

Orangeville mayor and council to keep watchful eye on Melville pit –Caledon Enterprise - Oct 07, 2013

Caledon Enterprise

By Matthew Strader

Town of Orangeville staff have said they trust Caledon's council on the Olympia Sand and Gravel application in northwest Caledon, but Orangeville's mayor and council will maintain a watchful eye on a gravel pit they have a lot of concerns about.

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Olympia Sand and Gravel, made up of Caledon investors, has applied for an approximately 300 acre gravel pit between Porterfield and Willoughby Roads, Lots 27 and 28, Concession 2, in Caledon.

The application will require changes in the Town's zoning and Official Plan to permit extraction.

The Citizens Against the Melville Pit (CAMP) is a resident group that wants to limit aggregate altogether in Caledon. The group delegated Orangeville's council in August to share their concerns and frustration with the lack of communication from the Caledon council, group leaders said.

Caledon's representatives, including Ward 1 Regional Councillor Richard Paterak and Mayor Marolyn Morrison, have said the application is within the town's resource area, a designated swatch of land created when Caledon reacted to a provincial order to mark nearly 16,000 hectares as potential resource sites.

Paterak and Morrison said committee work more than a decade ago resulted in them getting that number down to approximately 7,000 hectares. Morrison explained the town was told if they did not designate some land as potential aggregate sites, an official plan would have not been approved.

Paterak also shared statistics from the Ontario Aggregate Resource Corporation annual report that show aggregate shipped from Caledon has been reduced to 3.9 million tonnes annually in 2012, from highs of 5.3 in 2004 and 2006.

"There may be more gravel trucks but they are coming from Wellington, Dufferin, Grey and Simcoe and we have no control over that truck traffic," he said.

Both Morrison and Paterak reacted to statements by Orangeville Mayor Rob Adams about his council's concern regarding the application and a possible Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing to support resident views and fight it.

"That's a political statement. He hasn't got in touch with anyone here to find out what our Official Plan is, or what our policies are. If Rob Adams wants to contribute a few million to the fight he's welcome to," Morrison said. "They'll (producer) take us to the OMB and because it's mapped and in the resource

area in the town's Official Plan, and the region's Official Plan, the town won't have a legal leg to stand on."

In a previous interview with The Enterprise, Adams said Orangeville had a lot of concerns regarding this particular application because it is located directly south of his community. He's concerned about water, traffic, pollution and the creation of even more pits.

His council asked Orangeville staff to produce a report about the application, and Paterak shared that report with The Enterprise.

Orangeville staff noted many of the concerns Caledon's councillors noted.

"The site is designated as "High Potential Mineral Aggregate Resource Area". This designation extends from the proposed pit location to the boundaries of the Town of Orangeville. The area falls outside of the Region's Greenlands system, and outside of the area designated as Prime Agricultural. This designation recognizes high potential mineral aggregate resource areas and seeks to protect them for possible use," it reads.

It report also notes that Porterfield Road and County Road 109, the Orangeville Bypass, are designated as high capacity arterials in the Caledon official plan, and Porterfield itself is a regional road, making them ideal for haul routes.

It also notes that studies on water, visual impact, noise and air quality have been submitted and peer reviewed.

However, Orangeville council is still very concerned, Adams maintains.

"Council takes advice from staff, and our staff gave us some advice," he said. "But quite often, staff will try to remain neutral, especially when commenting in another jurisdiction. It doesn't mean the council doesn't have very strong concerns."

Adams said a number of his councillors are concerned about traffic, noise, dust and other factors, and members of his community have continued to come before council to share their views.

Orangeville council received the staff report they asked for, but passed a motion immediately after stating that they remained concerned about a number of factors and will be watching the process.

"Council still feels there are issues we should continue to monitor," Adams said. "We will keep consideration of all options available to us, our priority is protecting our residents. At this stage we want to evaluate what the next steps might be and keep an eye on how the application is proceeding."