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Consultant recommends further work on controversial quarry

by Kris Svela

BRUCEDALE - Guelph-Eramosa council is continuing to gather information on a proposed quarry near Rockwood.

Council, at its Sept. 2 meeting, received a report from planning consultant Liz Howson, of Macaulay Shiomi Howson MSH Ltd., on submissions from the public and issues raised surrounding the proposed hidden quarry development, including requests for an economic impact study and haul route study.

James Dick Construction is seeking an aggregate licence from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and a zoning amendment from Guelph-Eramosa council that will allow it to proceed with a quarry at the northeast corner of the 6th Line and Highway 7 that is expected to produce about 700,000 tonnes annually of sand, gravel and dolostone.

The planned quarry would cover about 25 hectares (61 acres) of the 39 hectare (100 acre) property.

Howson recommended, and council approved, the hiring of a consultant to conduct the economic impact study, with the cost covered by James Dick Construction. Council also decided it would contact surrounding municipalities on the development of a haul route.

"Council supports building a coalition with the surrounding municipalities (Halton Hills, Halton Region and Milton) to work together to assess on topics of mutual interest regarding the hidden quarry application," stated the motion approved by council.

The issue was raised last month at a public meeting by representatives from the other municipalities concerned about a lack of discussion relating to the haul route.

Howson is also recommending studies completed by provincial ministries, including MNR and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), be reviewed and any concerns be forwarded to the appropriate ministry.

"That may be the view of the agency, but we're not necessarily in agreement," Mayor Chris White said of the ministry reports.

"An agency may deem an issue complete; it's closed and complete."

White told the Advertiser after the meeting that the township can raise questions about ministry studies as part of the process. He noted that if the issue goes to an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing, any inquiries from the township could be part of the hearing.

White said the township will be consulting with neighbouring municipalities.

"They were at our (public) meeting and looking for answers," White told council.



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Howson said the proposed quarry application "is a bit of a moving target," because issues continue to come in, including three recent proposals the planner included in the report.

White said he wants council to receive as much information as it can before deciding whether to approve the zoning amendment.

"What we're trying to do is when we make a decision we have a comprehensive look at all the submissions," the mayor said. "If things go well, by the end of the year we should be able to cut it off."

Initially an economic impact study was not considered.

In her report Howson said the study was not required by Wellington County but was suggested by the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC), which has opposed the quarry since it was first considered about a 19 months ago. Council agreed to the economic impact study following the Aug. 12 public meeting.

"The township has directed that such a study be undertaken," Howson said in her report. "Terms of reference will be developed in consultation with the township's economic consultant."

September 5, 2014

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