

St. Marys quarry meeting slated for Nov. 29

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Draft alternative haul routes for the proposed Flamborough Quarry will be revealed November 29 at a Public Information Centre (PIC) hosted by St. Marys Cement.

The meeting will be held at the Carlisle Golf and Country Club at 523 Carlisle Road, just a few kilometres south of the quarry site at 11th Concession Road East and Milborough Line (the border between Flamborough and Milton).

In June, an anti-quarry citizen's group known as FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment) criticized St. Marys for choosing Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) as the venue for its first PIC on haul routes. The RBG is more than 20 kilometres from the proposed quarry site and area residents who will be most affected by its operation.

Members of the City of Hamilton's Combined Aggregate Review Team (CART) were also critical of the aggregate company's handling of the summer PIC, alleging that St. Marys disregarded common public consultation rules, presented incorrect information at the meeting and held the session too far from the proposed quarry site.

The company appears to have listened to previous concerns and taken steps to address them. This time around, the meeting is much closer for area residents, notification in local newspapers carries a map showing the haul route study area and meeting location, and the format for the session includes a presentation, something that didn't occur at the first PIC.

"We're happy they (St. Marys) are now obeying the guidelines set down" in the City of Hamilton's terms of reference, FORCE Chair Graham Flint said. "We're encouraged that there is now a better level of communication and the meeting will be held in a location more appropriate for the community."

The meeting will run from 4 to 9 p.m., with the presentation slated for 7 p.m. Besides presenting the draft alternative routes for public view and comment, representatives will outline the preliminary criteria for the evaluation of the alternative haul routes.

Two more PICs are scheduled as part of the haul route study process. In December, a public workshop will be held to allow for input on the evaluation criteria. Early next year, draft results of the comparative evaluation will be presented at a final meeting.

At the first PIC, one of the placards viewed by guests showed a map with a proposed new study area for the haul route assessment. Bounded by Campbellville Road, the 10th Concession, Hwy. 6 and Guelph Line, the new area is much smaller than that identified in the study's terms of reference. It includes an area bounded by Hwy. 401 in the north, the QEW and Hwy. 403 in the south, Hwy. 6 in the west and Guelph Line in the east.

Both the City of Hamilton and FORCE objected to the suggested adjustment of boundaries.

"There was no objective criteria to justify such a dramatic reduction in area," Flint said. Despite claims by St. Marys' transportation consultants that 80 per cent of the aggregate product from the new quarry would be destined to projects in Halton and Peel, east of the proposed site, Flint said that removing Derry Road from the study area doesn't make sense, given the amount of building that is currently underway, and expected to continue over the next five to seven years, in Milton.

Reduction of the haul route study area has not been approved.

Area residents are "anxious to see" what new information will be revealed at the upcoming PIC, Flint said. He predicted attendance will be greater than the 125 guests who attended the June meeting.

"We anticipate the community will come out in full force."