

Dufferin postpones decision on expanding Acton quarry

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work begins in May. Dufferin is inviting one town councillor, one staff member plus three council-appointed citizens, plus another seven citizens appointed by Dufferin to participate.

"We believe there is an opportunity to do a lot more than what is required of us by the Ministry of Natural Resources on the approved site plan. We are very interested in engaging the Town of Halton Hills and the community's residents. There is an opportunity for the Acton Quarry to be quite a spectacular after use," said Bourrie.

A cynical Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, who has seen the ownership of the quarry change many times, wondered what assurance the Town has that Dufferin will follow through on its rehabilitation plans.

"We do what we say we'll do," answered Bourrie bluntly, noting that the company is publicly traded with audited financial statements, including a trust fund to rehabilitate the quarry to the standards required.

The approved Ministry of Natural Resources after use site plan calls for "simple, dry land form with gentle side slopes and grassed/treed areas". To date almost 30 hectares have been rehabilitated and since Dufferin took ownership in 2001, 21,500 native trees have been planted, two quarry walls have been sloped 3:1 (2:1 is required) and four hectares of seep recharge area has been installed. The earliest that the public could possibly use one portion would be in about five years.

As part of its annual Earth Week celebrations Dufferin has scheduled a Tree Planting Day at the quarry on Saturday, April 21. Activities get under way at 8:30 a.m. with a barbecue lunch at 11 a.m.

Councillors took the opportunity to question Bourrie on a number of nagging issues such as hours of operation and blasting.

Bourrie says quarry processing begins at 5:45 a.m. and ends 11:30 p.m. to accommodate the shipping times of 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. While she will investigate ways to ease the impact of the early and late times on neighbours, Bourrie pointed out the quarry does have an operating licence for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The operating hours were set to meet the required aggregate demand and after consulting with the quarry's neighbours.



RICK BONNETTE

The quarry's blasting expert is also looking at new techniques in blast patterns and frequency, again to alleviate resident impact, noting that a change in previous years brought some success.

Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER) past president Barbara Halsall commented, while the JART process began about a year ago, council and residents didn't learn of the proposal until February.

Regional Councillor Jane Fogal agreed with Halsall's concerns and as a result, a report on a recent regional committee agency addressed this "flaw in the system".

Effective immediately regional council will be informed when staff is in a pre-consultation stage with JART proposals.

For more see page 9.

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