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## Council sides with CRC call for more quarry water monitoring

by Kris Svela

BRUCEDALE - A Guelph-Eramosa citizens group attempting to halt the development of "the hidden quarry" focused its efforts on water quality in a presentation to Guelph-Eramosa council.

Stephanie De Grandis and Michael Venhuis of the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) made a presentation to council at its March 3 meeting calling for better water monitoring information, safeguards for the groundwater aquifer and wells that supply water to several homes in the vicinity of the proposed quarry.

James Dick Construction is seeking an aggregate licence from the MNR as well as a zoning amendment from the township that will allow the company to proceed with the proposed pit, which is expected to produce about 700,000 tonnes annually of sand, gravel and dolostone.

The quarry would cover about 25 hectares (61 acres) of the 39 hectare (100 acre) James Dick property at the northeast corner of 6th Line and Highway 7.

De Grandis told council both her and Venhuis live within one kilometre of the proposed site.

"We both have wells that supply water to our families and in my case 81 head of cattle and five horses," she said in her presentation.

"There are at least 20 private wells within 500 metres of the proposed quarry site and another 24 or more between 500 and 1,000 metres."

De Grande said CRC members want more up-to-date information on all expected impacts the quarry will present. She said extraction beneath the bedrock, as proposed in the application, will disrupt the aquifer by pushing water up to the surface, and depleting water supplied to wells used by those living around the area.

She said previous information from engineering studies show, "there's not reliable information to determine how testing and monitoring should be done."

Concerns have also been raised with CRC about contaminants coming from the excavation and contaminating the water supply.

"With good baseline data, citizens will be able to demonstrate cause and affect of the quarry operations on their wells and water," she said.

De Grandis said she tests her water supply "on a regular basis," but not for potential contaminants generated by the quarry operation.

"Water levels are seasonal, may change from year to year and water quality may fluctuate because of climatic and environmental influences," she said.


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"I personally do not maintain this type of data set on my well (and) cannot currently determine this difference."

She said she it wouldn't be necessary to upgrade her testing if information was available to establish true baseline water/pump levels and establish accurate water quality indices.

The CRC is also calling for "Well testing now until potential extraction or at least two years of well monitoring data.. The information would come from wells located further from the quarry land as part of an overall testing system."

The group is also calling on "third-party verification" of all results

Venhuis, a geologist and mining expert, said monitoring should be done on site south and north of the quarry, although he added any leaching would be expected to come from the south end.

"In order to see what is going on we need to have good data," he said.

James Dick Construction would be responsible for the extra costs, the CRC contends.

Council agreed more work should be done to upgrade monitoring.

Councillor Doug Breen said water protection is important.

"Water is the one we have to be more concerned with," he said.

Breen said similar concerns should be raised by the developer.

Mayor Chris White said council is prepared to take up the CRC concerns and will meet with the ministry and engineering companies to discuss the issues raised.

"We'll get back to you as soon as we can," White stated.

March 14, 2014

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