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THE HALTON COMPASS

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Councillor turns to ECO and Gravel Watch for statistics

BY DON REDMOND

Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy is worried that the St Marys' quarry application, recently sent back to the company by the Ministry of Natural Resources as 'incomplete', will find its way back to the MNR soon enough.

To that end, she is scrambling to check two things - where the application fell short and the rate of application rejection by the MNR.

McCarthy asked Diane Schwier of the MNR's Guelph office about application rejections last week only to be told that the MNR did not keep those statistics.

She did discover that St Marys had been told by the MNR to make some "minor changes to the site plans, and to provide clarification on a few points."

However, when she pressed for details, she was told by the MNR that "as the application is not considered public information at this time, specifics can not be provided."

Hearing that, McCarthy went to Ontario Environment Commissioner Gord Miller and

Continued on Page 2



OLG helping Olympic dreams

The hopes and dreams of Milton's Travis Gerrits took another step towards an Olympic medal this week as OLG came up with help in funding the cost of training. Pictured here at this week's Mayor's Breakfast is, left, Jake Pastore of OLG with Travis' mother, Heather Gerrits and Milton Mayor Gord Krantz. The inset photo shows seventeen old Travis winning a bronze medal at the Apex NorAm championships in January at Mont Gabriel in Quebec. Travis is ranked 7th in Canada in Aerials, and stands a strong chance of being selected to the 2010 Olympic team, where he is over a decade younger than the rest of the squad. Travis and his family have nothing but praise for Milton District High School principal Ian Jones and his staff for the help and support they give Travis in coping with school and competition on a full time basis.

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAKER AND ROB GERRITS



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Watch Regional Council live online

Halton residents can now watch a live broadcast of Halton Regional Council Meetings on the Internet via a video stream available on www.halton.ca.

The streaming technology, accessible on the homepage at www.halton.ca, will allow online viewers to watch Council meetings in real time or download a podcast of the meetings at a later date.

Cogeco's television broadcast of the meetings will continue to be available on channel 14 in Halton Hills and Milton, and channel 23 in Burlington and Oakville.

"The addition of video streaming gives the community an opportunity to watch what is going on with their government - anywhere and anytime," said Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr. "I hope the ability to watch meetings in real time engages residents to become more involved in their Regional government."

Residents that have comments are encouraged to email Carr directly at gary.carr@halton.ca.

An archive of video footage from past Regional Council meetings will also be available for viewing at www.halton.ca. Online video streaming of Halton Regional Committee meetings is expected to be available beginning spring 2009.

For more information please contact Halton Region by dialling 311, 905-825-6000 or visit www.halton.ca.

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE #2

GTA West Corridor - Environmental Assessment (EA) Study - Stage 1

THE STUDY

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is working to provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within the context of the Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. To support the policy directions in the Growth Plan, MTO has commenced the formal environmental assessment (EA) process for the GTA West Corridor. The purpose of this Study is to examine long-term transportation problems and opportunities and consider alternative solutions to provide better linkages between Urban Growth Centres within the GTA West Corridor Preliminary Study Area.

The Project Team is now in the process of identifying the transportation problems and opportunities in the preliminary study area, which will later assist the Team in examining the effectiveness of alternative transportation improvements.

PROCESS

The Study is being undertaken as an Individual EA in accordance with the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. The Study's Terms of Reference (ToR) was approved by the Ontario Minister of the Environment on March 4, 2008.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRES

The public is invited to attend these informal sessions to view maps and displays that illustrate the problems and opportunities within the GTA West corridor. Project Team members will be available to answer questions, receive comments and discuss the next steps in this study. The dates and locations of the Public Information Centres are as follows:

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

River Run Centre
Canada Company Hall
35 Woolwich St.
Guelph, ON
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

