



CRC Rockwood Inc. Concerned Residents Coalition

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Media Release

CRC concerns remain to be addressed after GET

Preliminary Status Report on Hidden Quarry

Rockwood, ON – August 24, 2014...An estimated 200 members of the public and the Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) filled Rockmosa Community Centre on a mid-summer evening for the **Special Meeting of Guelph Eramosa (GET) Township Council** on August 12 regarding the James Dick Construction Limited (JDCL) proposal to develop the “**Hidden Quarry.**” While the proposed pit and quarry is located in Guelph Eramosa Township, it is right on the border with Halton Region. Milton and Halton Hills will be equally affected, and were well represented.

Township Planner, **Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd. (MSH)**, presented the first **Application Status Report** summarizing the work undertaken to date on behalf of GET and making recommendations on next steps for Council’s consideration. The Report was the first public communication from Guelph Eramosa Township on the application since the March 25, 2013 Public Meeting outlining the Hidden Quarry proposal.

It was clear at the meeting that residents’ concerns about the proposed quarry are as serious as ever, and that the review of the application is far from complete and thorough. In fact, one of the significant outcomes of this meeting was GET Council’s agreement to require an economic impact study from JDCL. CRC has been requesting such a study for more than a year. MSH had not recommended it, but the points raised by CRC and the public that evening clearly convinced Council that this was an important undertaking. (See document below.)

Doug Tripp spoke on behalf of CRC. He thanked Council and MSH for preparing the summary, for inclusion of CRC’s submissions, and for the action taken in response to CRC’s earlier requests for both a cultural heritage study and a visual impact study and appropriate peer reviews.

Tripp noted that there were still several key documents listed in the report which CRC had not yet received although CRC appreciates GET and MSH’s much improved efforts to manage the large number of documents associated with the application. **Since March 2013, important CRC work has been unduly delayed, sometimes by up to 10 months, because documents were neither posted on the GET website, nor circulated.** Subsequent to the August 12 meeting GET Township forwarded some of the outstanding documents to the CRC.

Six members of the CRC spoke, reiterating residents’ continuing concerns that, by its nature, a pit and quarry in this area would have major impacts on the environment, water, air, health, safety, traffic and community, impacting thousands of local residents. Furthermore no study has cross-referenced the various impacts to assess the interactive and cumulative impact. For example, the impact of blasting in this particular hydrogeological setting had not been given any consideration. The CRC statements and questions included:

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Blasting

- CRC disagrees with the MHS conclusion to dismiss the possibility of a “mega-quarry” development occurring in the future, should the current application be approved, given the significant aggregate reserves in Guelph-Eramosa Township and Milton, in close proximity to the Town of Rockwood and Village of Eden Mills.
- The track record of the applicant, particularly with regard to the fracture of the aquitard at the Dolime Quarry operated by JDCL adjacent to the City of Guelph, in Guelph Eramosa Township, must be considered by GET.
- The mining process proposed for the Hidden Quarry is experimental in the kind of geology found at this site.
- CRC has grave concerns about the ability of the Township’s peer reviewer, Novus Environmental, to undertake a proper and comprehensive review of the blasting impacts and fly rock potential of the proposed quarry.

Traffic

- CRC continues to be concerned about the negative haulage impact on the Town of Acton/Halton Hills.
- CRC welcomes the request for a haul route study to be carried out by the proponent.
- CRC finds that 6th Line Eramosa is inappropriate as an aggregate haul route.

Hydrogeology

- CRC finds that MNR, MOE and GRCA have been premature in indicating their satisfaction with the proponent’s application in view of the fact that there are significant outstanding concerns being expressed by the Township’s own consultant, R. J. Burnside, as well as Halton Region, Halton Hills, Milton and CRC.
- Example 1: CRC notes that Burnside’s request for two deep monitoring wells in the extraction zone have resulted in only one well being installed and a commitment to do the second well only after the licence to operate the quarry has been issued.
- Example 2: CRC notes that GRCA argued for two years of advance well monitoring data but nevertheless signed off without this information.

