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Unpopular proposal - A controversial quarry proposed by James Dick Construction at the northeast corner of 6th Line and Highway 7, east of Rockwood, has led to the creation of citizens' group fighting to oppose the operation. photo by Chris Daponte



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## Concerned residents form new group, question notice provided for quarry

by Chris Daponte

GUELPH-ERAMOSA - It appears a newly-formed citizens group seeking to extend the commenting period for a quarry proposed near Rockwood may be out of luck.

Members of the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) say they want the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) deadline extended beyond April 15.

"We are running now to catch up to these applications," CRC member Joyce Hill said of the "hidden quarry" application at the northeast corner of 6th Line and Highway 7, east of Rockwood.

James Dick Construction is seeking a licence from the MNR and a zoning bylaw amendment from Guelph-Eramosa Township, that together will pave the way for the extraction of two million tonnes (700,000 annually) of sand, gravel and dolostone at the 39 hectare (100 acre) property.

The CRC, formed 10 days ago by about 20 Guelph-Eramosa and Halton Region residents, says people living in the area did not receive adequate notice about those plans.

"People have to be made aware of the impact this will have on their lives," said Hill, whose [www.wellingtonadvertiser.com/comments/index.cfm?articleID=16278](http://www.wellingtonadvertiser.com/comments/index.cfm?articleID=16278)

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people have to be made aware of the impact this will have on their lives, said Hill, whose family owns a farm about one kilometre from the James Dick Property.

"It's the lack of awareness that has caused us to form this group."

Hill says while notice of the application was placed in the Wellington Advertiser, those affected by the proposed quarry and living in Halton Region, notably former Nassagaweya Township, did not receive any notice.

Fellow CRC member Linda Sword, who lives on the 5th Line of Nassagaweya, does receive the Advertiser at her home, but she wondered about those living farther south who received no notice despite being directly affected by the pit, if approved, as well as its haul route.

"If there is a risk (with the quarry), people south of Highway 7 are at serious risk," said Sword.

James Dick Construction vice president Greg Sweetnam said his company has met all ministry requirements when it comes to informing residents.

"There was widespread circulation," Sweetnam said. "We were in compliance with the [Aggregate Resources Act]."

He acknowledged the only newspaper in which notice was placed was the Advertiser, but stressed the company also mailed notices, as required, to those living within 120 metres of the property, in addition to hand-delivering notices to those living outside that radius, particularly along the 6th Line in Guelph-Eramosa.

"It's been well advertised," Sweetnam said, adding there has also been extensive media coverage about the proposal. "Lots of people know about the application and there's lots of time to comment."

At a March 25 public meeting attended by over 200 people, over two dozen individuals spoke in opposition of the quarry application, citing concerns about noise, dust, property values, water quantity and quality, the haul route, and notice for neighbours, among others.

Sweetnam said the company has "always kept neighbours informed" about its plans for the property, which has been identified in the county's official plan as an aggregate extraction site for 25 years.

"We can't fly a helicopter over the area and drop leaflets," Sweetnam said, adding he maintains the property is "an absolutely phenomenal site" for a quarry.

Stephen May, aggregates technical specialist with the MNR told the Advertiser James Dick Construction has met the notice requirements for the application.

"There is a formal process required for circulating aggregates licence proposals. The proponent has followed the requirements for public posting in a local newspaper and hosting of a public meeting," May said in an email.

"They are also required to circulate by hand or registered mail to all landowners within 120m of the proposed site. This detail is verified prior to making a decision on the issuance of the licence when the proponent provides documentation."

Milton councillor Cindy Lunau, who represents residents in the Nassagaweya area, admitted James Dick Construction has met the MNR's notice requirements, but she added "they don't require very much."

She said it would have been nice for Nassagaweya residents to receive notice "as a courtesy," since water and traffic routes do not conform to municipal boundaries.

"There's a great area that is affected by this (application)," said Lunau.

Regardless of notice, the CRC, which has adopted the slogan "hidden no more," contends the company is downplaying the impact the quarry, and in particular blasting, could have on residents in the area.

"They may think this is a little isolated spot, but actually it's part of the community," said Sword.

Hill, who called the formation of the CRC "kitchen table democracy," says the group's aim is to get as many objections as possible registered with the MNR before the April 15 deadline.

Sweetnam said anyone who does not make the MNR commenting deadline can still have their voice heard through the zoning bylaw process.

Sword says residents are banking on that fact

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Some residents are banking on that fact.

“Township council does have an opportunity here to listen to the citizens,” she said.

Mayor Chris White said council will consider all public comments - “I’m getting emails every day about it,” he noted - before making a decision on the pit, which is expected to take several weeks, if not months.

“It’ll be a while,” White said, adding there are numerous reports to be received, including advice from its advisor, Cuesta Planning Consultants.

April 12, 2013

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