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Councillor leads walkout on meeting

Eric McGuinness

The Hamilton Spectator

FLAMBOROUGH (Jan 10, 2008)

More than 150 people voted with their feet and walked out of a workshop on truck routes for the proposed St. Marys Flamborough quarry last night.

Councillor Margaret McCarthy, who read a letter from Mayor Fred Eisenberger restating his opposition to the Carlisle-area pit, accused the cement company of disregarding democratic process and told the crowd, "It's not in anyone's interest to complete the workbook."

Environmental consultant Don Richardson nevertheless tried to get people to sit down and evaluate criteria for haul routes, saying, "We want to work with community members to understand what they're concerned about."

When he explained St. Marys needed public input to satisfy city planners, members of the audience shouted, "You're not getting our knowledge," and, "We don't want to listen to you."

McCarthy set the stage for the walkout by saying, "It's not in anyone's interest to complete their workbook or subject themselves to two-and-a-half hours of behavioural engineering."

She said breaking the audience into small groups was a divide-and-conquer tactic by a multinational, multibillion-dollar company that hires psychologists to tell it how "they can infiltrate, how to pit one against another."

St. Marys vice-president John Moroz later said: "I regret we weren't given the opportunity to set the stage as to what the process tonight was about and then allow people to make a decision."

The next meeting was to present a selected route for more than 1,000 trucks a day, but Moroz said, "We anticipated getting some feedback tonight and unfortunately lost that opportunity."

Richardson looked at the handful of people left in the second-floor room in the Carlisle Community Centre and said, "At least take advantage of the coffee and doughnuts."

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Ted Brellisford, the Hamilton Spectator

Councillor Margaret McCarthy confronts moderator Don Richardson.

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