

Province is investigating claims from residents

Gravel pit material 'not contaminated,' owner says

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confirmed that images viewed by The Tribune, showing roofing material, plastic piping, plastic jugs, plastic snow fencing tires, rubber material, asphalt and hydro poles, complete with electrical wiring attached, were dumped into a Warden Avenue gravel pit.

"It is not contaminated material," stressed Alcorn. "The Ministry of the Environment is satisfied that this is not contaminated material. The fill suits the requirements of the Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry are the watch dogs. If they're happy, we're happy."

According to MOE, inert (or acceptable) fill means earth or rock fill or waste of a similar nature that contains no questionable materials or soluble or decomposable chemical sub-

stance.

In a letter to the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Foreman suggested that gravel pit operators are violating Ministry terms because of what's being dumped.

Foreman is asking if plastic, wire and rubber are classified as clean fill.

Alcorn said the debris in question "represents only half of one percent" of fill at this site.

Sean McGowan, aggregate resource officer with the Ministry of the Natural Resources, reported that after inspecting the gravel pit, he set up a meeting with MOE officials to determine what's going on at this site.

"If some material contravenes the act, it will be rectified," stressed McGowan. "We have the authority through the Aggregate Resources Act."

While emphasizing that such waste does not pose a health threat to the neighborhood, Alcorn said Pitway is still taking measures to limit what material can be brought into company pits.

Hydro poles, roofing materials and plastics will not be accepted at any Pitway operations from now on, Alcorn stated. "We run a clean operation. It's an open door. We've got nothing to hide. Ours is cleaner than most."

Last week, residents from the Bloomington Road and Warden Avenue area filled the local council chambers and expressed worries that unclean fill dumped into nearby gravel pits could seep into their water supply, thus putting lives at risk.

Council sided with the residents and rejected three applications from pit operators, including one from the Brillinger property. The applicants requested exemptions to a new fill control bylaw, allowing them to continue to dump fill into the holes at mined gravel pits.

Earlier this year, a bylaw governing the 16 gravel pits in Whitchurch-Stouffville was passed, making it necessary for pit owners to apply for permits to dump fill. Members of the aggregate community, including Hicks, helped draft the bylaw.

Alcorn pointed out that gravel pit owners are now required to enter into a comprehensive fill agreement and post a substantial no contamination security bond with the town as well as undertaking ground water monitoring and hydrogeological impact assessment prior to approval in the defunct pits.

The new bylaw was put in place after a provincial judge found a Whitchurch-Stouffville gravel pit owner guilty of illegal dumping after construction debris was uncovered in a defunct gravel pit. A cleanup order was slapped on the property. The owner complied with the judge's demands.

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Trucks dump fill at a pit on Warden Ave. last week. The owner says only a small amount of controversial material has been dumped at the site.