

?It's a monster?: Community meeting being held about proposed quarry]

Forks of the Credit Preservation Group meeting will address CBM application

By Zachary Roman

A meeting will be held later this month to discuss the largest quarry application ever submitted to the Town of Caledon.

On April 18, the Forks of the Credit Preservation Group (FOTCPG) is hosting a community meeting at 7 p.m. at the Alton Legion. The group is a non-profit coalition of Caledon residents dedicated to protecting Caledon's environment and the Credit River.

Caledon Mayor Annette Groves, local Councillors, the Town's chief planner Antoinetta Minichillo, and the FOTCPG's lawyer David Donnelly will be among those in attendance at the meeting. Anyone is welcome to attend.

The meeting is being called as on March 23, planning firm Glen Schnarr and Associates submitted Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendment requests to the Town on behalf of CBM Aggregates for a below-water table limestone blasting quarry north of Alton.

CBM Aggregates is owned by the Brazilian company Votorantim Cimentos, which is the eighth-largest cement company in the world.

David Sylvester, president of FOTCPG, said the quarry is the biggest to ever be applied for in Caledon. He expects to see over 100 residents at the meeting, many of whom he said will be angry, astonished, or confused.

?This is the biggest development application in the history of Caledon, both in terms of its size, 800 acres, and the massive environmental and social impacts,? said Sylvester. ?This land will be permanently devastated? the actual act of blasting and extraction will go on for 40-plus years.?

The proposed quarry would be located between Mississauga Road and Main Street north of Charleston Sideroad (Regional Road 24). It would also include portions of land south of Charleston Sideroad, and east of Main Street north of Charleston Sideroad.

In order for a quarry to be built and operated there, the area would need to be changed in Caledon's Official Plan from ?general agricultural area, rural lands, and environmental policy area? to ?extractive industrial area and environmental policy area?. The zoning of the area would have to be changed from ?agricultural and environmental policy area? to ?extractive industrial with an exception.?

Sylvester said aggregate companies will do everything they can to get their applications approved. However, he's confident the Town of Caledon will respond to the application forcefully and effectively; that it's in the process of doing its due diligence and getting legal opinions. He said Caledon is going to hire a planner and project manager with aggregate experience to help deal with CBM's application.

?It's a monster,? said Sylvester of CBM's proposal. ?This is a billion-dollar proposal from one of the biggest mining companies in the world.?

Sylvester said the application came as a shock since Caledon Council passed an interim control bylaw (ICBL) last October to temporarily prohibit new gravel pits or quarries for a year. It was Sylvester who delegated to Council on behalf of the FOTCPG in October about the need for the ICBL.

?As I understand it, an ICBL does pause the approval? of any aggregate application,? said Sylvester. ?But I've since learned that applicants can still dump their documents on the desk of the Planning Department and submit an application.?

He also said he was astonished that Council and residents weren't immediately aware CBM Aggregates' application documents were submitted when they were in December 2022.

Examples of the documents submitted by CBM are a traffic study, water table report, and noise assessment. The application from CBM included an extremely large amount of documentation ? thousands of pages ? and the FOTCPG is still going through it and developing an action plan.

To view a full list of materials submitted by CBM, or to offer feedback on the proposed quarry, those interested can visit the following link: caledon.ca/en/town-services/cbm-caledon.aspx#Material-Submitted

Sylvester said a rather discouraging sentiment he's hearing lately is that ?Caledon is going to the pits.? He said development pressure is so overwhelming these days, and while aggregate is of course needed, the question shouldn't be ?where can we put an aggregate pit?? but instead ?where shouldn't we put an aggregate pit??

The area where CBM's proposed quarry would be is in an area that's so rich with natural heritage features, said Sylvester, adding it's ?mind-boggling? to think of a quarry operating there.