



# OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

## This site should stay protected as in plan

Dear Editor:

An application has been made by Jannock Limited to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan, to delete approximately 31 hectares (76.6 acres) of land from the protection of the plan.

And, a second application has been made to amend the Region of Halton Official Plan to permit the inclusion of this land as part of the Milton Urban Expansion Area.

This site, located on the northeast corner of Steeles Avenue and Tremaine Road and bounded on the east by the CPR line, was used for shale extraction and once had a brick plant on site.

In recent years, a proposal to build a new brick plant was turned down. The land is within an environmental protection zone in the Niagara Escarpment Plan and is designated environmental protection and escarpment rural area in the Region of Halton Official Plan.

The main argument of Jannock Limited's justification for application to the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) is its contention that this land is not part of the escarpment. The company's interpretation is that the foot of the escarpment runs along Tremaine Road.

The Ontario Geological Survey — Ministry of Northern Development and Mines — has indicated that the base of the escarpment falls within the property in question. Jannock Limited also suggests that the vegetation "old field, successional woods and shrub units are substantially different in character from the vegetation found on the escarpment slope, west of Tremaine Road" and therefore, doesn't warrant inclusion in the Milton Outlier Earth Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). This still does not mean that the property isn't part of the Outlier.

In a letter to Halton regional council in December, 1994, the NEC stated that "urban development is considered to inherently conflict with the purpose of the act, of maintaining the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity, substantially as a continuous natural environment, and ensure such development occurs as is compatible with the natural environment." The staff of the NEC has prepared a Review of Niagara Escarpment Plan Boundary: Milton Outlier East and Surrounding Area.

The Review affirms the appropriateness of including the Jannock property and three properties south of Steeles Avenue at Tremaine Road within the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

The Jannock property and the three properties on the south side

of Steeles Avenue constitute a "special study area" in the region of Halton Official Plan. This designation has allowed Halton region to weasel out of its responsibility to give the area the protection from the urban development that the escarpment and land in its vicinity deserve.

The individual landowners in this "special study area" have been encouraged by the Region planners to make application for individual Niagara Escarpment amendments.

Because Jannock Limited has made applications to both the NEC and Halton Region, a joint board made up of an officer from the Environmental Assessment Board and an officer of the Ontario Municipal Board will hear the applications.

A second pre-hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m. July 27 in Milton Council Chambers. If the hearings were to proceed now, the Region planners would have to oppose an amendment to the

Halton Region Plan because of a lack of infrastructure in Milton (i.e. water supply) to support urban expansion in this area.

By the July pre-hearing, the Region of Halton will, doubtless, have plans in place for a water pipeline from Lake Ontario to Milton and is unlikely to oppose Jannock Limited's application.

Instead of covering up the earlier damage to the escarpment and changing its character to that of just another bland housing development, the area should be preserved for its historic and cultural value.

Why should it be only the beautiful or ennobling sites that are protected? We have an example here of natural regeneration and a chance to observe the natural process of healing. We might have something to learn here.

Irene McIlveen  
Acton

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