



## Concerned Residents Coalition

### Media Release

#### **Concerned Residents Coalition Formed in Response to James Dick Construction's "Hidden Quarry" Proposal for Rockwood**

April 8, 2013...Guelph-Eramosa Township, Ontario- Residents of Guelph-Eramosa, Milton, Erin and Halton Hills have formed the **Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC)** to respond to the proposal by the **James Dick Construction Limited (JDCL)**. The company has applied to open a gravel pit and quarry called the "Hidden Quarry" on the North side of Highway 7 at the 6<sup>th</sup> Line, between Acton and Rockwood. **Area residents who want more information about the proposal or to join the CRC are urged to contact the Coalition.**

**JDCL has made concurrent applications to the Ministry of Natural Resources for a licence under the Aggregate Resources Act and to the Township of Woolwich for a rezoning under the Planning Act. The CRC's first task is to ensure that residents are aware of the Monday, April 15 deadline for letters of objection under the Aggregate Resources Act licence application procedures.**

**The CRC is also encouraging residents to submit comment letters to the Township in regards to the rezoning application and to copy the member of Township Council on their Aggregate Resources Act letters of objection.**

The application to the Township for re-zoning proposes is to change the zoning on JDCL's lands from agricultural to extractive industrial. In addition, a special provision requests Township to "provide relief from required surface water excavation setback of 30 metres to 20 metres."

The Aggregate Resources Act licence application would, if approved, enable JDCL to extract 700,000 tonnes a year, down to 30 metres below the water table at the site.

A public meeting required by both the Aggregate Resources Act and Planning Act processes was held on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Close to 300 residents attended to express concerns about the impact of pit and quarry operations on health, safety, traffic, the natural environment, peace, wells, property values, water resources, cultural heritage resources and quality of life. Concerns were also expressed about the requirements of the Aggregate Resources Act process which stipulate a short, 45-day public response window. This short response deadline was described as not appropriate for what is a technically complex application that proposes activity that would change and damage life for years to come in the surrounding communities.

Greg Sweetnam represented JDCL and said nothing to allay concerns. JDCL had not consulted with Milton residents South of Highway 7 or in Acton and peer reviews of the application by the Township have revealed serious deficiencies with regards to the application.

It was also noted at the meeting that the Grand River Conservation Authority had not submitted a report on the proposal. Inquiries at the Township offices in the next days revealed



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that the GRCA had in fact submitted a partial report to Township Council dated January 31, but had deferred its full response until further analysis could be completed on site. The GRCA report will not be complete before the public consultation period associated with the Aggregate Resources Act process is over.

The scope and urgency of residents' concerns led to the establishment of the Concerned Residents Coalition a short week later. Immediately the Coalition began sharing and circulating information about the proposal throughout the affected area which includes Guelph-Eramosa, Rockwood, Milton and Halton Hills residents. Only Guelph-Eramosa has authority over the zoning so the Towns of Milton and Halton Hills can only comment and raise concerns.

James Dick Construction purchased the property in 1988 registering it under a numbered company. The approximately 100 acres of wetlands, established woodland and a conifer tree plantation (planted with the assistance of the Ministry of Natural Resources in the 1980's) on the property are located close to the eastern limit of the Grand River Watershed. Ground water feeds the cold-water, trout stream named Blue Springs Creek which flows into the Eramosa River in Eden Mills and on through Guelph to the Grand. The 6<sup>th</sup> Line, where the pit entrance would be located, is a quiet rural dead-end concession line which features families, several heritage stone farm houses, a variety of other heritage buildings, and farms, including a mushroom farm. Several horse farms are near the property. Just one kilometre away, the Eastern-most ridges of the new housing developments and young families of Rockwood overlook the proposed quarry site.

The excavation of 700,000 tonnes of gravel and rock a year would send at least 26 heavy and dusty trucks an hour onto the two-lane Highway 7, through the town of Acton and to the 401, merging with an equal number of Dufferin Aggregates trucks just South of Acton.

The CRC aims to ensure that the proposed so-called "Hidden Quarry" gravel pit and quarry is "hidden no more." The CRS will coordinate and circulate information, conduct research on all aspects of the site and the proposed mineral aggregate mining, bring issues to the attention of municipal and provincial government and participate in the review of the application. If in the end there are unacceptable impacts associated with the pit and quarry the CRA will oppose the application and advocate for the Township of Guelph-Eramosa to deny the rezoning and advocate for the Ministry of Natural Resources to refuse the licence.

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