

Company seeking approval for quarry

By JASON MISNER

Special to The Champion

A long-time Burlington brick company says it needs a new quarry site to extract popular shale aggregate because its current supply will likely run out in the next three to four months.

But despite Hanson Brick's business dilemma, Halton councillors insist they won't quicken their approval process and will ensure all the proper information is in before they consider giving the okay.

Hanson's vice-president, Arnold Norris, made a presentation to the Region's planning and public works committee Wednesday morning explaining the company's critical need to open a 71-acre extraction quarry west of Tremaine Road, south of No. 1 Sideroad, with a lifespan of 50 to 55 years.

The proposed site, a farming property that also borders Milton and Oakville, is located north of Hanson's current operations.

The land in question doesn't allow for a quarry pit. Halton is one of a number of agencies that would need to give zoning amendment approvals for the quarry. The City of Burlington and the Province must also give their approvals.

The company first made an application to the Region in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Norris told the committee that Hanson "supports the need to protect the rural setting," and acknowledged a quarry can't exist amicably in an urban setting.

Mr. Norris said Hanson needs shale to produce what's called a "buff" brick. It's a blond-coloured brick that's in high demand for industrial construction to build structures like hospitals and schools.

While having the same strength as traditional brick, buff brick is prized for its aesthetic value.

Hanson, Mr. Norris told the committee, needs to purchase the potential quarry property by mid-August so it would like to know there's approval, in principle, from the committee.

The current 35-acre shale quarry has been depleted and Hanson hopes to ultimately have all of the necessary approvals to begin quarry extraction at the new site in the fall.

The quarry is vital to Hanson's need to build a new \$60-million brick manufacturing plant, Mr. Norris said. One of the three plants, more than 40 years old, is set to close in 2010. Without a replacement, Norris warned that 80 to 100 jobs would be in "jeopardy."

The company has a total workforce of about 450 people.

Hanson has asked for an exemption to the minister's greenbelt order introduced last December, which placed a moratorium on development outside of designated urban areas. A meeting has been scheduled for June 14 with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

"To help us in this process we are requesting council to support the principle of a quarry use as a rural use," Norris said. "This does not, in our view, prematurely determine nor prejudice your consideration of our application. We are a committed Halton region employer."

But the committee members couldn't approve it in principle.

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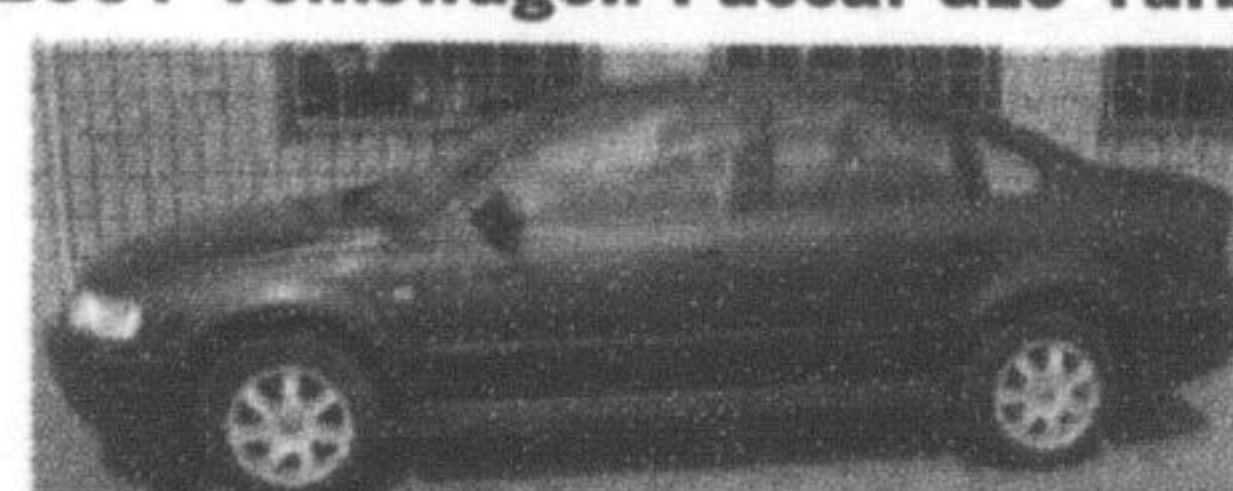
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