

NEC application aimed at limiting quarry size

By Dianne Cornish

Plans to expand quarrying south of the Acton Quarry will become more difficult to implement if an application submitted by Fourth Line resident Giuseppe Gori is approved later this month by the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC).

About four months ago, Gori applied for an amendment to the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) to add about 280 hectares (700 acres) to the Plan, designating the lands as Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area.

During a telephone interview Monday, Gori said he filed the application "for environmental reasons." The block of land that is the subject of his proposal contains trees and wetlands that "should be protected as part of the escarpment," he said.

The lands, which border the Plan area, are south of 22 Sideroad and west of the Third Line.

Gori's proposal will be considered at a meeting of the NEC,

January 14.

If the Commission decides to initiate the amendment, owners of the affected lands will be notified for input and another NEC hearing will be held. Final approval will rest with the provincial cabinet.

"I am investigating any possible legal means of limiting quarrying in the area," Gori said, adding that he made the application on behalf of EAGLE (Ecology Awareness Group, Landscape and Environment). Gori is a past president of the Halton Hills-based environmental group which has steadfastly opposed quarrying on the escarpment.

Landowners within the 700-acre parcel include private homeowners, as well as United Aggregates Limited (UAL), which owns Acton Quarry, and Taro Aggregates, another quarrying company.

UAL owns about 100 acres in the parcel and Taro, about 225 acres, Gori said. UAL plans to expand its quarrying to the south side of 22 Sideroad in the near future and Taro hopes to get government

approval to begin quarrying in the area.

By adding the land to the NEP, "it will create extra difficulty for them (aggregate companies)" to proceed with their plans, Gori remarked. Many residents of the Third and Fourth Lines are concerned about the potential impact of additional quarrying on the groundwater supply which feeds local wells, he added.

About three years ago, Gori applied to the NEC for another amendment, which would restrict quarrying on the east side of Third Line, south of 22 Sideroad. He had hoped to change the designation of the land from mineral extraction to escarpment natural. However, that application is still going through the process.

"They (government officials) usually say, not more than two years" for amendments to be approved, Gori said, noting there are several steps which NEP changes must clear before achieving final approval.

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