



FORCE regroups to continue quarry battle

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Flamborough Review

In the face of a greenbelt plan that doesn't provide an outright ban on new quarries within the protected greenbelt area, a grassroots citizens' group in northeast Flamborough is gearing up for the next stage of its battle against a quarry proposed for the 11th Concession Road East near Milborough Line.

FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment) is calling in the troops and regrouping even though its chairman Graham Flint acknowledges that it may be another three to four months before the battle over the quarry heats up again. In the meantime, the citizens' group will not be idle.

A first anniversary meeting marking the formation of FORCE last spring will be held May 30 at Lawson Park, across the road from the site of the proposed quarry. An annual report will be presented on the group's work in halting the project and another round of fund-raising will begin.

Since its formation, FORCE has raised about \$150,000 from about 300 supporters to help pay for technical studies on groundwater and the environment and how they will be affected if a quarry is allowed. More money is needed to sustain the group's efforts, Flint said, stressing that if FORCE is to win its case, members will have to maintain their endurance and continue to back the fight financially.

Flint acknowledged that the group has lost its battle to have city council throw out the application on the grounds that proponent

David Lowndes hasn't addressed new greenbelt requirements in his bid. After several discussions with the city over the past six weeks, staff have indicated they aren't willing to grant FORCE's request. "They feel that the best course of action is to fully and completely evaluate the current application against all requirements before making a final determination," Flint said. Last week, the city's planning and economic development committee received a status report on the application outlining the process that will be followed. The committee received the report for information purposes only.

Part of the process includes a proponent-financed peer review team which will examine the application in depth. Also, a technical review team of government agency stakeholders, such as representatives from the Conservation Authority and surrounding municipalities, will be formed. The group, to be known as the Combined Aggregate Review Team (CART), is welcomed by FORCE, Flint said.

Reacting to a published comment attributed to Lowndes about the proposed quarry site being designated for mineral extraction in the Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan since 1980, the FORCE chair denied the claim. He said the land is not zoned for aggregate extraction but is designated as rural land with both agricultural and conservation management zones. Flint acknowledged that an appendix to the Official Plan carries an inventory of mineral deposits in the area but the quarry site shows sand and gravel, "not limestone quarry deposits," he said.

Lowndes could not be reached for comment before press deadline.