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Two quarry meetings tomorrow

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The Hamilton Spectator

FLAMBOROUGH (Apr 14, 2009)

St. Marys Cement's controversial quarry application will be debated at two public meetings tomorrow night.

As Hamilton city council considers a motion asking the provincial government to refuse a licence for the quarry, at least 400 supporters of anti-quarry group FORCE are expected to gather at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Carlisle.

Spokesperson Mark Rudolph says the FORCE meeting is intended to prepare people to ask questions at a five-hour walk-in session the company will hold at the Waterdown Legion Hall April 27.

The city, public agencies and the general public have until May 21 to comment on the application, which is on the company website, flamboroughquarry.ca. FORCE also has a website, stopthequarry.ca.

The council motion comes from Councillor Margaret McCarthy. She says the top concern about the proposed quarry northeast of Carlisle is the lack of groundwater testing St. Marys told residents it would do before applying for a licence.

Her motion quotes a St. Marys community newsletter, which said: "St. Marys is committed to successfully demonstrating its (groundwater recirculation system) method here in Flamborough before this system is implemented or added as a component to our final application."

But the company abandoned a series of planned tests after the Ministry of the Environment last year rejected results of the first phase. St. Marys now says it will seek an operating licence from the Ministry of Natural Resources, then ask the environment ministry for a water-taking permit to pump the pit dry.

McCarthy says the quarry on 11th Concession East at Milborough Line should not be licensed until the proposed dewatering system is tested to prove it won't harm surface streams, wetlands or the underground aquifer supplying rural residents and Carlisle's municipal wells.

She also says the company showed "complete disregard for the welfare of our community" by proceeding with the licence application before the city has acted on its applications to amend the Official Plan and zoning bylaws to allow quarrying on 158 hectares of forest and farmland.

St. Marys vice-president John Moroz said: "At St. Marys we stand committed to gathering the information required for the appropriate authorities to make informed decisions. We also stand committed to sharing this information with our neighbours and the public.

"Prior to the quarry proceeding, we will demonstrate that it will be done in an environmentally and socially responsible way."

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