

Local resident voices objections to Erin Pit expansion, calls on Council to reconsider?

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

A Caledon resident has criticized Council for backing down in its years-long fight over the Erin Pit Expansion.

This past Tuesday, local resident Cheryl Connors delegated to Council about license application for the expansion project - informing the municipality's elected officials about the alleged negative connotations this would bring to the community.

Back on Feb 11, Town staff recommended that a zoning bylaw amendment, filed on behalf of James Dick Construction, proposing an addition to the existing Erin Pit operation, be approved.

The Town had initially filed an objection to the application, alongside The Region of Peel and Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), in 2017. Both Peel Region and CVC have since retracted their objection, after working with James Dick Construction to resolve issues on the Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) Licence Application with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

The current pit is located north of Wellington Road 42 and travels from 10th Line to Winston Churchill Boulevard.

Connors gave an insight on what it's like to live beside an aggregate and presented reasoning for council to rethink their decision on giving the proposal the green light. She listened to the previous council meeting where the license application was discussed and needed clarification on a few of the topics.

?The understanding of how the resource designation worked in the official plan when they do it, that that was done in a very high macro level, and it didn't mean blanked approval for all pits and quarries, that the individual application should still be examined by zone merit. Where it's located, whether the other land uses are particularly sensitive land uses, but somehow over time this has come to me an automatic blanked approval for any application within the resource area,? explained Connors.

She added, ?every home owner, and real estate agent should be able to disclose to people that when they buy their dream home in this beautiful property in Caledon, that they're in a resource area.?

In the last meeting on Feb 11th, James Parkin from MHBC Planning explained that the property goes almost 60 years when the lands were originally purchased for aggregate extraction 40 years ago and are designated in the Town of Caledon Official Plan.

?We all move here, like I did 20 years ago, from the city knowing nothing about pits and quarries, and it's not disclosed to them. It's a complete surprise to them when they find it out, and we shouldn't be expected to be experts,? said Connors.

She went on to discuss several topics of the application and staff report that needed clarification, adding on the lack of social impact regarded.

?Is there anyone on council who lives next to a pit? Because, I do. And I'd like to speak about what actually goes on when you live next to a pit,? said Connors.

She then proceeded to show pictures that showed what she experiences while living next to a pit herself where dust covers her windows, and builds up all along the outside of her house, preventing her for being able to open a window in fear of the amount of dirt and dust surrounding her home.

?We don't even bother putting out our lawn furniture in the summer. We are prisoners in our home. We never have a window open, they have to be closed at all time. We run air conditioning all day long, so our hydro bills are even higher,? said Connors.

She added, ?my big ask is can we please have a committee and respond to this, they're asking for comments, I think other municipalities will be responding because it's not good for municipalities.?

Council discussed different ways to be able to properly communicate with the ministry but decided, because questions are still being asked and details have yet to be provided, if a member from the ministry would come to council where proper information can be laid out for not only council, but for the public.

A motion was passed to get the ministry involved with the help of MPP Sylvia Jones through correspondence from Mayor Allan Thompson and the help from council.

For more information, please visit caledon.ca to view council agenda and minutes.