

Gravel Watch says no quarry application turned down since 2001

BY DON REDMOND

Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy will appeal directly to Premier Dalton McGuinty for a more stringent application process after discovering the Ministry of Natural Resources has not turned down a quarry application since 2001.

Research provided to her by Mariel Jensen of Gravel Watch Ontario turned up evidence that the only way an application isn't passed through the MNR is if the applicant themselves withdraws the application.

Working on applications from 2001 to the end of 2008, Jensen discovered that only six of out 235 aggregate licences

weren't approved by the MNR - five were withdrawn by the applicants themselves and one exceeded the allowable two year time limit.

To that end, McCarthy told the Compass that she was putting a motion forth at Hamilton City Council, "asking that better protection be applied (to the licensing process) to ensure the integrity of the McGuinty government's environmental legislation is followed through at the aggregate licenses level."

"There's no point in having the regulations if their (own government) agencies are not abiding by them."

Originally, Jensen had been researched the likelihood of the Ontario Municipal Board overturning a quarry licence and reported those statistics weren't good, either.

"As for the OMB, I have found only

one case out of the 15 where a licence application was not granted (and only) because there were many errors in the application," Jensen said.

Despite that, on the same application, she noted, "the Official Plan amendment and the rezoning for the site were granted (by the OMB)."

But Jensen believed that "in these rare cases where approval of licence was not granted, the MNR and the OMB appear to have made decisions that left the door open for an applicant to reapply."

McCarthy also has a motion before Hamilton Council, asking the Province to outright deny the St Marys' quarry application at 11th Concession East and Milborough Townline.

The proposed quarry is right on the Campbellville-Flamborough border.

Tourism Burlington gets hip and goes on Facebook

BY DON REDMOND

Changing times means changing promotion tactics and Tourism Burlington has decided to one of the best ways to reach out to promote the city is through cyberspace. That led to the creation of a Tourism Burlington page on Facebook, one of the most popular site on the Internet these days.

"It's our way of reaching out to a new audience," admitted Pam Belgrade, Tourism Burlington Executive Director.

While the site only has about 35 fans one month after its inception, Belgrade is hoping word will spread and more fans will be hopping aboard the Facebook page. Called "Discover Burlington Ontario", the page can easily be found through the Facebook search tool.

"Hopefully, people will go onto the page and say what they love about Burlington," she told the Compass, noting that people were free to post photos or simply write about what they liked when they visited or enjoy as residents.

Belgrade added that they were sure to add the "Ontario" to the name just so there was no confusion.

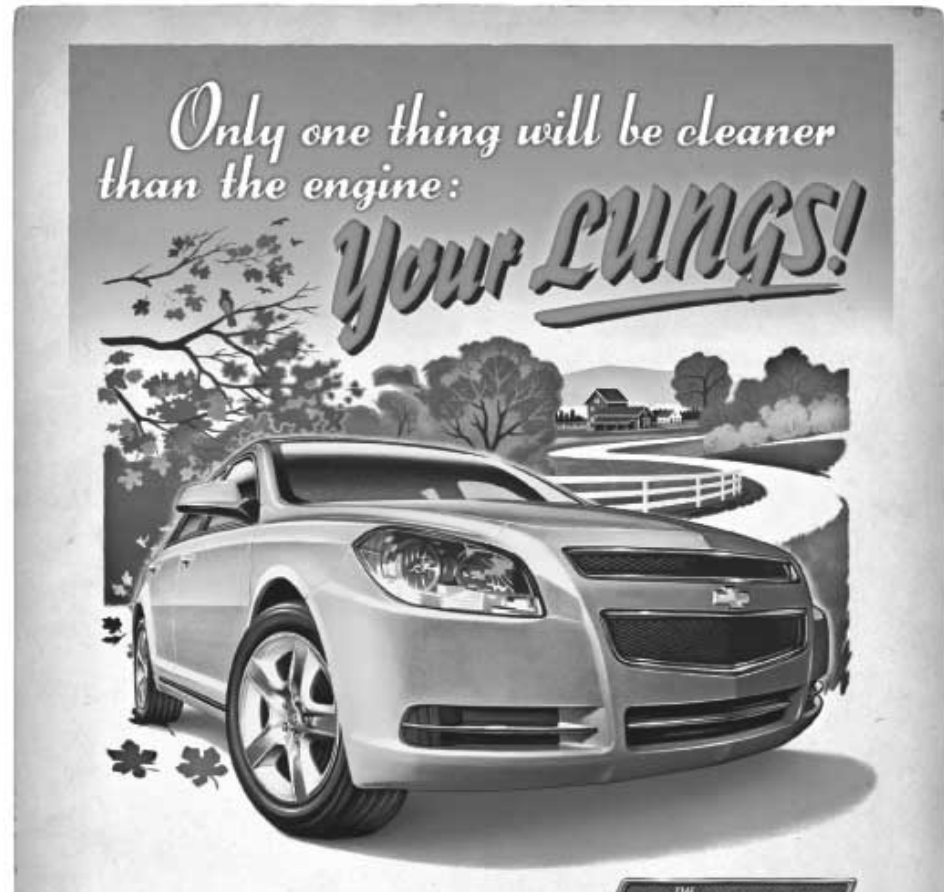
"When the Burlington International Games Committee was trying to contact other Burlingtons, they discovered that there are over 20 of them in North America," she laughed. "Now granted, some of these were tiny little spots of a couple hundred where the sheriff would be the chief official in town."

Asked by they decided on Facebook, a hot-spot for a younger crowd, Belgrade noted, "We had been talking about it for a while. We have young students who work here as travel advisors and they told us what's cool."

"Not that I think we're cool just yet," she laughed. However, being on Facebook "does offer an opportunity to tap into a younger crowd."

As well as Facebook, the group launched their own updated website recently - tourismburlington.com. Belgrade said the "site has an eye-catching new look, enhanced search capability, and expanded information for a variety of audiences."

She added visitors can check out points of interest, scenic drives, historical walking trails, special offers, accommodations, dining and events and obtain



important travel tips and tools. New information includes pet friendly venues, culinary experiences, artists and galleries, welcome translated into French and Japanese (for visitors from our twin-city Itabashi) and much more.

“Residents will get some great ideas for activities to do with their visiting friends and family or for day trips when they are tourists in their own town,” said Belgrade. “They can also learn more about the city by checking out the history of the area, or our list of famous Burlingtonians.”

She noted meeting planners, sport organizers, and group tour operators can go to their specific section to gain insight into facilities and facilities available to support their interests. “Travel writers will find the Media Centre provides great ideas and details on how to acquire photos and logos to supplement their story or how to set up site visits and familiarization tours.”



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