

The Halton Compass
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By: Don Redmond

Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr is echoing the sentiments of Milton's Ward 1 and 3 councillors when it comes to the St. Mary's quarry application in Flamborough.

"There are huge traffic concerns, problems with this being on the escarpment and most definitely, water is one of the big concerns for residents and I share them," Carr told the Post.

Carr noted that he had attended a council meeting at Milton Town Hall back in May when Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy and Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE) chair Graham Flint made a presentation to area councillors, as well as another meeting held by McCarthy and FORCE in September at Balaclava Public School in Flamborough.

From those meetings, he said, he was able to get a better handle on the contentious quarry application at the corner of 11th Concession Road East and Milborough Townline, across from Campbellville.

It's obvious that Graham Flint has done his homework and is very knowledgeable about the application and its potential effects on the surrounding community," Carr said, "so we (at the Region) will have to take a real hard look at it."

The recent permit to take water (PTTW) application submitted by St. Mary's to the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) also has the area residents worried as the company is looking to draw 12.7 million litres of water per day for a three-week period to show its water recirculation program is effective. The application represents four times the amount of water that the nearby Carlisle well system draws for its residents daily.

To that end, McCarthy met with Ministry of the Environment officials, Paul Odom and Cora Sheppard, on November 29 to express the local concerns over the PTTW application. Sheppard is expected to decide before the end of the year.

"Paul Odom is very much aware of the fact that (previous examples) this application that is based on recirculation of water is untested and conceptual," McCarthy told the Compass. "The examples that St. Mary's point to as successfully incorporating this type of system used in Colorado and the U.K. are completely different in that they are in "dirt and sand" (quarry operations)-qualitatively different and not comparable to what is covering the lands in question at the St. Mary's site which is "fractured limestone". Again even St. Mary's cannot point to one example of where there is a use of this system in fractured limestone, and there is no data to indicate whether or not it will be successful."

“We should not in my mind be experimenting with unproven technology when it comes to our communities drinking water,” she added. “The standard of protection should be higher than that since we are in the Carlisle Wellhead Protection Area.”

McCarthy added that Odom has numerous queries regarding a motion she had passed at the Hamilton council table back in July that will see the city independently upgrade all the aggregate resource maps used by the MoE, most of them decades-old.

“He was interested in the funding the city was putting towards the (map-upgrading) project,” she noted. “Perhaps that directive (passed motion) depicts just how seriously the City is taking the issue.”