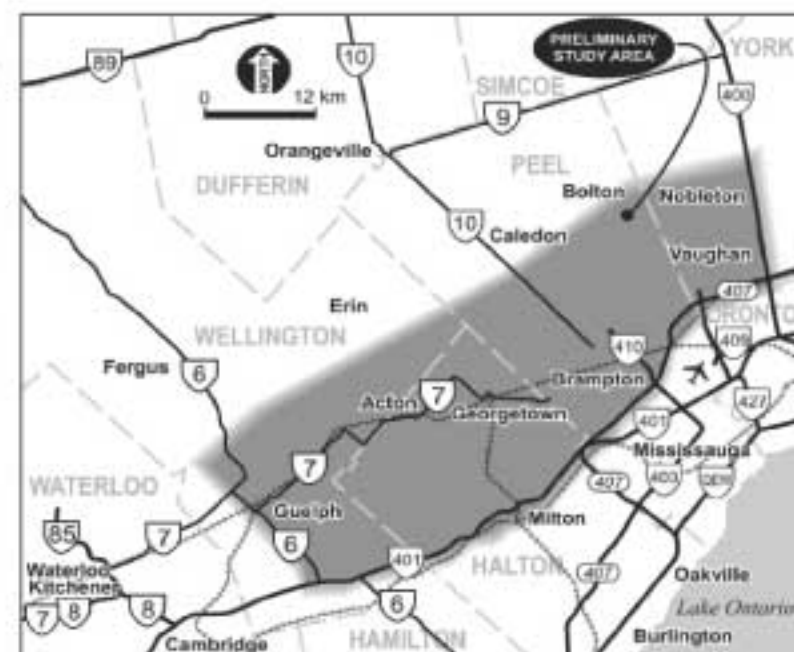
Le Jardin Special Events Centre
Venetian Room
8440 Highway 27
Woodbridge, ON
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

COMMENTS

Comments and information regarding this Study will be collected to assist the Project Team. This material will be maintained on file for use during the project and may be included in project documentation. Comment forms and study information are available on the project website: www.gta-west.com. Information collected will be used in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

For further information, or to be added to the mailing list, please visit the project website or contact:

Mr. Jin Wang, Project Co-ordinator
Ontario Ministry of Transportation
Provincial and Environmental Planning Office
301 St. Paul Street, 2nd Floor
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7R4
Phone: 905-704-2117
Fax: 905-704-2007
E-mail: project_team@gta-west.com



Thursday, March 5, 2009

Brampton Fairgrounds
Hall
12942 Heart Lake Rd.
Caledon, ON
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

