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## Community Guide

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## Guelph-Eramosa joins county's aggregate property appeal

by Jaime Myslik

**GUELPH-ERAMOSIA** - Guelph-Eramosa township is joining Wellington County in its aggregate property appeal with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC).

In 2016, MPAC and the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association came to an agreement to settle "legacy appeals" from the 2009 to 2016 taxation years.

Under previous assessments, most Wellington County pits were valued between \$40,000 and \$50,000 per acre and other parts of the site were valued based on the land-use (farm or residential).

Under the new assessment, active areas of aggregate operations will be valued as class 5 farmland to a maximum of \$15,000 per acre throughout the province.

"You can't assess the gravel," Mayor Chris White said. "You have to assess the land use, which is at an agricultural cost."

That agricultural cost is 25% of the total assessed value of the land.

Under the new guidelines most Wellington County pits are now valued at less than \$10,000 per acre.

"This movement to reassess everything that we do is going to be crippling municipalities," White said, adding the township has a "fair amount of pits" so the tax impact could be significant.

To maintain services, municipalities will likely have to increase residential taxes to fill in the revenue void, he said.

"The County of Wellington is going to challenge that at MPAC and try to sort out exactly how this works," White explained.

On Feb. 15 Puslinch council decided to join the county in its appeal.

"There's no legal ramifications for us," White said. "It just means that we're going to be a supporter of Puslinch and the county in trying to get MPAC to reassess how they're looking at gravel pits.

"This is not about specific applications we have before us today."

The county will cover legal fees and make the decisions to prosecute the aggregate property appeal.

- With files from Mike Robinson

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