

St. Marys meeting at RBG next week

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A decision by St. Marys Cement to hold a public meeting in Burlington on potential truck routes for its proposed quarry in northeast Flamborough has left some area residents bewildered and suspicious. The meeting, to be held next Thursday (June 21) from 5 to 8 p.m., will take place at the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG).

Flamborough councillor Margaret McCarthy and Graham Flint, chair of FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment), a citizens' group opposed to the quarry, question why a Flamborough site wasn't chosen for the first of four public information meetings required by the haul route evaluation's terms of reference. When McCarthy contacted John Moroz, vice-president and general manager of St. Marys CBM Aggregates, for an explanation, he said the venue was needed for accommodation purposes. Flint also contacted Moroz for an explanation.

"I think their choice of the RBG as a venue is a strategic move," Flint said last week, noting that Moroz pointed out that the Plains Road West site was once a quarry. "I'm concerned about the genuineness of their engagement with the community. The venue is outside of what is effective for the community."

The RBG is located more than 20 kilometres from the proposed quarry site on 11th Concession Road East at Milborough Townline. Flint wondered why something closer, such as the Bohemian Banquet Centre in Waterdown, wasn't chosen as the meeting site.

Study area

But Glen Schnarr, a planning consultant for St. Marys, said the study area for the truck haul routes goes down as far as the QEW, so hosting a meeting in Burlington isn't that far outside the study area.

"The RBG is accessible from the highway and I'm told it's a nice venue for a PIC (Public Information Centre)," he said. The fact that the RBG is a rehabilitated quarry site also figured into considerations when a venue was being determined, Schnarr said.

The size of the venue was taken into account, as St. Marys officials anticipate a large turnout, the consultant added. Some halls aren't large enough to accommodate the crowds that are expected, including residents not only from the quarry area but also those from the haul route study area, he said.

Schnarr said if residents near the proposed quarry site object about the location of the meeting, there's a chance that future meetings will be held at alternate locations.

Moroz was not available for comment before the Review's deadline.