

NEC gives quarry green light for expansion

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Frawley said the alternative recommendation was included in the report due to the complexity of the application.

At the meeting Sarah Lowe, Dufferin's property and resource manager, said the proposal will "lead to significant public benefits" and that "everything was done within the rules and regulations of the plan."

She said an additional 173 acres (70 hectares) of Dufferin-owned land will be turned over to the NEC for a natural buffer around the quarry.

Commissioners heard from approximately 25 people, nearly evenly split for and against the Dufferin application.

Several Dufferin employees spoke in favour of the application.

"I cannot imagine the cost of this product if we had to buy it from northern Ontario," said Milton resident Letty Stevenson, who added if the application was approved it would provide continued employment for Dufferin employees.

She and others outlined some of the charitable activities Dufferin is involved in.

Another employee, Brad Yundt, said he had "full confidence" Dufferin protects the environment.

Doug Grey, a local representative of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP) Union, said he was there to support the 86 unionized workers at Dufferin and to speak in favour of the quarry extension with the understanding the environment will be pro-



Ken Zimmerman, lands supervisor at Dufferin Aggregates, surveys the Halton Hills area lands that will be used for aggregate extraction. Photo by Ted Brown

tected.

"We reject the false argument of (a choice between) jobs or the environment," said Grey.

Derek Potapczuk of Beaver Valley Stone, which buys aggregate from Dufferin, said if Dufferin could not expand it would be very difficult to find a new supplier and it would be detrimental to his business.

Speaking against the Dufferin expansion was biologist Fiona Reid who said there were "five nationally significant" bird species living in the area of the expansion.

Reid also said the "perpetual artificial maintenance of wetlands is untenable", referring to Dufferin's water management plan that includes a series of injection wells that are to pump

water to the wetlands to prevent them from drying up.

The system would require ongoing monitoring, maintenance, and if necessary, pumping in perpetuity.

Georgetown resident Barbara Halsall, president of Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER) urged the commission to refuse the Dufferin application.

"A biosphere reserve is supposed to have a balance between development and protection. This portion of the Escarpment has already given its pound of flesh. Please leave just a little bit of corridor," said Halsall.

Karen Schuch called the recommendation and the alternative in the NEC staff report a

"breach of logic."

She added that Dufferin's planned expansion will "be effectively ripping out the current environment."

Halton Hills resident John Morton, an engineer, raised concerns about the proposed dams that are to occupy quarry lands when the extraction is complete and said that the lake embankments have not been adequately studied.

After the vote was taken, Lowe, said she was pleased with the outcome.

"I think it was a good debate," said Lowe. "I think the concerns have been thoroughly aired."

"I was very pleased to hear the comments from some of the commissioners," said area resi-

dent Marion McMeeken who handed in a petition with more than 2,200 signatures of people concerned about the fate of the Escarpment.

Before the vote was taken Commissioner Boraks spoke passionately about protecting the Escarpment.

"We think there's enough doubt here, we're going to err on the side of the Escarpment," said Boraks who had many concerns about the water management plan and did not support the amendment.

"I was disappointed but not surprised because of the commission's past voting pattern where a number of the commissioners do not support the legislation," said Halsall after the vote.

"We have to prepare for a hearing," she added.

NEC director Mark Frawley explained a decision on the application will be made at a joint board hearing, which likely wouldn't be held until next spring. If anyone petitions to provincial cabinet on the decision that comes out of that hearing, it will be up to cabinet to make the final decision, he said.

Voting in favour of the amendment to the plan were Bob Brechin, Marvin Caplan, Gord Krantz, Sam Luckhardt, Larry Miller, Carman Myles, Howard Staff, Betsy Stewart, Jim Turner, Louis Zurini and David Arnill. Opposed were Robert Boraks, Jim Rainforth, Richard Paterak, Rob Nicholson and Ian Lang.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

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