

Residents at LPAT Hearing: 'JDCL Blinded by profits'

By: Vivien Fleisher

Eight witnesses testified last Monday at LPAT hearings into James Dick Construction Ltd.'s (JDCL) application to quarry beneath the water table along Highway 7, known as "Hidden Quarry". Many live within a kilometre of the proposed category two quarry site and were present to table serious concerns with the proposal, from the effects of truck traffic; excessive noise, dust, and vibration; the negative effects on agricultural operations; to the very real possibilities of both fly rock to damage to the aquitard from blasting 23 meters beneath the Paris-Galt Moraine.

After taking a collective oath together, Sixth Line resident Mary Cuerrier spoke. She has lived there since 1973—first with her parents, and presently with her husband and family—and first found out about the quarry from her kids' bus driver in January 2013. Her main issue is the increased traffic at the corner of Sixth Line and Highway 7, where 82-year-old Gordon Ball died in 2011 turning north off the highway. Steady residential growth in the area has brought a lot more traffic, yet she said the applicant conducted their traffic count in February, on Family Day—the least busy month on a Monday. June or August would have been far more accurate to capture what has become a major commuter route, along with school buses, transit buses and lots of trucks. She felt JDCL's experts did not show concern for people, only inanimate objects.

Next was Rockwood's Ken Hermann, who moved to Rockwood in 2013 to get away from Dolime Quarry at

Guelph's south end, thinking he'd put all that behind him, having experienced firsthand the effect of constant vibration and the resulting damage to foundations. Despite repeated requests to have company reps from operator JDCL come to speak with him, he never did get that meeting. He pointed out that Dolime—where damage to the aquitard did occur and must be monitored—is not in Karst rock like Hidden Quarry is, making this proposal an even riskier one while reminding that pit and quarry licenses are forever. Also concerning is the workload for inspectors tasked with monitoring operations: on average, each provincial inspector oversees 153 licenses.

Wellington Water Watchers (WW) Executive director and Eden Mills resident Arlene Slocombe spoke of the role of moraines in water recharge, with the overlay of climate change burdening systems. She pointed out that bedrock extraction is not an "interim land use" when blasting destroys physical structures, which trees and berms cannot hide. Since 2008, WW has monitored blasting damage to Dolime and said the effect on blasting to bedrock is not adequately understood, asking, "Who will pay for the damage?" and decrying such poor stewardship.

Natalie Jaroszewski runs W&T Mushroom farm with her parents on the Sixth Line. Concerns over dust contamination are serious in their line of work as it can seriously impact production. The business has grown steadily over the years and money invested in infrastructure to specialize in several types of mushrooms, and with the quarry only 30 me-

ters from their property line, concerns over dust are not theoretical. JDCL lawyer David White, however, using photos, attempted to show that a housekeeping issue—temporary storage of used substrate at the back of the farm—was a greater threat to operations, prompting CRC lawyer Chris Barnett to object, saying, "This is preposterous." Jaroszewski asked of the chair, "Why am I losing income because someone else is putting money in their pocket?"

Farm owner Stephanie DeGrandis has lived on her 210-acre cattle farm since 1965, first as a child and now as owner and operator. DeGrandis has been subject to much pushback from David White over E coli levels in Tributary B of the Brydson Creek, who claims quarry processes will ameliorate bacteria levels. DeGrandis—a microbiologist—said JDCL studies are nowhere near robust enough to prove any of this and they've never had issues with their wells. She is very concerned about the effects on the water table from the quarry operation, saying "no water, no life" and the future of her farm is in jeopardy.

Sheep farmer Glen Duff was last to speak, and focussed on damage to the 13 heritage structures within two kilometres of the site. His background in biochemistry makes him familiar with proper studies and peer review; he presented at the Walkerton hearings. He also asked who pays when damage occurs, explaining unique heritage building techniques are vulnerable to repeated vibration. He finished by saying his concern wasn't remuneration for damage, but in preserving heritage, fairness and justice.