



FORCE not ruffled by Milton quarry expansion approval

By Dianne Cornish

Flamborough Review

Speculation by environmental activists that recent approval for expansion of Milton Quarry doesn't bode well for those fighting a proposal for a new pit in northeast Flamborough was refuted last week by quarry opponent, Graham Flint. "It's really quite different from our situation," he said, pointing out that the Milton pit's application pre-dates the greenbelt legislation while the quarry proposed for 11th Concession Road East near the Milborough Line will have to conform to the more rigorous environmental constraints of the new greenspace protection regulations.

While some see the recent decision by the joint panel of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and the Environmental Review Tribunal to allow Dufferin Aggregates' Milton Quarry to grow from its current 468 hectares to 551 hectares as a sign that massive pits in Burlington and Flamborough will eventually get the go-ahead, Flint doesn't subscribe to the same way of thinking. The chair of FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment), a grassroots citizens' group opposed to the Flamborough quarry plan, has a different take on things.

"There's speculation that you cannot stop a quarry," he said. "We don't accept that," he added on behalf of FORCE's membership.

Flint continues to argue that the opposition group's biggest 'ace in the hole' is new greenbelt legislation which calls for greater protection of environmentally significant features, something which is present on the site where Caledon area developer David Lowndes wants to locate a 90-hectare quarry. For him, the application process became considerably more stringent when the greenbelt legislation came into effect earlier this year.

The application for the Milton Quarry expansion goes back four years. Flint also noted there's quite a difference between expanding an existing quarry and approving a new one. Other environmental groups have voiced strong opposition to the Milton pit's expansion. Bradley Shaw, executive director of CONE (Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment), said of the joint board's decision, "This is a sad day for the Niagara Escarpment, but this is not yet a defeat." The group will file an appeal to Ontario Cabinet, he added.

CONE was joined by POWER (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources), a Halton Hills-based community environmental group, in opposing the application as a joint party—the only party in opposition to the expansion application.

The Milton Quarry, located north of Highway 401 on the border of Milton and the Town of Halton Hills, is the largest active quarry in Canada. The town councils of Milton and

Halton Hills supported Dufferin's expansion plan, as did Halton Region, the Niagara Escarpment Commission and Conservation Halton.

The application for a rezoning and Official Plan Amendment at the Flamborough site is currently being reviewed by an independent panel of experts. The proponent provided the money needed for the review about two weeks ago.

The review will take a close look at all technical reports filed in support of and in opposition to the Lowndes' proposal. After it is complete, the City of Hamilton will host a series of public meetings on the proposal. It's anticipated that the first meeting will be held this fall.