

Council passes interim control by-law for high potential aggregate resource lands

By Zachary Roman

Earlier this week, Mayor Allan Thompson called the current Caledon Council together for an emergency meeting.

On October 18, less than a week before Caledon's municipal election on October 24, Town of Caledon Council held an emergency meeting to discuss an interim control by-law for lands within Caledon's high potential aggregate resource areas.

A Town of Caledon staff report prepared for the meeting recommended that Caledon Council enact an interim control by-law to prohibit Gravel Pits or Quarries on all lands identified on Schedule B to Staff Report 2022-0448, excluding those lands within MX Extractive Industrial Zones under Zoning By-law 2006-50, as amended, for a period of one year.

The report also recommended a new capital project be created a Caledon Supplementary Aggregate Resources Policy Study and that this project be funded with \$50,000 from the Town's tax-funded capital reserve. The documents referred to in the report are available on the Town of Caledon's website.

Thompson said he called the meeting because of a request to Council from the Forks of the Credit Preservation Group, who stressed its importance.

The timing of the meeting was my decision, said Thompson. Although we are in 'lame duck' the matter is not restricted by the Municipal Act.

A number of Caledon residents registered to delegate at the meeting, and there were last minute delegation requests that were granted as well. Two candidates in Caledon's municipal election were among those who delegated: Ramat Gill and Cheryl Connors.

Gill said he attended the meeting as a resident of Ward 1, as he lives outside of the Caledon Village area. Gill explained he's been in opposition to gravel/aggregate pit expansion for the last decade. He said in his opinion, Council calling a meeting so close to the election to try and activate the by-law in question is a token appeal to residents before the election. He said the interim control by-law is a good first positive step but the timing of the meeting was inappropriate.

David Sylvester of the Forks of the Credit Preservation Group used a slideshow in his delegation and explained that out of the top aggregate-producing municipalities in Ontario, Caledon's aggregate policies are the weakest. He said this leaves Caledon vulnerable to future aggregate applications, specifically quarry applications. The Group is especially worried about a blasting quarry application in Caledon. Sylvester said an interim control by-law passed now will ensure Caledon is able to plan Caledon.

Connors said while she supports the interim control by-law, she and other groups have been fighting against pits for years with large amounts of support and never received an interim control by-law to help them.

So, what's different between our applications and this one? I'm sure it's nothing to do with [the fact] that we're five days before an election, said Connors. To say we [now] have unprecedented community engagement? Aggregate has been a problem in this community for decades.

Councillor Annette Groves said she understands the optics of the timing of the meeting might make it seem like the issue is being politicized, but that Council has a responsibility to protect those who are impacted by potential pits and quarries. She said she'll be supporting the interim control by-law.

Councillor Lynn Kiernan said the timing of the Council meeting was not good but that it was the right thing to do. Kiernan said it was because of the hard work of the Forks of the Credit Preservation Group that she asked Mayor Thompson to call the emergency

Council meeting.

?It became apparent we were exposed? what we're doing today, to ensure we're doing something to put a pin in this,? said Kiernan. ?We tried other avenues than engaging this ICBL (interim control by-law) at the eleventh hour but frankly we couldn't. Here we are today to do what we have to do? I support this interim control by-law; I pray this can give us relief from this blasting quarry and move us forward.?

Councillor Jennifer Innis said she wanted to thank the Forks of the Credit Conservation Group for their conversations over the past months and commended them for ?doing their homework.?

She said she'd be supporting the interim control by-law and that it's the easy part; that the next hard part will be ensuring Caledon's new official plan policies are as sound as they possibly can be to protect Caledon in the future.

Caledon Council passed Town staff's recommendation to implement the interim control by-law unanimously.