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Residents meet to try to stop quarry plan

By **ROBIN DOWNTON-POIRIER**

Special to *The Champion*

With the official application for a proposed quarry filed last week, Friends of

Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE) are ready to do battle with the proponent, Lowndes Holdings Inc.

Lowndes Holdings filed an application

with the City of Hamilton to put a limestone quarry on a 380-acre parcel of land on the 11th Concession in Flamborough near Milton. It has also obtained rights to

another 150 acres of land for future use but the application was made only for the original 380 acres.

A community information meeting was held Thursday at the Campbellville Lions Hall by FORCE in conjunction with the Milton Rural Residents Association. Attended by approximately 150 residents, the meeting covered various aspects of the fight against Lowndes Holdings' proposed quarry.

Members of FORCE discussed the facts of the quarry with regards to size and location as well as the impact on the community and the environment.

If Lowndes Holdings' application is successful, the quarry will be the eighth largest quarry in Canada.

But FORCE is doing everything it can to ensure that doesn't happen.

"We have a lot of substantial facts to back this case," said Graham Flint, chair and spokesperson for FORCE. "But, as the saying goes, we've only just begun. It's going to take a long time (before the matter is resolved)."

Members of FORCE strongly believe that they will win the case against Lowndes Holdings because of the impact they say a quarry would have on the surrounding wetlands, water supply and residential area. A quarry established in this rural community would drastically lower property values and damage the standard of living the residents have always enjoyed, they believe.

Another reason FORCE believes it will win is the legal representation it has obtained.

"The lawyer we've hired, Rod Northey, M.A., LL.M., or Birchall Northey, practices exclusively in environmental law," said Mr. Flint. "He hasn't lost a case yet. He's excellent!"

Many residents are showing their support for FORCE and stopping the quarry not only by attending the meetings and contributing much-needed monetary commitments, but by talking to their neighbors and posting signs on their lawns. Some residents are outraged that someone would think of placing a quarry in their community.

"I just feel overwhelmed by the idea of (the proposed quarry)," said Nancy Stevens, a Milborough Line resident. "We've been in Campbellville for 18 years and love it. I really think we can beat it!"

Another resident, Jean Woods, is worried about the water.

"We have such beautiful, pure water, with a lovely taste and we were told that we had enough water to irrigate our whole lot if we ever wanted to put an irrigation system in. There is no guarantee that if we have to go deeper onto another aquifer that the quality or amount (of water) will be as good."

Some residents, though, have taken a different view on the matter.

"With all the housing going up in the GTA, the demand for limestone is high," said Bert Walton, a Campbellville resident. "There will always be people upset no matter where the quarry goes. As far as the extra truck traffic, I have 720 vehicles go past my house in an hour. Another 450 a day is not going to make a lot of difference."

In order to fight the quarry, the cost will be high — estimated to be \$100,000 per year. The majority of the cost is allocated to legal and technical experts for research and reports to back FORCE's arguments.

More than 130 households have contributed funds (average commitment of \$535) as well as approximately 14 local businesses (average commitment of \$1,100).

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