



**GLOBAL GRILL:** The Thurston family of Acton, Nicholas (right) Mick, and Jill won this barbecue in Global Pet's first annual beach party on the weekend. They accepted their prize from Global owner Jenn Everson. - Submitted photo

# Acton quarry expansion gets Town Council support

The Acton quarry expansion - one of "most scrutinized" extraction applications in Ontario - now has unanimous support of both Town and Regional Councils. While there are still major conditions to be satisfied before final approval, the approvals in principle by Halton Hills and Halton Councils mean the quarry will likely operate south of Acton for at least another 25 years.

In opposing, last-minute appeals to Halton Hills Council on Monday, quarry employees protecting their jobs faced off with local environmentalists opposed to quarrying on the Niagara Escarpment, a World Biosphere Reserve.

Acton's Lincoln Trevail, a 19-year quarry employee whose father retired after 40 years at the quarry, said the expansion will bring job security so he can raise his family, just like his dad did.

Part-time firefighter, Acton resident Dale Levere, a 28-year quarry employee, said the quarry is a major part of the community which pays competitive wages, offers skills training, and adds to the tax base. "It's stressful right now knowing that people are fighting to take my employment away from me," Levere said.

Acton resident Chris Rumley could not reconcile how Council - with its environmental bent - could approve the application with incomplete studies, and after hearing how mining at the quarry has damaged the local watershed. "You heard how blasting has caused homes to crack and crumble, you heard about people's wells have gone dry (and) you heard how some of the habitat of an endangered species has been destroyed...." Rumley said.

Quarry planning consultant Brian Zeman said they after meeting with local environmentalists six times, there are

issues they can't resolve, quarrying on the Escarpment but is allowed with strict conditions.

Mayor Rick Bonnette noted there are many stipulations Dufferin must meet before final approval. At Halton Council last week Bonnette amended the approval in principle motion by asking for Ministry of Natural Resources confirmation there are no outstanding technical issues related to Jefferson Salamander habitat, and that of any other regulated, endangered or threatened species, on quarry expansion land.

On Monday Regional/Ward Two Councillor Jane Fogal said since the quarry expansion application was filed in 2009, Council has done its due diligence. "I think this is one of the most tested quarries in the province as far as making sure that the water table is protected, and looking after endangered species and the different habitats," Fogal said. She noted Dufferin intends to turn over approximately 400-hectares of land at the end of the mining process, something the "just isn't done" usually.

At the Halton committee, Dufferin spokesman Brent Clarkson said peer reviews found the application meets all Ministry guidelines related to blasting, noise, haul routes and air quality, and that private and municipal wells would be protected. He said they have the "added comfort" of an outside, independent review that found that the application was a "reasonable proposal and the environment and people's wells surrounding this site will be protected," Clarkson said.

North Halton environmentalist Leslie Adams said the committee should not be in a "rush" to give approval in principle when there are so many outstanding issues. She grudgingly admitted Dufferin, is a "great guy" and is trying to move forward,

but said the Niagara Escarpment is the "wrong place."

POWER (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources) President Doris Treleven echoed that sentiment, and asked for another public meeting. Fourth Line resident Steve Lister contradicted Dufferin's contention it would be responsible for any water issues. He said his 80 to 100-year-old artesian well dried up when the quarry stopped pumping water in Phase two. "Since then we've had to - at our expense...we've had to alter the wells, rebuild wells, (and) add cisterns," Lister said, adding Dufferin has a policy to deny responsibility.

Staff stressed the approval in principle, unanimous at Halton Council, is contingent on results of technical evaluations.

After Monday's Town Council approval in principle, Enzo Bertucci, Dufferin's Manager of Planning, and Property Approvals said he was "pretty happy" with Council's "significant decision" and kind words about being good corporate citizens who keeps its words.

He said they reduced the proposed extraction area by half to 48-hectares, with 38-million tonnes of high quality dolostone, which should extend the life of the quarry by 20 years. It would take approximately five years to mine out the current licenced areas with a maximum annual extraction of four-million tonnes.

"This (approval) gives us the go-ahead to continue working with agency representatives and staff and finalize key documents that are almost near completion...including an Adaptive Management Plan, an Ecological Enhancement Plan, and the Aggregate Resources Act Site Plans," Bertucci said, adding there is still a long process ahead, and a lot of people he'd like to continue meeting with to get on board.

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