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## St Marys proceeds with quarry application

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As a prehearing conference about an OMB appeal on the zoning freeze of the proposed Flamborough Quarry site approaches, St Marys Cement (SMC) continues to move forward with its quarry application.

On Friday, April 1, representatives of the aggregate company will meet with parties opposed to the application and in favour of the retention of a zoning freeze on the quarry lands to try to resolve issues before the matter goes to a full OMB hearing.

Attending the preconference meeting to outline their positions will be legal representatives of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), the City of Hamilton, the Regional Municipality of Halton, the Hamilton Conservation Authority and FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment), the citizens' group opposing the quarry.

The preconference session, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in OMB Hearing Room No. 6 at the McMaster Learning Centre, 50 Main St. E., Hamilton.

The preconference stage could take anywhere from a few days to a few months before proceeding to a full OMB hearing, where it will be decided whether the MMAH acted appropriately and within its mandate in placing a zoning freeze on the quarry lands last April. The freeze effectively quashes SMC's plans to establish a quarry on the 11th Concession Road East near Milborough Line.

Even as the parties were preparing to square off at the prehearing, the aggregate company sent out letters to opposing parties, including FORCE, public agencies and area municipalities, asking them to respond by the end of March if they want to reconfirm their objections to the aggregate licence.

The objection reconfirmation is part of the official ARA (Aggregate Resource Act) process and precedes the issue being referred to the Ministry of Natural Resources that, after 30 days of review, can either reject or approve the aggregate licence or send the application to the OMB for a decision.

FORCE chair Graham Flint said he felt the tight deadline for responding was unfortunate, particularly since the timeframe included the March break, a time when typically many families are away on holidays. "It's not a lot of time; it's really an offence to the process," he said of the recent arrival of the correspondence.

Flint also told the Review that he had learned SMC filed another application for a permit to take water (PTTW) in late February so it can conduct pump tests on the site. The company had filed a similar application last year but the Ministry of the Environment denied it on the basis of the zoning freeze on the land. SMC subsequently appealed the ministry decision to the Environmental Review Tribunal but withdrew the appeal last fall.

The actions by St Marys, although not unexpected, confirm the company's stated intention to move ahead with its aggregate licence despite the efforts of others to halt the process.

In a press release distributed last month, the company reaffirmed that it is continuing its efforts to secure all the necessary regulatory approvals to proceed with its quarry plans.

"It's full steam ahead," said John Moroz, vice-president and general manager of St Marys. "We are taking all necessary steps to demonstrate that the proposed quarry will be environmentally sustainable and an important and necessary attribute to southern Ontario."

Although the media release made no mention of the letters seeking reconfirmation from those objecting to the quarry proposal or the company's re-filing of the PTTW, both actions support Moroz's general comments.

FORCE, Hamilton, Milton, Halton Region and several public agencies remain committed to opposing the quarry proposal.



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