

Concerns expressed Orangeville is unprotected by Olympia pit

By James Matthews

Orangeville Mayor Rob Adams says his town's taxpayers should get their fair share from any pit or quarry development that will directly impact on them.

Caledon council recently voted to support the proposed gravel quarry by Olympia Sand and Gravel Ltd. north of Melville. The meeting took more than four hours and included more than a dozen delegations from the community, voicing opposition to the proposal. The quarry will require the Town's Official Plan be amended and as much as 291 acres be rezoned at Lots 27 and 28, Concession 2, in west Caledon to allow extraction.

The rub for Orangeville is in the fact the quarry's northern border will be about a kilometre from the town's southern outskirts and a Town well on Highway 10. And opponents say that's cause to be concerned for the integrity of the municipal water supply.

According to a press release from Citizens Against Melville Pit (CAMP), the quarry will be expandable to 500 or more acres and, should it get approval, may be located in the area bordered by the County 109 truck bypass, Highway 136, Willoughby Road, and Highpoint Road. It will be larger than the two quarries south of Caledon village, on both sides of Highway 10.

?It's unusual to have a council take a position different than another council,? Adams said about the recent Caledon council meeting. He said he's heard indications there are many residents of both Orangeville and Caledon who are displeased with the possibility of the quarry and the impact it will have on the region.

Adams added such an endeavour would be detrimental to ground water integrity and air quality. It will lead to more traffic congestion that will in turn increase deterioration of local roads as heavy equipment will be a common sight. And that will lead to steeper road repair costs to both communities' taxpayers.

Orangeville would have to pay out of pocket whatever it could cost to remediate a compromised water supply or road damages, while any damages to Caledon thoroughfares could be paid with the benefits from the quarry. Adams said Caledon will benefit through a percentage of what comes out of the quarry.

In weighing the proposal, Caledon benefited from feedback from a 2008 and June 2013 public information meetings. Planners reportedly reviewed the quarry application through the lenses of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the Greenbelt Plan, Peel Region's Official Plan, and provincial, regional and municipal policies.

Orangeville council and residents had none of that, the mayor said. The Town of Orangeville never had any correspondence or contact with the quarry's proponents. When the proposed quarry came to Orangeville's attention, Adams sent a letter to Caledon council outlining some of the concerns from his municipality's perspective.

Adams said there was no response from Caledon. Despite the silence from the neighbouring community, he said he will find ways to protect Orangeville interests.

?We're going to look at what we need to do to protect the rights and interests of Orangeville residents with regards to the quarry,? he said.