

Orangeville seeks legal opinion as Caledon approves Melville Pit – Orangeville Banner - Dec 11, 2013

Matthew Strader

“It was standing room only in the council chambers, as well as the overflow room set up in the cafeteria at town hall, as dozens of Caledon residents showed on Monday night to protest Olympia Sand and Gravel’s application for a 293 acre gravel pit in North West Caledon. In the end, council voted to approve the application, with Ward 1 Area Councillor Doug Beffort, the lone councillor voting against.”

Orangeville Banner

By Bill Tremblay

As Caledon council voted to approve the Melville Pit, Orangeville council was discussing how they could stop the project from becoming a reality.

On Monday (Dec. 9), Caledon council approved Olympia Sand and Gravel’s request to rezone 118 hectares of land at 20946 Willoughby Road. The applications were approved with an amendment requesting the Ministry of Natural Resources grant a license for dry extraction only, with the hope of testing and approaching issues on water later.

In Orangeville, the plan to mine 1.2 million tonnes of gravel annually has raised concerns of traffic, water consumption and dust.

Mayor Rob Adams said the pit’s approval is the first time he can recall Orangeville council looking for ways to challenge another municipality’s decision.

“I’ve never had a situation like this. We certainly have a good relationship with Caledon and have over the years as good neighbours,” Adams said. “I understand they have to make decisions. They have a job to do, but we also have a job to do in protecting our residents.”

Adams said council would now consult its solicitor and staff in an attempt to solve its concerns surrounding the approval.

“We’ll have to review our options and see how we can deal with it,” Adams said, adding Orangeville politicians and staff will review all documents related to the pit. “I’m not certain what our options are, but we want to have thoroughly investigated all of our options to protect the interests of Orangeville residents.”

Orangeville council previously approved a motion voicing its concerns about the pit proposal.

“I’ve made it clear council has real concerns,” Adams said. “I wrote a letter on behalf of council to Caledon council outlining those very concerns. It put them on notice that Orangeville has those concerns, and feels they need to be addressed.”

At Orangeville's council meeting, Simon Watts, a Highpoint Sideroad resident, explained Caledon residents share the same concern.

"There are serious concerns, not just with the immediate residents, but also with a large number of residents living in Orangeville," Watts said. "The regional boundary is not a boundary that those health concerns will respect."

Coun. Scott Wilson asked what avenues the town has to take to fight the approval. Planning director Nancy Tuckett, explained staff have prepared a position in the wake of the pit's approval.

"There certainly is an appeal process," Tuckett said. "Certainly with any decision made by the Town of Caledon, there will be an opportunity to make an appeal."