

# THE HALTON COMPASS

REGIONAL NEWS, NOTES AND NEIGHBOURS

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## Quarry opponents out in FORCE

BY DONNA DANIELLI

Almost 200 concerned residents packed into the cafeteria of Milton District High School for a public meeting on the proposed Lowndes Quarry. Many waited patiently for over two hours in the humid room before every person who wished to speak had the chance to do so.

At issue is an application dubbed the Proposed Mountsberg Quarry, which would see the creation of an excavation site of 68 hectares of land on the north-east side of 11th Concession and Milborough Line in Flamborough.

Lowndes Holdings representative Robert Long stressed the growing need for aggregate to build "everything from roads to hospitals" in his 10-minute presentation. He pointed out that provincial and local regulations allow for quarries, especially those located close to the GTA and provincial highways, as this application does and that quarries are an accepted use under the Greenbelt Protection Act.

Long actually drew laughter from the crowd with his statements that, "Our studies show that there will be economical and environmental benefits" of the application and "we think the proposal will actually increase the wetlands in the long run."

Long's presentation, at the beginning of the meeting, contained the only arguments in favour of the proposal throughout the evening. Resident after resident, many of whom own homes that either neighbour the proposed quarry, or lie along the proposed truck haul route for the aggregate, then took the microphone to speak out.

"No reasonable person would approve a quarry in this location," argued Graham Flint, President of FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment). He cited concerns about the truck haul route, groundwater quality and quantity, property values, road safety and much more.

These concerns were echoed throughout the evening by speakers, including Kevin Friesen, a Grade 6 student at Milton's Sam Sherratt School who expressed his concerns about the environmental impact the proposal could potentially have. "Putting a quarry here is wrong because it destroys nature and the environment," said the youth. "Big holes in the ground remind us of the animals and plants who have died to provide us roads."

Many of the speakers expressed frustration that the quarry, if approved, would pay all taxes and levies to Hamilton because of its

location, and yet, Halton residents could potentially be on the financial hook, should there be impact on their wells, roads and more.

"Why would we be asked to pay for something that will have a negative impact on our quality of life?" Milton resident Jim Harding asked, pointing out that road upgrades along the proposed truck haul route that includes Milborough Line, Campbellville Road, Twiss Road and Guelph Line, would all be paid by the Halton taxpayer.

Burlington resident James Van Hees reiterated this concern, saying, "the last time I checked, David Lowndes and Lowndes Holdings were not taxpayers in the region of Halton, the town of Milton or the city of Burlington. If we have nothing to gain from this, why are we paying for it?"

Van Hees also demanded answers from town and regional staff, who were hosting the meeting, as to the position that Milton and Halton will take on the proposal, asking "How are you protecting the taxpayers of Halton?"

Helma Geerts, a Halton Senior Planner, acknowledged that there are concerns with hydrogeology, groundwater quantity and quality and the haul route but emphasized that while Halton will be providing a recommendation on the application, the decision will actually rest in the hands of Hamilton council and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

"Our commitment is to ensure that if quarries are established, they're put in properly and the impacts are minimal," she said.

Nancy Mott-Allen, Halton Manager of Current Planning, emphasized that town and regional staff are currently in the process of gathering information and reviewing the application and its supporting documents.

"At this point, we haven't accepted anything (as) the proposal is still under consideration," she said. "These are very complex applications, they take a long time to process and assess. I'm sure you want your politicians to make the best decisions, based on information rather than as a knee-jerk reaction."

But for Campbellville's Kevin Brackley, a declared candidate for the November election, the lack of a time frame was like waving a red flag. He suggested giving town and regional councillors a deadline of November 10, three days before the municipal election to announce their decision on the proposal. "If it's not one that we like, then on November 13, we can let them know how we feel about it," he shouted.