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ENVIRONMENT

Town to pass tough laws on pit dumping

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STAFF WRITER

Gravel pit owners could wake up tomorrow to tighter laws.

Tonight, gravel pit owners are expected to be out in full force at a council meeting where a new bylaw is being considered.

Council has been asked to pass a tough bylaw designed to put some teeth into the laws governing the local gravel pits, especially defunct pits.

If council gives the nod, dumping fill on lands zoned rural extractive will be banned.

As well as prohibiting the placing of fill in lands zoned rural extractive, town staff has recommended that the bylaw include a provision to require all pit owners who place fill in excess of 5,000 cubic feet to enter into an agreement with the town.

The new bylaw is proposed to ensure that the fill does not contaminate the natural environment and that it conforms with existing environmental laws, staff pointed out.

Pit owners are also being reminded that they should accept liability for any damage resulting from filling.

SERIOUS MATTER

There are 16 gravel pits in Stouffville; the handling of fill at an unused pit is a serious matter, Mayor Wayne Emmerson said.

"We're concerned about what's going in them," Emmerson said.

"I don't want to see old construction material ending up in the defunct pits. When it happens, the pit just becomes a garbage dump."

"Of the 16 pits, four or five are defunct. We just don't have the staff to monitor them," Emmerson said.

Last year, court action was initiated at a defunct gravel pit on the Concession 7, following an 18-month investigation by the province.

The province stepped in after area residents complained that trucks were going in and out of the pit. Construction debris was being dumped on the site, the Ministry found.

Charges were laid and the case is still before the courts. Shortly after the province laid the charges, the town got involved and shut the operation down.

Stop "Bracket Creep" Tax Increases!!

One of our responsibilities as financial planners is to protect clients from excess taxation. But, we now need your help! The latest federal budget is a great disappointment to us once again.

First, the government failed to increase the annual RRSP contribution limits and failed to raise the allowable foreign content. However, we feel the federal government really let Canadians down by not re-indexing the tax system. For those who do not understand the importance of this "bracket creep", we will explain. We are confident that you, too, will be upset and will join us by putting pressure on our MP's to create a fairer tax system.

Currently, we have a three tiered tax system:

<u>Income Level</u>	<u>Approximate Average Federal and Provincial Tax*</u>
to \$29,590	27%
\$29,591 to \$59,180	42%
over \$59,180	50%

*This will change from province to province, generally annually

These tax levels only get indexed if inflation is over 3%. For the last 7 years, inflation has been under 3% while our tax levels have remained the same. During this time frame, most people's incomes have increased by inflation or just slightly more. The result is we are paying more tax. For example, in 1998 an individual earning \$50,000 paid an extra \$1340 in tax, due to this bracket creep. Yes, the government eliminated the 3% surtax, but re-indexing the tax system to inflation is, over the long, more important. Re-indexing should not be looked at as a tax cut by our law makers; re-indexing prevents an automatic, annual tax increase.

People of all income levels should be 'up in arms' about this. Those making around the \$29,590 level will soon be paying 42% of every new dollar earned to the government, rather than 27%. Many high income earners are contributing to RRSPs today, knowing that at retirement or age 69, they will convert their RRSPs to RRIFs and be taxed on the withdrawals at that time. With proper tax planning, and income splitting, they are hoping this will be in a lower tax bracket at retirement thus lowering their current 50% marginal tax bracket to 42% or 27%. If we have another 7 years or longer with low inflation under 3%, we will all be in the highest tax bracket before we know it.

As Canadian taxpayers, we urge you to lobby your MP and Honourable Paul Martin, our Minister of Finance. Tell all of your friends and family members to do the same. This is critical to our future financial health, not only as individuals, but as a nation. We are already one of the most highly taxed nations in the world, let's not let it get any worse.

We, at **Money Concepts**, are so committed to effecting positive change that we have written a letter outlining our argument. The letter will be sent to Mr. Martin and our local MP. Please call Maryanne at our office for a copy of the letter if you would also like to lobby for this tax change.

At **Money Concepts**, we do our best to help clients minimize their taxes. It may be investment planning, income splitting between spouses, developing an effective estate plan to ensure the next generation truly inherits your wealth and/or using life insurance to create a meaningful tax shelter. We would be delighted to meet with you about your financial situation or to simply further explain this tax issue. Please call **Carol Clements, Sandy Parsons** or **Signy Lawson** at 642-4540.



Carol Clements, Signy Lawson, Sandy Parsons

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