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### THIS WEEK

Ryan Laird puts anti-bullying message to music, A&E: Hills of Erin Studio Tour celebrates 25 years, Events, Rural Life, Seniors, County Page, Sports

## Request for financial study denied

by Chris Daponte

BRUCEDALE - Guelph-Eramosa council has - for now - denied a request from a group of concerned residents for a report on the possible financial impact of a proposed quarry southwest of Rockwood.

On Sept. 16 Perry Groskopf, representing the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC), said property values in the area could plummet by five to 30 per cent if the 25-hectare (61-acre) quarry proposed by James Dick Construction at the northeast corner of the 6th Line and Highway 7 is allowed to proceed.

James Dick is seeking an aggregate licence from the Ministry of Natural Resources as well as a zoning amendment from Guelph-Eramosa 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.

"Among our concerns relative to this application is its economic impact - on land and homeowners, as well as on the municipal government," stated Groskopf.

In addition to possible decreases in property values, he said the CRC is worried about costs related to "unsuccessful mitigation of physical risks" and "municipal overhead." Groskopf explained residents would consider "legal action" against the township if it approves the quarry application and there is any damage from "fly rock from blasting operations."

He also noted a study commissioned in 2009 by the Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel on the financial impact of James Dick's proposed Rockfort quarry in Caledon - which was later disallowed by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) - indicated "potential future costs" of \$17.9 to \$31.2 million, versus a net income for the municipalities of just \$2.8 million.

Guelph-Eramosa Mayor Chris White said it is still awaiting its first major preliminary report on the application.

"Until we get the report, we can't be hiring folks," White said. "It's not something we're going to do mid-process."

The mayor said he would forward the request to its consultant, Cuesta Planning, for review but the township would not be acting on it right away.

Groskopf and fellow CRC member Dan Kennaley stressed the financial impact study would need to be a part of the township's decision on the application - and thus it could not wait until after the first major report.

White countered that a financial impact study now could be a waste of money, particularly if the OMB decides that property value impact is not a valid reason to reject a quarry application.

"We have to find that out," said White.



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Councillor Doug Breen said the initial planning report to council will “almost definitely” not be the last that council considers on the application – so just because it does not support something now, does not mean it will never happen.

Councillor John Scott said council is very concerned about spending tax dollars. He also said councillors are not without an opinion on the quarry application but they have to remain impartial until it is time to actually make a decision.

September 20, 2013

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