Economic Impact

- CRC disagrees with the Report’s conclusion that if the social and environmental impacts are minimized, there will be no adverse economic impacts on residents or the Township. CRC reiterated its several earlier requests to Council that GET require an economic impact study from the proponent.
- CRC agrees with the Report’s recommendation for an agricultural impact study, but recommends that the number and range of farms to be studied be increased.

Meeting with GET Technical Consultant

- CRC welcomes the recommendation of a meeting with R. J. Burnside, the GET engineering Consultants, as requested previously, but recommends that meetings be scheduled during the formative stages of Burnside’s reviews, not only at the conclusion.
- CRC recommends including in meetings with Burnside all of the issues they are addressing not just those specifically identified in the report.

Liz Howson of MHS suggested that the Township would be setting a deadline for new submissions and input in the fall. CRC is concerned that such a deadline would be premature, and that the delay in the public circulation of documents throughout the process has put public input at a serious disadvantage.

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GET Special Council Meeting, August 12, 2014

CRC Question #2, presented by Perry Groskopf

Economic Impact Re: Table 3

CRC: Requests for Additional Meetings and Studies

In 2013 CRC presented a delegation to GET on the Economic Impact of the Hidden Quarry. In particular emphasis was placed on Property value devaluation. The response from the then GET Planner summarized that with regards to “property value devaluation” Hidden Quarry was not situated in an area of Rolling Horse Farms such as those in Caledon, implying that there are no properties of value to be devalued. Nevertheless the Planner left the decision for an Economic Impact Study with GET.

The CRC is pleased to see that MSH cited the value of Economic Impact included in the PPS, Section 2.5.2.2 However, the MHS Status Report asserts there will no adverse economic impacts “if impacts on key factors such as air quality, hydrogeology and natural environment are minimized, then social, economic and environmental impacts will also be minimized.” CRC disagrees with this conclusion for the reasons that there are several important economic impacts that would be borne by the Township and neighbouring towns and their residents, including but not limited to the nearby agri-businesses. As well, CRC maintains that, even if the quarry operations were to meet minimum impact standards set in Provincial Regulations, the cumulative effect of all those impacts – particularly those that have repeatedly been demonstrated in other cases to be disruptive – would have a net negative economic impact.

MSH recommends that the proponent submit a report on the potential impact on adjacent agri-businesses only, rather than a full economic impact study. CRC agrees, having, in fact, requested an agricultural impact study in a recent delegation to GET Council.

The CRC believes potential economic impacts must also be studied including the following:

Property values MPAC already recognizes reductions in assessment for properties adjacent to quarries. In 2013 CRC presented a report to GET recognizing a 30% reduction of property values in Caledon Village related to quarries. In fact, real estate values are already being affected.

Property Taxes Reduced property values will result in every household in Guelph Eramosa Township compensating for the reduced assessments in Rockwood and in the area surrounding the proposed pit and quarry, including properties in Milton and Halton Hills.

Impact on Agri-Business There is a potential Impact on indoor & outdoor farms - buildings, livestock, crops, woodlots etc. in Guelph Eramosa, as well as in Milton.

Road Services Over 17 years or more ongoing repair or replacement of roads will be required in Guelph Eramosa, Halton Hills and Milton as a result of wear and tear caused by 26 heavy gravel trucks per hour 10 to 12 hours per day, and uncontrolled use by gravel trucks on secondary roads.

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Personal Home & Auto rate increases Insurance Premiums are determined on the number of claims in a region or area. A quarry (blasting) influences house claims, trucking influences auto claims.

Acid Rain/Fog damage Gravel Crushing facility dust mixed with rain or fog will expose expensive motor homes, trailers and campers downwind of the proposed Hidden Quarry to paint damage.

Alternate Water Source costs Residents will bear replacement costs for wells that degraded by the quarry operations until they can prove the Quarry Applicant is responsible.

Health and Safety Increased truck traffic and industrial activity will require increased availability of emergency services; GET Township may face costly interventions in the event that the nearby and soon to be commissioned Well #4 is adversely affected; school bus routes follow the haulage routes.

Liability Because the burden of proof of damage to business, structures, health, property value, etc. will lie with residents, the need for a letter of credit or bond to be held by the Township from the proponent should be addressed.

It is for these reasons that CRC renewed its request for an economic impact assessment study and is gratified to see that GET Township agrees.