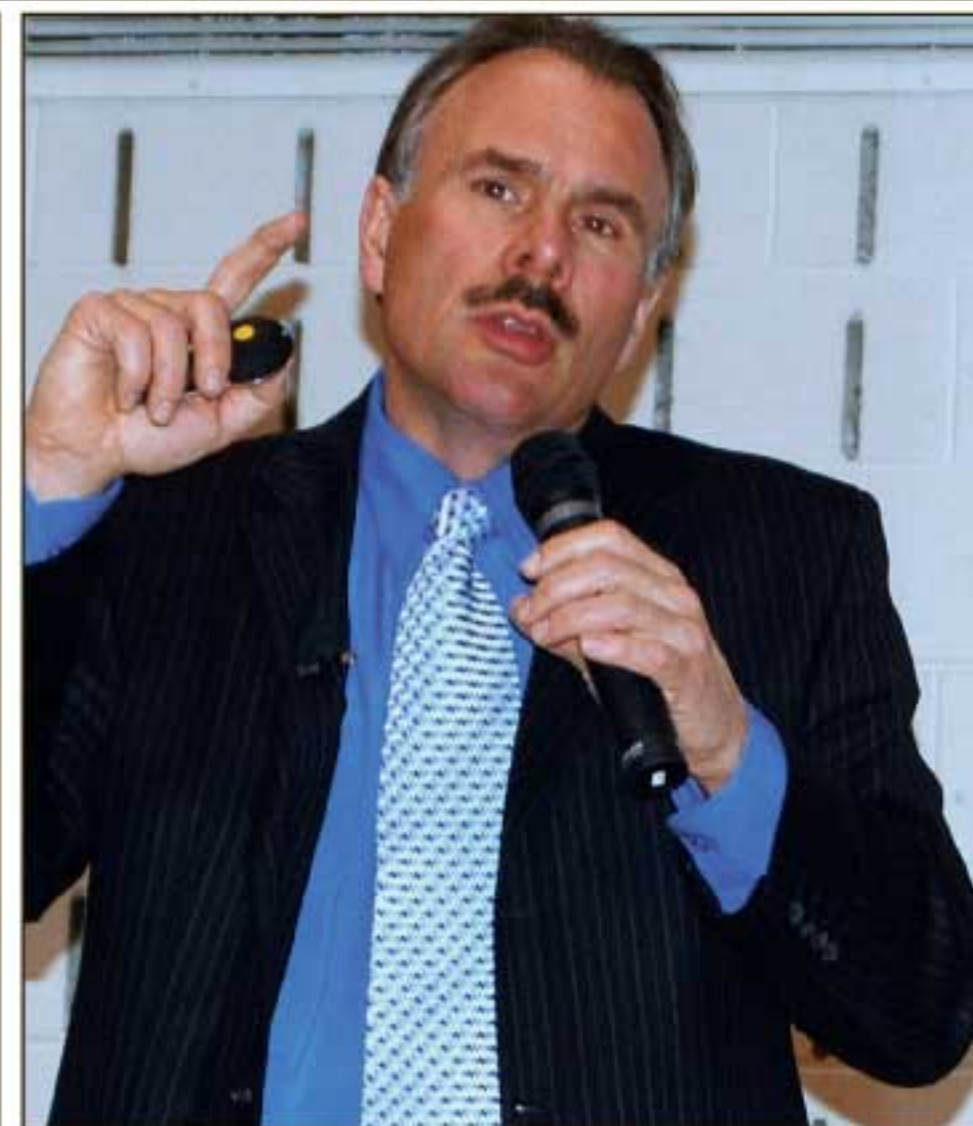
Thursday, March 12, 2009

Pearson Convention Center
Hall C
2638 Steeles Ave. E.
Brampton, ON
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Monday, March 9, 2009

Mold-Master Sportsplex
Alcott Hall
221 Guelph St.
Georgetown, ON
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Neil Ahmed, P. Eng., Consultant Project Manager
McCormick Rankin Corporation
2655 North Sheridan Way
Mississauga, ON L5K 2P8
Toll-free: 1-877-562-7947
Phone: 905-823-8500
Fax: 905-823-8503
E-mail: project_team@gta-west.com



Gord Miller

Councillor turns to ECO...

Continued from Page 1

Ric Holt, the chair of quarry watchdog group, Gravel Watch, to see if they had any idea how often the MNR rejected quarry applications entirely.

Miller's office was unable to give McCarthy a definitive answer. However, Yazmin Shroff, the Public Information Officer in the office, did point out a specific mention regarding quarry applications pulled directly from Miller's last annual report.

"As you are likely well aware, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has commented numerous times on MNR's policies regarding the extraction of aggregates," said Shroff. "Regarding your particular concern as to whether any applications are turned down, the following excerpt might interest you: 'The ECO has observed that each application moves inexorably toward approval, despite the potential environmental impacts and the legitimate concerns raised by municipalities, citizens groups and individuals'."

Holt, who has been following the application process, told the councillor he didn't believe the MNR had ever turned down a quarry application.

Noting that a colleague, Mariel Jenson of the Harrington Creek Eco Group had been studying the similar idea by looking into whether or not the Ontario Municipal Board had ever rejected a quarry application, "it looks like the answer is no."

Holt continued, saying, "As noted by Ms. Schwier, the MNR uses a check-box system. My understanding is: once the boxes are checked, the MNR approves. I think MNR simply does a 'check box analysis' rather than actually studying or evaluating the proposal. It is my understanding that MNR does not generally consider the public's objections, but rather counts on the applicant and the OMB to deal with these."

So in essence, he believes the MNR pass all applications once they meet the 'check-box' criteria and the OMB doesn't overturn them, said McCarthy.

"It is now expected that St. Marys will resubmit another application to the MNR within the next couple of weeks, and at that time the Ministry has another 20 days to review the revised application and respond," said McCarthy.

"So if on first blush we can take a sigh of relief, that breath however is best saved for our next round. Because, if or when the Ministry of Natural Resources does deem the application complete, we then have only 45 days to provide our objections once published notice is provided."

