may not carry sufficient authority, said Mr. Wellings.

The issue of United Aggregates right to quarry the southern part of its land comes down to the quarry company's license, said Mr. Wellings. "The amendment begs the question of fairness," he said. United Aggregates was issued a license quarry its property in 1972. It has an inherent right to quarry the land, said Mr. Wellings. The right would only be nullified if the procedure undertaken at the time of issuing the license was improper as deemed by the MNR, said Mr. Wellings.

The MNR stands behind United Aggregates right to quarry the entire property, according to a report submitted to the NEC.

The amendment is totally unacceptable. The result would be that large areas of licensed aggregate resources would not be available to meet the future needs of Ontario residents," according to the report.

Under a heading, "Lack of rational", the MNR argues the E.A.G.L.E. proposal doesn't take into account the effect the amendment would have on the continued availability of aggregate; and the potential environmental effects resulting from new operation that would have to be licensed to make up for the shortfall in aggregate resulting from the amendment.

Before the MNR could seriously consider supporting the amendment, EAGLE, would have to provide an economic analysis of the proposal, a list of alternative supplies, and a description of the type, quality and quantity of resources affected.

The town of Milton has already informed the Town of Halton Hills it supports the amendment. The Milton planning department argues extensive quarrying could have a negative impact on the Amabel Aquifer - Georgetown's water supply.

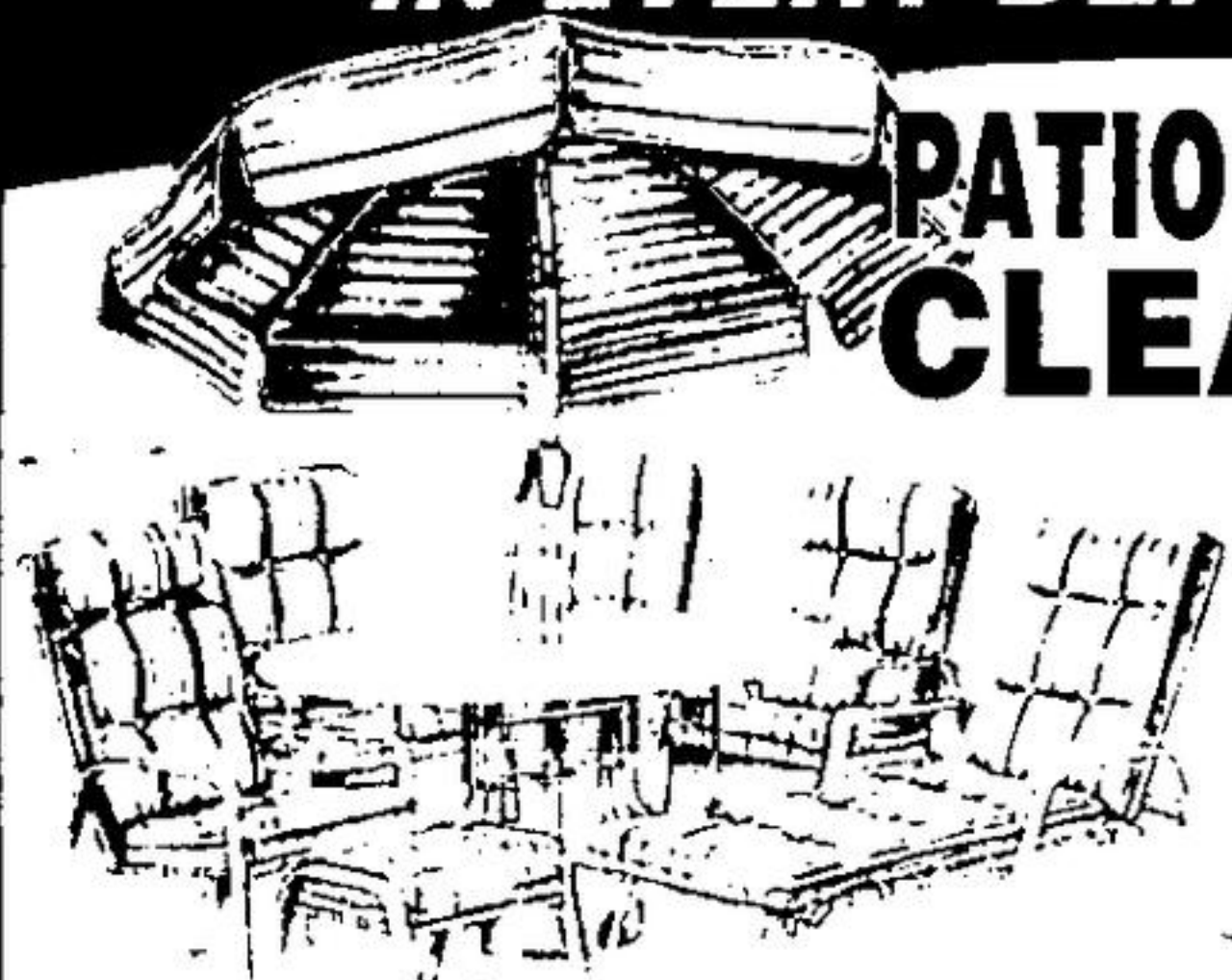
Mr. Wellings said the town's analysis will be much more in depth than that of Milton. The lands in question, said Mr. Wellings, are right in the middle of Halton Hills so the town has a greater interest in the land use, he said.



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