

MPP slams Liberals over quarry

BY DON REDMOND

Andrea Horwath, the MPP from Hamilton Centre, has picked up the ball for opponents of the St Marys quarry application on the Flamborough-Campbellville border.

During the November 6 Question Period at Queen's Park, Horwath repeatedly challenged Environment Minister John Gerretsen to put an end to the application.

On hand at Queen's Park for Horwath's offensive were dozens of Flamborough, Campbellville and Burlington residents, as well as Graham Flint, Chair of Friends of the Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE), Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy and Milton Councillor Jan Mowbray.

McCarthy was thrilled that Horwath, a former colleague of hers at Hamilton City Hall, was willing to go into battle against the quarry. Horwath herself announced the next day that she would be in the running as the head of the Ontario NDP during the leadership convention in the spring.

"The one drawback is that Andrea is in the Opposition and really, it's only the government that can shut down this application," McCarthy told the Compass. "But the good thing is that now it's been brought onto the floor at Queen's Park and Andrea is very vocal, strong and determined. She can make sure this doesn't fade into the background."

McCarthy said Horwath's best ammunition was the Province's own Safe Water Act introduced at Queen's Park after

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Lest we forget

Remembering the horrors of the Holocaust is Toronto's 80 year old Elly Gotz, one of the last survivors of the Dachau concentration camp. Elly spoke movingly at the Kristallnacht Sabbath service held at the Solel Synagogue in Erin Mills on October 31. Born in Lithuania, Elly was sent to the Kovno concentration camp with his mother and father in 1941 when he was just 13 years of age. Here he was trained as a machinist in the slave labour force used to supply the Nazi war effort. He and his family were shipped to Dachau in 1943 and it was his training that kept him alive. Elly spoke of the love that he and his father shared in those dark times. On Elly's 16th birthday, his father gave him a present of his own bread ration, an incredible gift when most inmates died of slow starvation and an apple core thrown away by a guard was fought bitterly over. In 1945, Elly's father lay down in the racks used for sleeping and wouldn't get up again. Elly made him promise to keep living. "The Americans are coming," he whispered and a few days later they did. Elly spoke of feeling guilty for years because despite the odds his whole family somehow survived the war. The most moving moment came when Elly spoke of how little bitterness he feels. "While we need to never forget what happened, we can't let the anger linger, because it will fester and damage us."

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Region has five projects lined up for federal cash

BY DON REDMOND

When Federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities John Baird announced on November 6 that he would be freeing up some \$3 billion in promised infrastructure funding, Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr's ears perked up.

Carr told the Compass that the Region would be quick to fill out the necessary applications to lobby for its slice of the pie.

Carr singled out five separate projects that he wants on Halton's wish list for the Federal cash, which he is also hoping will be supplemented by Provincial cash as well.

Carr pointed to the much-needed upgrades at the Skyway Water/Wastewater facility, the potential of an entrance/exit ramp at Tremaine Road and Highway 401, as well as funding for expansions at Jo Brant Hospital, Milton District Hospital and the construction of the new hospital in north-east Oakville.

"We have already sent in our application for the Skyway (plant) and will be following up with the applications for the others," Carr told the Compass. "If there's cash available, we want it. We need it."

Under the Provincial Places to Grow legislation, Carr said the

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Hamilton Centre MPP Andrea Horwath, front row, third from right, had plenty of company when she blasted the Liberals for allowing the St Marys' quarry application to continue at Queen's Park on November 6. Joining her was Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy, front, third from left, Graham Flint, chair of FORCE, front, second from right, and Milton Councillor Jan Mowbray, front, far right, as well as dozens of Campbellville, Burlington and Flamborough residents. The group was bussed in for Horwath's questions.

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the Walkerton tragedy.

"The whole purpose of that legislation was to screen out anything that poses a threat to the safety of drinking water," said McCarthy. "(Shutting down the St Marys' application) should be a no-brainer."

Indeed, that was precisely the argument used by Horwath on November 6 as she challenged Gerretsen and the McGuinty Liberals not to let the Greenbelt "become the Greed-belt" and implored the Grits to follow the recent advice of the Environment Commissioner of Ontario, Gord Miller, who suggested the Province start screening out quarry applications like St. Marys.

"The McGuinty government needs to look at the 'big picture' view to protect Ontarians' health and the environment," Horwath said during Question Period.

"That is why they passed the laws in the first place. Greenbelt and drinking water protection should not take a back seat to quarry development."

"Two thousand people from the area sent postcards asking the McGuinty government once and for all to stop this quarry, which is a real threat to the residents' water safety," Horwath said. "Will the Minister say today when the government is going to step in and stop the quarry?"

Horwath then produced a letter sent to St Marys by the MOE on October 30, saying that the first rounds of water tests were deemed a failure by the Ministry "but allows St Marys a re-do."

Likening the letter to a student's report card, Horwath said, "If you are a student at school and you get an 'F' on a test, you fail. If you're an aggregate company trying to develop a new quarry in the Greenbelt in a municipality's drinking water protection area, you can keep getting 'F's, get more chances to redo your tests, and still make your way through the development process."

Horwath's Queen Park pitch was also lauded by FORCE chair Flint and Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director of Environmental Defence, also in attendance.

"No 'reasonable person' would approve a new quarry in this location," noted Flint, Chair and spokesperson for Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment.

"We call on the McGuinty government to walk the talk on its Greenbelt and Clean Water laws and stop this quarry," added Smith. "If this quarry proceeds, no drinking water protection area or land in the Greenbelt is safe. Ontario has a real opportunity to lead the way by setting a green standard for the aggregate industry to help foster a green economy and green jobs."

But Horwath's push against the quarry application lead for a handful of emails to McCarthy over the weekend, all asking the same question, she said.

"They all wanted to know where (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough) MPP Ted McMeekin was on the issue (since it's in his riding). They want to know why Andrea is fighting this, rather than him."

McMeekin is on record as being opposed to the application. However, McCarthy said, he hasn't been "particularly vocal" about it at Queen's Park.