

**May 10, 2014**

**St. John's Anglican Church Rockwood Public Forum on Hidden Quarry**

**Introductory Presentation from Concerned Residents Coalition**

**Represented by Doug Tripp**

Having carefully and thoroughly assessed the application documents and peer reviews related to the proposed Hidden Quarry, we strongly believe that the proposed quarry will seriously degrade the overall quality of life in our community and have significant adverse effects on the environment, health and safety of residents, on the economic well-being of the Township and its residents, and on the structural integrity of homes, buildings, and local infrastructure. The various presentations and reports that we have submitted to Guelph-Eramosa Township provide extensive details of our concerns and these are all available to the public on the CRC website, [www.hiddenquarry.ca](http://www.hiddenquarry.ca).

I will address three questions in this brief statement:

- What is CRC?
- What are our concerns?
- How are we presenting our case?

### **1. What is CRC?**

Some of you may not be familiar with the Concerned Residents Coalition. CRC is a community group representing the citizens of Guelph-Eramosa, Erin, Acton, and Nassagaweya (Milton), established in March 2013 to do due diligence on the Rockwood quarry application submitted by James Dick Construction Limited. Our growing membership numbers more than 600 at present. Many highly qualified, knowledgeable, and experienced individuals within our group have volunteered countless hours to the assessment of application documents and the preparation of detailed reports that have shed additional light on the implications of the proposal to operate a quarry in the heart of our community. To address those areas outside of our own expertise, we have hired highly respected experts to prepare additional scientific assessments and reports.

## 2. What are our concerns?

Let me elaborate very briefly on some of the key concerns

- Negative environmental impacts will include
  - significant risk to groundwater resources that feed many private wells and the soon to be commissioned municipal well #4 in Rockwood due to the proposed below water mining operation in what is widely agreed to be karst geology; our hydrogeology consultant has raised in excess of 60 specific questions and made numerous additional comments about deficiencies in the proponent's hydrogeology assessment in a report about to be submitted to the Township and stakeholders;
  - destruction of nearby provincially significant wetlands and the Brydson Creek which meanders through the middle of the quarry site;
  - air pollution including the emission of hazardous micro-particulates due to stone crushing, loading and truck traffic; our air quality consultant has identified more than 30 significant deficiencies in the proponent's air quality assessment in a report provided by CRC to the Township;
  - noise pollution from the 12 hour per day stone crushing, washing, storage and loading operations and the regular blasting events.
- Health and safety impacts will include
  - Human and animal health issues due to degraded water resources and dust pollution;
  - The significant risk of fly-rock damage to nearby residences and a 1 km stretch of Hwy 7 which will be within less than 500 metres of blasting operations;
  - Road hazards arising from an average of 26 heavy gravel trucks travelling to and from the quarry each hour from 6 am to 6 pm, entering or exiting Hwy 7 at the 6<sup>th</sup> line and trundling through Acton's already overwhelmed main streets;
  - General disruption to the peaceful rural lifestyle that brought many of us here in the first place.

- Blasting vibration impacts on nearby homes and buildings will be significant, quite possibly to a range of 1500 metres or more; a number of those structures are heritage stone houses that we expect to be particularly vulnerable to vibration damage;
- Negative economic impacts will include
  - The potential loss of nearby farming and agri-business operations, including a prosperous mushroom farm located about 100 metres from the site, a livestock and poultry farm only slightly further away, and at least three horse farms and training operations well within the quarry impact zone;
  - Infrastructure costs including road maintenance along haul routes such as through downtown Acton or wherever the operator ends up transporting product;
  - Reduction in property values of nearby residences and the resulting loss of assessment and property taxes accruing to the Township—quite possibly resulting in the need to shift tax burden to areas that are further removed from the quarry site.

### **3. How are we presenting our case?**

CRC has been actively communicating within the community and with stakeholders. In all of our efforts, we have been respectful, factual and balanced. Since March 2013, CRC has:

- Made 12 delegations to the GET Council, each with specific reports and concerns;
- Held 3 well-attended community meetings in Eden Mills, Acton and Rockwood to educate the community on the relevant issues;
- Met with stakeholders and commenting agencies including the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources, Grand River Conservation Authority, Halton Region planning staff, and MPPs Ted Chudleigh and Ted Arnott;
- Kept the local media informed including the New Tanner and Wellington Advertiser newspapers, Cogeco community TV, and media in Guelph, Milton, Georgetown and Erin;

- Shared information with other organizations that have an interest in the aggregate extraction and water issues such as PitSense in Caledon, NDACT and Food & Water First, Gravel Watch Ontario, Wellington Water Watchers and FORCE in Milton.

We will continue our due diligence as the rezoning and aggregate extraction licence applications work their way through the process, and will obtain the related expertise as needed to do so.

Of course, this all means that we need to raise financial support and our leadership group is focusing on fundraising events that will sustain our efforts including membership development, the upcoming garage sale on the 31<sup>st</sup>, a golf and dining event in June, and an entertaining and tasty Rockwood Mushroom Festival featuring local foods on the village green here in Rockwood in the Fall.

**In conclusion**, I believe that, important as it is to the quality of life in our community, the Rockwood quarry concerns are also symptomatic of a larger struggle:

- To find an appropriate balance between the development needs of an expanding urbanism and the preservation of a fragile natural environment, water resources that are already stressed, and the agricultural resources needed to feed a growing population;
- And to reconcile the injustices that occur when private for-profit industrial operations are enriched at the tangible and intangible costs of the “host” communities and their residents.