



FORCE battles quarry

By Dianne Cornish
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Residents in and around Concession 11 East are digging deep into their pockets to stop a quarry developer from digging into neighbouring land and destroying the rural serenity of northeast Flamborough.

More than 200 people crowded into the recreation hall at Lawson Park last Wednesday to hear what needs to be done to stop the quarry. When asked for a financial commitment, after being told it will take upwards of \$100,000 in the first year to effectively battle the proposal, 90 per cent of the crowd agreed by a show of hands to back their protest with cash. Many already have, with \$35,000 being raised in the last few weeks.

“This is about protecting your investment in your home,” Graham Flint, chair of the newly-formed committee, Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE), told the crowd. Earlier, the Milborough Line resident outlined some of the impacts of the quarry being proposed by developer David Lowndes for a 380-acre site north of Concession 11 between Centre Road and Milborough Line. Dynamite blasting, rock crushing and trucking will invade the rural solitude of the area, he warned, adding there’ll also be a pump running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, likely discharging millions of gallons of water from the below water quarry into nearby Bronte Creek.

Depletion and contamination of local drinking water is also a concern as the quarry lands sit on a large aquifer that supplies

water to community wells in Carlisle, Freelon, Campbellville, and Kilbride, as well as private wells in the rural areas. A decline in property values for adjacent landowners is another major concern. Research done by FORCE committee members revealed that a quarry in Ohio, located on similar bedrock to that on the Flamborough site, caused water wells within a 10-mile radius to go dry, the audience was told.

“This is a real fight,” Flint said, adding “We can beat him (Lowndes),” provided the group “works together and stays focused.”

He outlined several reasons why the battle is winnable, including provincially-significant wetlands and environmentally significant areas identified on about 30 per cent of the quarry site; the location of the headwaters of Bronte Creek on the site; the fact that three residential subdivisions (Timber Run, Glenron and Stonebrook Estates) accounting for close to 100 homes and some 250 residents “touch on” the quarry property; the presence of aquifers on site that supply community wells; the new legislative environment, such as smart growth and green belt protection; and “a passionate committee and expert team” working hard to prevent the quarry from becoming a reality.

To help raise the profile of public opposition to the quarry, a lawn sign campaign was launched at Thursday’s community meeting. Two hundred signs carrying the familiar red circle with a line through the word quarry as well as the address for the group’s informative Web site (www.StopTheQuarry.ca) were handed out that night. By early next morning, 40 were spotted by FORCE member Mark Rudolph who took a driving tour through the area bounded by Milborough Line, Centre Road, Concession 11 E and Mountsberg Road.

Committee members have also been getting support from area politicians, including municipal councillors in Hamilton (Flamborough councillor Margaret McCarthy and Ward 5 councillor Chad Collins) and Milton (councillor Brian Penman). Flint said Hamilton mayor Larry Di Ianni is also on side and has

indicated he won't support the quarry application (for rezoning and an Official Plan Amendment) and local MPP Ted McMeekin is also opposed to the proposal. McMeekin, a former Carlisle resident, attended last week's meeting and briefly addressed the crowd saying, "I don't think two people with two brains together would want to put a quarry here."

To date, no formal application has been filed with the city for the proposal. Several technical reports, covering a variety of issues such as noise, truck traffic and groundwater, were expected to be completed at the end of June by consultants hired by the developer, but those reports are still pending.

Flint said he holds no doubts that the developer is serious about proceeding with the plan. The committee and area landowners are equally serious about halting the proposal, he said.

Volunteers serving on the committee have been assigned various roles, including legal, strategic, community outreach and financial. The committee has opened a bank account and hired an environmental lawyer with a good track record. "No quarries have been approved in any of the cases he has undertaken," Flint said. As further evidence of the community's resolve to block the project, Flint said an additional \$20,000 was raised from area homeowners at the community meeting. "The war chest" now totals \$55,000, meaning the committee has already passed the halfway mark after just six weeks of canvassing.

Over the next six to nine months, the committee plans to work diligently to get out its message of protest, to tell its story and conduct its own technical studies with a view to refute the findings of those expected to be unveiled soon by Lowndes. Flint said the committee also hopes to widen its reach, showing that the quarry has "a large sphere of influence" which goes well beyond the Concession 11 East area. People in the Waterdown area, Milton proper, west of Highway #6 near Freelon and as far north as Moffat should also be aware that they, too, could be susceptible to well water problems if the quarry is approved, he warned.

Cutlines

FORCE committee chair Graham Flint crouches beside one of the new lawn signs protesting the proposed Concession 11 East quarry.