

# City staffers missing key quarry info, says McCarthy

BY DON REDMOND

Key information about past infractions at the proposed St. Marys' quarry site have gone unnoticed and unknown by CART, said Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy.

Hamilton city staffers on CART, an acronym for Combined Aggregate Review Team, were completely unaware of numerous infractions and subsequent clean-up orders from the Ministry of the Environment (MOE), McCarthy told the

Compass, adding that when she met with a trio of Hamilton city staffers from the Health, Planning and Water/Wastewater departments on May 30, they were all working off a 700-page environmental assessment created specifically for the quarry's original applicant, David Lowndes.

However, upon McCarthy's request, Jason Ryan from the MOE's Hamilton office had provided her with a detailed printed records of infractions of illegal waste disposal on the 11th Concession East property, spanning a decade from 1988 to 1998, spurred by complaints of area neighbours.

"So at the moment, everyone was saying there was no existence of hazardous material on the property despite extensive MOE files indicating a long history of dumping on the site," McCarthy said. "My concerns - and now staff's concern - is what happens if St. Mary's is given their permit to take water (PTTW)? Will the digging unearth these toxic contaminants and put them into the water system?"

The records showed continuous complaints of dumping including everything from septic waste in the mid-1980s by a local contractor, abandoned cars, shingles and tires on the site, a "homemade incinerator" on site, used to burn electric and metal components, as well as the dumping of six barrels of PCB waste, linked to a local Flamborough business by the MOE inspector in November 1990.

When further PCB-dumping complaints were phoned into the MOE in April 1996, the landowner informed the Ministry he no longer owned the property, having it seized by the Town of Flamborough for unpaid taxes. At the time, a Hamilton-based environmental contractor, Provincial Environmental Services Inc., had been analyzing the soil on the property for the clean-up order and their samples indicated that the levels of copper were "unusually high," that a large portion of the property (60 cubic yards) was buried under ash and that to properly clean up the area would involve of 80 tonnes of soil and ash.

The MOE was concerned enough about the condition of the property that they wrote a letter to the Flamborough tax department in September 1996, stating that a "contaminated soil clean-up had been ongoing on the site" prior to the Town's seizure of the property and suggested strongly that the Town warn any potential buyers of the land. That December, the land was purchased by a Mississauga man who had initial contact with the MOE just prior to purchase. After numerous attempts to contact the new owner failed, the two sides eventually hooked up by the following summer and the owner promised the MOE he'd follow through on any outstanding clean-up orders by August 1997. A May 1998 MOE report indicated that a site inspector didn't see evidence that the owner had complied with the MOE's field order to clean the property.

Finally by October 1998, when MOE officials met the property owner on site, a report states, the "surface contaminated soil was excavated and removed" although it goes on to say there were still some non-hazardous wastes and debris on the property. An invoice in the MOE's files by a Pickering contractor indicated the clean-up cost the owner \$11,200.

During their May 30 meeting,

McCarthy said city water staffer Abdul Khan confirmed ground water would be drawn back up to the surface during the PTTW process and that it would flow right back down onto potentially contaminated rocks and soil.

Given the extensive history of waste disposal and contamination on the property, McCarthy and the city staffers want the MOE to be held responsible should they issue the PTTW and water problems are the end result of it.

"Unfortunately, we both know if there's a problem with the water, we (Hamilton) are the ones who has to deal with it, not the MOE," said McCarthy grimly.

Echoing her sentiments is Milton Councillor Cindy Lunau who, after being given the files by McCarthy, plans to present them to both Conservation Halton and Milton town staff. The proposed quarry is across the street from Lunau's Ward 3 boundary line.

"I want our staff and CH to see it because if our water is affected, then Milton is on the hook," Lunau told the Compass. Noting that water was far more important than aggregate, she added, "you can always drive down a bad road but you have to have clean drinking water."



Cindy Lunau



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