

Farm owners attempt to delay dump opening

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

Annette Winter is attempting to make one last stand against the Halton regional landfill site off Highway 25 in south rural Milton.

Monday Ms Winter fired off a letter to provincial environment minister Ruth Grier asking that Halton not be allowed to begin dumping waste at the site until water problems at the neighbouring Winter family farm have been resolved.

If Ms Grier agrees to a postponed opening for the landfill it could present a problem for Halton Region, said Cliff Chan, Halton's manager of solid waste operations, Monday.

"We are so close to opening the site. I hope there would not be any problem with the ministry," Mr. Chan said.

To have the opening pushed back would mean re-negotiating a temporary disposal deal to keep trucking Halton's garbage out of the region, to New York, for example. Much of Halton's waste is shipped to New York's Niagara area for disposal, but that agreement was to cease as municipal waste began going to the Milton landfill later this month.

Mr. Chan also said he doesn't want to see the protective clay liner at the Milton landfill left vulnerable to the elements due to a delay in opening.

"It would not be advisable to leave the clay liner exposed to the air. We have to dump some garbage on top to help protect the liner."

The liner is to act as a barrier to help prevent leachate — the liquid formed when groundwater mixes with waste — from dripping into the soil beneath the dump site. Mr.

Chan fears that if the liner is left uncovered for weeks, during potentially cold weather, it could crack.

Annette and Ray Winter operate a dairy farm south of the landfill. They are the closest private property owners to the dump, and they say they have had an extremely difficult time supplying their herd, and themselves, with water for about a year.

The couple believe excavation operations at the landfill compromised their wells, and they have battled for months to get compensation from Halton.

Regional councillors finally agreed to hire independent consultants to investigate the matter in July, and they began their work this week. Both the Winters and Halton have agreed to accept the verdict of the consultants regarding whether or not landfill operations

are responsible for the farm difficulties.

But the studies are expected to take up to two months. And by the end of September, Halton was planning to open the landfill to at least take the waste collected by the area municipalities. The landfill is scheduled to open to the public and private haulers in November.

As far as Ms Winter is concerned, if Halton begins putting waste on the site before her family's problems are resolved, "they might as well be dumping it right into our well."

Mr. Chan said Ms Winter's letter to Ruth Grier was "news to me." As recently as last Friday, he added, he met with Ministry of the Environment officials and there appeared to be "no concern" about starting limited operations in September.

Now, "I suppose it will be up to the ministry to decide," Mr. Chan noted.

Council aims to tear down wall built against brick plant

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

Milton town council came out against environment minister Ruth Grier's move to block approval for a brick manufacturing plant at the foot of the Niagara Escarpment Monday night.

Ward 2 councillor John Challinor successfully pushed through a motion stressing Milton's disagreement with Ms Grier's over-ruling of Niagara Escarpment Commission approval for the proposed plant.

Mr. Challinor's motion also called on Ms Grier to set up a meeting involving all the interested parties to outline what information the provincial government needs in order to see the proposal in a more favourable light.

In over-ruling the NEC approval for the plant, Ms Grier said she wanted a detailed and comprehensive site plan from Jannock Brick, the company that owns 200 acres on both sides of Town Line north of Steeles Avenue. The firm works a large strip mine type quarry on the west side of Town Line and plans to build a 180,000 square foot brick plant on the vacant east side of the property.

Jannock has stated publicly that the firm wants provincial approval to double the size of its quarry pit on the western property, flank, hard against the foot of the Niagara Escarpment. In that manner, Jannock will be assured of a longer-term supply of shale with which to make bricks. Milton council is opposed to any enlargement of the quarry, but supports the basic brick plant, with its attendant jobs and tax base.

While Mr. Challinor urged the

provincial government to give ground, Ward 1 councillor Brian Penman argued that it is the company that must be more forthcoming.

A staunch Progressive Conservative, Mr. Penman said, "I'm almost embarrassed to find myself defending the NDP and Ruth Grier."

"I would love that industry to come to Milton but I am concerned that the (company) never put all its cards on the table" by formally declaring the quarry expansion was coupled to the manufacturing plant bid, Mr. Penman said.

While Jannock has acknowledged that over the long term it will apply for a quarry expansion, the company separated that matter from its initial submission to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Its proposal detailed only the proposed brick building facility, not a push for more mining rights.


Many in government circles fear that once the plant is up and running, the company will use it as leverage to obtain the pit expansion, what Mr. Penman depicted as an attempt "to wiggle through the back door."

The councillor vehemently opposes making the strip mine bigger. Already the view in the area "is no longer a vista, it is a scar," Mr. Penman said. "It is ugly."

Mr. Challinor said he was "not looking for unqualified support" for the entire Jannock plan. "Had the development permit been approved there would have been a myriad of conditions," he said. But Ms Grier "interfered with the process."

He urged Ms Grier to "put your cards on the table, tell us what is re-

• see BRICK on page 8




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