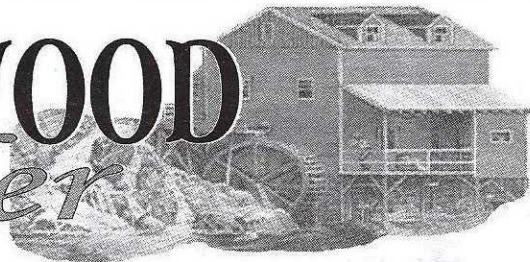


The ROCKWOOD Miller



First OMB Pre-hearing held at Rockmosa for Hidden Quarry

By: Vivien Fleisher

On Monday November 9, legal council for several parties along with dozens of local residents attended the first of several OMB pre-hearings regarding James Dick Construction's application for a license and rezoning of lands for the proposed Hidden Quarry. Described as a Class A Category 2 aggregate quarry, the application was started in 2012, and is now scheduled to go before the Ontario Municipal Board, most likely on September 13, 2016 if all goes well.

At the Monday meeting, preliminary details were discussed that will be part of the hearings next fall. These include starting the process of setting up mediation, assigning a mediator, looking at the potential length of the hearing, recognizing party status, and establishing a list of participants. Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) legal counsel Laura Bissett expressed concern that setting a hearing date so soon was premature. However OMB chair Joseph Sniezek, insisted this timeline would be sufficient.

Sniezek, who will not be present at the

hearing next September, told the crowd that this would be his second-last case before he retires. In some lighthearted remarks about another venue for a past hearing that featured an adjoined, unlocked bar, he elicited laughter. But perhaps his guard was down when during an exchange with Glen Duff who sought clarification on the definition of participants said "the real part of my question was is our testimony being respected?", and Sniezek answered with "I'm trying to give you an idea of what the mechanics are...we can't in effect grind the hearing to a halt, but it is gonna be in your neighborhood and you're going to be affected by it." Reaction to his phrasing was swift, prompting Halton counsel Jeff Wilker to point out the choice of words made it sound like a decision had been made, prompting Sniezek to admit he should have said "proposed", but sensitivities were by then heightened.

Before the hearing next fall, a full list of participants is to be determined by January 30, with two more pre-hearings to take place on March 1-4, and May 15.