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## 'Hidden quarry' opponents speak out at council

by Jaime Myslik

**ROCKWOOD** - A number of people attending the Aug. 17 Guelph-Eramosa council meeting voiced their objections and concerns over James Dick Construction Ltd.'s (JDCL) proposed quarry southeast of Rockwood.

The quarry application process began in December of 2012 when JDCL applied to rezone a 24.8-hectare (61.3 acre) property at the northern corner of Highway 7 and 6th Line from agriculture and hazard land to extractive industrial.

In October 2016 the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing was put on hold when OMB vice chair Steve Stefanko realized the zoning bylaw amendment was filed for a bylaw that no longer existed.

In the summer of 2016 Guelph-Eramosa had repealed and replaced its entire comprehensive zoning bylaw, making the 2012 JDCL quarry rezoning application inaccurate.

After the OMB decision, JDCL immediately filed another amendment application for both a Guelph-Eramosa zoning bylaw amendment and a Wellington County Official Plan amendment.

When no decision was made within the designated timeframe by the township or the county, JDCL once again appealed the non-decision.

The matter is scheduled to appear at the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), formerly the OMB, next year.

At the Aug. 17 council meeting a number of delegations spoke out against the "hidden quarry."

Dr. Emil Frind appeared on behalf of the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC), a citizen's group opposing the quarry. His presentation was about the uncertainties surrounding ground water impact modeling.

"Usual procedure is to use models and tie their values to risks, but modeling involves uncertainties and uncertainties often (are) not really appreciated," Frind said.

His review, completed in collaboration with Garry Hunter, focuses on what he called contradictions in a report produced by Harden Environmental for JDCL.

Frind explained the Harden report concluded the quarry was not within the wellhead protection area and it would not have a significant influence on municipal wells or local wetlands.

However, Frind said the quarry was not considered when the model was created, so its potential influence wasn't taken into account for the wellhead protection areas.


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In addition, Frind explained the Grand River Source Protection Authority's Guelph and Guelph-Eramosa Tier 3 Water Budget and Local Area Risk Assessment, which indicates wellhead protection areas, only looks at drawdown (lowering of the water table) levels of two metres or more.

"It's an operational decision," he said. "The quarry is outside of the 2m drawdown but ... the actual drawdown does go to the quarry, so it means that flow from the quarry to the well is possible."

Frind said the Harden report indicates there can be no flow from the quarry to municipal wells.

"I don't see any reasons why the flow should not be possible," Frind said. "The impact of the quarry on well 4 cannot be excluded.

"I'm not saying it will be and I'm not saying it will not be, but it cannot be excluded."

This discrepancy comes from different calibrated models.

"We can calibrate them acceptably and all give you different predictions and ... many people think that once you calibrate a model you are free, you can use it to predict anything you want, and that's wrong," Frind said.

He concluded there is no certainty the proposed quarry is outside of wellhead protection zones, there is no guarantee municipal wells won't be impacted and there is no certainty provincially significant wetlands won't be impacted.

"Science tells us that ground water, soil water and surface water act as one unit," Frind said. "Water can flow both ways."

CRC president Doug Tripp made four requests to council based on Frind's presentation:

- to ensure the report is thoroughly reviewed;
- have township planning consultants respond to council concerns arising from ground water and blasting risks;
- oppose the quarry at the LPAT; and
- provide compensation to the CRC for expert reports (approximately \$100,000) and the 2019 hearings.

Councillor Mark Bouwmeester moved that council amend the motion to include a staff review of Frind and Hunter's report and that the township peer review the CRC's most recent submissions on blasting impacts.

"I fully support reviewing any updated reports that allow us to better make informed decisions," Bouwmeester said.

"I fully support following the process before making any decision. I fully support allowing the technical experts from both sides to get it together."

The amended resolution passed in a 3-2 vote, with Bouwmeester, Mayor Chris White and councillor Louise Marshall in favour. Councillors Corey Woods and David Wolk did not vote in favour of the motion.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette also appeared as a delegation at the meeting.

"The Town of Halton Hills' primary interest is the haul route and the justification of the proposed quarry," he said.

"There's no appropriate haul routes leaving from the hidden quarry to the proposed markets in the GTA.

"Notwithstanding the provincial designation of Highway 7, current options are through the Town of Halton Hills, through Acton, Georgetown and Norval, which is a bottle neck with serious implications for the social fabric of our community."

He noted 26 trucks an hour coming out of the quarry site could be significantly underestimated.

"Highway 7 at the intersection of Main and Mill Street in Acton has significant physical constraints and any increase in truck traffic through this intersection increases the risk of collisions with trucks currently encroaching on sidewalks," he said.

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He added the quarry would not benefit Halton Hills in any way.

“Make no mistake, Halton Hills and Halton Region are opposed to this application with the focus being on the trucks ... and if it goes forward to the [LPAT] ... we will be at the table. So I just wanted this council to know.”

According to the LPAT website, the hearing is to take place from May 21 to July 15, 2019.

“We’ll see you there and appreciate you coming in and adding to the concerns,” White said.

“Though the quarry’s not in your township it certainly impacts there and being good neighbours we have to take care of each other.”

August 31, 2018

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