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THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Halton Hills' award-winning newspaper serving Acton & Georgetown

56 Pages

50 Cents (+HST)



Public raises concerns about quarry extension

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

Well water, speeding trucks and endangered species topped the list of concerns at a public meeting about the proposed extension of the Acton Quarry.

Organized by JART (Joint Agency Review Team), the meeting updated the two dozen residents in attendance about JART's conclusions to date. The process began in 2009. Dufferin Aggregates' consultants and representatives were also on hand to provide information about its recently revised proposal.

JART is comprised of experts from the Town, Region and provincial agencies such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) to look about the technical aspects of the proposed expansion. It does not make any decisions, said JART

chair and NEC Senior Strategic Advisor Nancy Mott-Allen, but simply reviews and assesses the complex issues and concerns such as hydrogeology, natural resources, transportation, impact on the Niagara Escarpment, and agriculture.

Once JART completes its evaluations, its work is then passed on to the various agencies, such as the Town and the NEC to form part of their decisions on the expansion.

In January, Dufferin submitted a new plan, reducing the expansion footprint, eliminating many provincial significant areas.

"The reason for the revision to the footprint was largely in response to comments raised by the public and by agencies... particularly related to natural environment features (wetlands and significant habitats of the Jefferson salamander)," said Andrea Bourrie, Dufferin Property and Resource Manager.

JART will consider the new plan before submitting its final report, and then the process moves into the decision-making phase of the various agencies.

For JART, there are still questions to be answered in the coming months on: water resources, natural environment, Adaptive Management Plan (AMP), visual impact, and final rehabilitation. These include key issues such as:

- The ability of Dufferin or the after-owner to manage the ground and

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Living outside the box

Safe School Ambassadors (a.k.a. the "A-Team") Caitlin Gallacher (left) and Natalie Pundsack weren't really disposing of their iPads and smart phones, but they intend to put them on the shelf for a week, as the Grades 6-8 students at Holy Cross School decided to organize a "Live Outside the Box Challenge", in which the 180 students will attempt to decrease their 'screen-time' using various devices and promote active living. In the program, students chart their activity for a week and measure how much time they are spending doing physical activities as opposed to sedentary ones. The challenge started March 23, and ends tomorrow (Friday). The A Team kicked off the event with an assembly featuring various physical games like the mini-sled race Katie Harthen took part in (right).

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