



## Quarry plan gets cool reception in rural Flamborough

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A rumble of discontent surged through an overflow crowd last week when area residents learned that as many as 1,000 trucks daily could be entering and exiting a planned quarry on Concession 11 East in northeastern Flamborough.

David Lowndes, the owner of the 380-acre site and proponent of the plan, delivered the unwelcome news at a public meeting called by Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy last Thursday night at the Carlisle Community Centre.

The arena meeting room was filled to overflowing as close to 250 people crowded into the hall to voice discontent over the project which threatens to disrupt their quiet rural neighbourhood. Despite Lowndes's continual reminders that the land he bought last year is designated as a mineral resource in both the Flamborough and Hamilton Official Plans, residents were equally emphatic in hammering home to him that a quarry doesn't belong in the middle of a residential area.

Freelton resident Jennifer Trott expressed concern over quality of life issues. "The blasting (from the quarry) will probably be heard for miles from the site," she said before questioning the possible impact of the quarry operation on the water table which feeds private wells in the area. "Our water table is already under pressure," she stressed, adding, "I feel this (proposed quarry) will upset the balance of our lives and the wetlands around us."

An 11<sup>th</sup> Concession resident living directly across from the proposed quarry pointedly asked how neighboring homeowners will be compensated for their devalued properties once the blasting of rock begins.

Councillor McCarthy said the resident's concerns will be among those assessed by city staff when they review Lowndes's application for an Official Plan Amendment (OPA), expected to come forward at the end of June. When she suggested, "Mr. Lowndes is going to be told (by city council) what to do," the crowd reacted with derisive laughter.

More than one resident expressed suspicions about the process followed when quarry applications come forward. "Why spend that kind of money (an estimated \$4 million for purchasing the quarry lands and testing the site) just surmising you'll get this thing?"

Jack Walker, who lives next to the site, asked. "You have a cut deal somewhere along the line," he charged.

Lowndes flatly denied the charge. "I can assure you there is no cut deal," he said.

Several residents asked for details about the depth of the proposed quarry, truck routes, and environmental impacts, but Lowndes said that information won't be made public until the OPA application is filed with the City of Hamilton at the end of June.

"This is your planet as well as ours," one angry resident told Lowndes after failing to get the developer to respond to his original query about whether the quarry will have "a positive or negative effect on the environment."

Lowndes told residents that many of their questions will be answered in technical reports which will be completed by various consultants and experts by the end of the month. He said his OPA application will be coupled with a proposal to form a citizen's advisory committee for the proposal. "We will work with the committee to resolve your concerns," he said.

While Councillor McCarthy assured residents that she is opposed to the plan, Carlisle resident Ron Bremer encouraged residents to

be proactive and fight the proposal as a group. “I don’t think you can leave it up to the city and city staff to stop this,” he cautioned. McCarthy told the crowd there will be opportunities for further public input at the OPA and rezoning stages. She promised to notify area residents when the application is ready to come before council.

When asked by Bremer what factors could persuade city council to reject the plan, the local councillor outlined several. “We’ve got serious water concerns; that’s not going to be taken lightly,” she said. Traffic, dust, noise, quality of life, and the impacts on other businesses will also be assessed in relation to the proposal, she added.

Residents of Flamborough voicing strong opposition to the plan found their words echoed by several Milton residents at the meeting. A man, who identified himself as a member of the Milton Rural Residents’s Association, warned Lowndes that opposition to the quarry is widespread. “It’s not going to be a cakewalk,” he stressed. “Once we talk to provincial and federal (government) representatives, you’re going to have an uphill battle,” he vowed. Some new pieces of information that emerged at the meeting included: the lifespan of the proposed quarry will be about 25 years; some of the monies per tonne of aggregate sold will be deposited in a trust fund to address water concerns; and the proposed quarry will service the Toronto market meaning that Milborough Line and Campbellville Sideroad will likely be the roads travelled by quarry trucks as they make their way to Highway 401 and eastward to Toronto.