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## Guelph-Eramosa switches consultants in controversial quarry portfolio

by Kris Svela

BRUCEDALE - A controversial quarry rezoning application in Guelph-Eramosa has resulted in council switching consultants to deal with the issue.

Council met in closed session after its April 7 meeting and decided to replace Cuesta Planning Consultants with Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd. (MSH Planning Ltd.).

Mayor Chris White told the Advertiser early on Tuesday that council decided to switch consultants over concerns the township had not received some reports from Cuesta "in a timely fashion."

"There was a series of information requests we sent in (and) the response wasn't as timely," said White.

Don Scott of Cuesta Planning declined to comment when contacted by the Advertiser.

The decision to replace Cuesta coincided with an earlier delegation from the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) that raised concerns about conflicting results from consulting firms acting on behalf of the township and the developer, James Dick Construction.

James Dick is seeking an aggregate licence from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) as well as a zoning amendment from the township to allow the company to proceed with a pit that 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 and could operate for 20 years.

The CRC has raised several issues in regard to the quarry, including potential water quality and water monitoring on and around the site, the type of bedrock formation that makes up the quarry, the impact from blasting expected during extraction, the economic impact on the township resulting from quarry activity and a drop in property values.

"The other interrelated matter that the CRC has found frustrating is that we don't know what is happening to the issues that are being raised by the CRC," member Dan Kennaley told council. "We have been expecting these issues and related information to be forwarded to the township's peer review consultants and we have been expecting a response through council from the peer review consultants and not at the end when the consultants present a recommendation to council. We've been largely left in the dark as to how these consultants are coming to the decisions they are."

Similar concerns have been raised by council, including White and councillor Doug Breen, who on Monday evening voiced his concern about conflicting reports from the different engineering firms.

"We've got stacks of contradictions here." Breen said of reports the township has received.

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We've got to get these answers."

Breen added, "I'm very cognizant of where this is going to end up so we've got to have our ducks in a row." He was referring to fears the process could end up in a costly Ontario Municipal Board hearing.

White acknowledged the issue has dragged on due, in part, to conflicting reports. The mayor said he would like to see a final report come to council so it can decide whether or not to support the rezoning application.

"I'm suggesting it would be nice to get to the next stage," White said.

White said concerns about lacking responses to questions raised by the township are being looked into by CAO Kim Wingrove, who is gathering a "database" to log concerns raised by the CRC and ensure answers are dealt with quickly.

April 11, 2014

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