



## Quarry opponents support OMB warchest

By Dianne Cornish

Flamborough Review

“I will be shocked if this doesn’t go to the OMB,” Graham Flint said Monday at a community meeting in Flamborough focusing on plans for a proposed quarry on 11<sup>th</sup> Concession Road East near Milborough Line. Speaking to a capacity crowd of about 200 area residents who jammed into the recreation hall at Lawson Park, the chair of FORCE (Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment) predicted the controversial proposal will eventually end up at the Ontario Municipal Board, which will decide its fate. FORCE, a citizens’ group which has been fighting the quarry for the past year, held its annual meeting Monday to remind residents of the continued need to stick together as they battle the quarry plans. “It’s going to be a very tough and long battle,” Flint stressed at the close of the meeting, suggesting it could take as long as seven years to go through the process.

Moments earlier residents were taking out their cheque books or signing pledge sheets to bolster the group’s 2005 budget, which includes \$50,000 that will be assigned to the group’s “warchest.” Fundraising chair Greg Ryan explained that the “warchest” funds will pay for FORCE’s participation in the expected OMB hearing. Caledon area resident David Lowndes applied last September for a rezoning and Official Plan Amendment for a 380-acre parcel of land on the 11<sup>th</sup> Concession which he wants to develop as a hardrock limestone quarry. He also owns a 154-acre parcel on the west side of the proposed quarry site which he is expected to use to

expand the quarry if his plans get the go-ahead from Hamilton city council.

At this week's community meeting, Flint charged that the applicant "has dragged this out" by not providing \$200,000 to the city so that a peer review can be done of various studies undertaken by Lowndes Holdings Corp. to support the company's application. It has been eight to 10 weeks since a status report from the city's planning department stated that Lowndes had agreed to provide the money for the independent review.

Once the review is complete, the first in a series of public meetings on the proposal will get underway. The formal public meetings will be "the next community milestone," Flint said, adding that he hopes the meetings will be held before the end of the year.

Lowndes' environmental consultant Bob Long told the Review during a telephone interview Tuesday that he expects the first public meeting to be in early September. He also said a peer review agreement between Lowndes and the city was reached last week and the first instalment of the \$227,000 required for the peer review will be provided by the applicant "within a week."

Twenty-five per cent of the cost (about \$57,000) will be covered by a cheque while the remainder will be covered by a letter of credit, Long explained.

The first public meeting will see a "revised proposal" from Lowndes, Long said. Asked to expand on the nature of the revisions, he said studies have continued since the original application was filed and the new greenbelt legislation, which is "somewhat more restrictive," has led to some changes in the plan. "The proposal is very similar but there are some differences," he said.

Flamborough councillor Margaret McCarthy, who was introduced to the crowd at the community meeting as "a fantastic supporter" of FORCE, drew loud applause when she suggested that if funds didn't come forward from the applicant for the peer review, there was an opportunity for city council to have the money upfronted so that the process can get going.

Stan Holiday, the city's lead planner on the quarry application, told the Review he doesn't expect the city will have to take that action as terms of the agreement between the city and applicant have been reached. But he acknowledged that, as of Tuesday, "we are still waiting for the necessary documents and funding."

Residents at the meeting were told that they, along with other area residents and businesses, supported FORCE to the tune of \$154,000 last year. The bulk of the money was used to pay experts in ecology and hydrogeology to prepare reports that will also be considered in the planning process.

Flint told residents not to be discouraged if they feel they are hearing the same messages this year as they did last about the quarry's impact on the local environment. FORCE has made significant progress over the past year, he said, because now there are reports from technical experts which echo concerns expressed earlier by residents. The quarry will impact local groundwater resources, cause dust and noise pollution and put a heavy burden on area roads, Flint said.

Area residents voiced these and other concerns a year ago, the FORCE chair said. Now, "We have experts validating our concerns," he said.