



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

Residents of Thornbay Drive stand in front of the Bloomington Road property its owners want to fill. The potential for noise and dust from years of dumping upsets residents.

BLOOMINGTON RESIDENTS FEAR ADDITIONAL YEARS OF GRAVEL TRUCKS, DUST FROM NEW FILL PROPOSAL

Neighbours: 'Not in my back yard'

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Hell.

That is what it will feel like living next to a proposed in-fill site on Bloomington Road, according to one area resident.

Terrified is how another resident of the hamlet of Bloomington described the potential scenario.

Sadness is what a mother is experiencing because her three young boys won't be able to play in their back yard for roughly the next four years.

They — names were not announced — were in a crowd of about 80 people from the Bloomington Road/Ninth Line area jammed into the Whitchurch-Stouffville council chambers' gallery Wednesday night for a special council meeting on the application to in-fill 5783 Bloomington Rd.

The Bloomington Road property owners want to restore the approximately 83 acres to its original grade and use it for agricultural/rural purposes, according to the staff report.

It will take about 1.84 cubic metres of clean fill to accomplish this and last three to four years.

At least one resident thinks it will

take longer.

As part of the project, the property's two ponds have to be filled.

"It's not how I want to live the next six years," said Thornbay Drive resident Paul Mihelcic prior to the meeting.

"Who in their right mind is going to say OK, you can do that in my back yard for six years?" he said.

The site once housed a gravel pit extraction operation. More recently and temporarily, it is being used as a horse stable with three dwellings on it. They will be removed and could be re-instated upon the project's completion, according to the risk management plan submitted to the town by Fabian Papa & Partners Inc. and G2S Environmental Consulting Inc.

"It doesn't need further remediation as far as I'm concerned," said Councillor Susanne Hilton, during the meeting.

The gallery erupted in applause.

Attempts by The Sun-Tribune to contact the owners through their consultants and other avenues were unsuccessful in time for this publication's deadline. They were not named in the report and did not speak at the meeting. Mayor Wayne Emmerson said the owners were in

the gallery Wednesday night.

Residents have already spent time living in a dust bowl and hearing the clanging of dump truck tailgates. The property beside this one — 5511 Bloomington Rd. — also a former gravel pit, is being rehabilitated and is near completion. It is owned/operated by the same people who put forth the proposal for the land next door.

'Who in their right mind is going to say OK, you can do that in my back yard for six years?'

Measures will be put in place to minimize the project's impact on area residents, according to the consultant who spoke on behalf of the owners.

Residents, who met with the owners privately last week, found the solutions laughable.

"That's just hogwash," said one Thornbay Drive resident.

Thornbay runs south off Bloomington Road and is just west of the Ninth Line.

One of the drivers' rules will be that they can only bang their truck's tailgate once. Between 300 and 400 trucks a day are expected to bring clean fill into that site.

"You won't stop the tailgate banging. You won't stop the noise, but they will do their best," Mayor Wayne Emmerson told the residents in attendance.

A 12-foot berm will be erected to help minimize the noise and dirt.

This is not a town project, but, if approved as proposed, the municipality stands to gain about \$1.656 million in servicing fees.

"What's in it for the people living there? Absolutely nothing," said Ninth Line resident John McPhee.

Along with a decrease in their property values, residents claim they will have to actually shell out more money in order to remain living in their homes.

Clothes won't be able to dry on the line, therefore, there will be an increase in dryer usage. Air conditioning will have to be installed and used regularly because of the dust.

"This is my life. This is my equity and you can't take it away like that," Glenn Collins, a Thornbay Drive resident, told councillors.

Mr. Collins hired a lawyer to fight the application.

"If I was mad and worried before this meeting, I'm 10 times more now," he said.

There is no definition of what constitutes clean fill, according to Debbie Gordon, from the STORM (Save the Oak Ridges Moraine) Coalition. Ms Gordon, along with Carmela Marshall of the Lakeridge Citizens for Clean Water, want the municipality to come up with a standard.

Fill being moved to the Bloomington Road site will be tested before being transported. Periodic testing will also be done of the soil once it is dumped, according to Paolo E. Albanese, PEO designated consulting engineer and partner at Fabian Papa & Partners Inc., who presented the proposal Wednesday night.

Ms Marshall noted a site in Scugog was found to be contaminated despite site testing.

The meeting was held in order to obtain resident feedback.

No decision was made on the application and one is not expected until sometime in the fall when staff will present its recommendation to council.