

The Halton Compass

HAMILTON LOOKS TO UPDATE OLD MNR AGGREGATE MAPS

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By Don Redmond

On July 26, Hamilton City Council passed a motion to independently update old aggregate maps still being used by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Spurred on by a motion created by Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy, the new maps could conceivably become a fly in the ointment for proponents of the St. Mary's quarry application at the corner of 11th Concession and Milborough Townline on the Flamborough-Campbellville border.

McCarthy noted that quarry opponents, Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE) had called the old aggregate maps "misleading" while Hamilton city staff itself simply referred to them as "inadequate." The ministry hadn't updated the maps since 1984.

"This is critical to us on several fronts," said McCarthy in a release. "It speaks to the need to identify incompatible uses in, on, and around the potential quarry site on the 11th Concession in Flamborough. The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has traditionally been responsible for producing this mapping but have refused to produce the updates leaving the entire cost and associated justification studies to the City.

The new maps will then be incorporated into the city's Official Plan.

However, despite the cost to the city for the undertaking, McCarthy was able to get her fellow councilors unanimously behind her motion. Beyond the St. Mary's application, McCarthy noted the motions would have city-wide ramifications.

"My gratitude goes out to my council colleagues who approved the support for this essential work to be undertaken to update our Aggregate Resources Mapping. This is a good news story for the city as a whole."

According to McCarthy, staffers at the County of Huron, a huge tract of land running adjacent to Lake Huron from Sarnia up to Port Elgin, decided to update their aggregate resource mapping in nine of their municipalities. Working in tandem with provincial officials, GIS mapping experts and community groups, the entire process took only a year. Huron County is over 3,400 square kilometers in size while the entire City of Hamilton is only 122 square kilometers, including dense urban area at the core.

McCarthy believes that specific to the St. Mary's site, the process will prove "incompatible land uses (for quarrying) will be uncovered in this new updated mapping."

The proximity of the quarry to Campbellville – directly across the street – has caused deep concern among local residents. When industry giant, St. Mary's recently purchased the quarry site from previous application, David Lowndes, the scrutiny amped up a notch.

Kevin Brockley, a Campbellville resident across the street from the quarry, admitted he was wary of St. Mary's take-over of the application.

"Well, on one hand, regardless of who owns the land, it's the same process," he told the Compass, "but they (St. Mary's) have much deeper pockets than Lowndes and are much better connected to the government (through previous applications.)"

He also noted that he believes the Province might push through the application as they go forward with their plans to create the Mid-Peninsula Corridor, a super highway stretching from Niagara Falls through to Burlington.

"I think they'll say they need the aggregate for that road."

As well, Regional Councillor Barry Lee expressed concerns over increased traffic on north Halton roads "unable to bear loads of that weight."