

?This is not a done deal? Residents push back against proposed Caledon mega-quarry

By Riley Murphy

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A second Public Meeting was held January 29 regarding the proposed mega-quarry for Caledon.

More than 100 residents attended in person at the Alton legion, and dozens more attended online.

After nearly four hours of presentations, delegations, and questions between Caledon Council and the attendees, it appeared that almost no one in the room was in favour of the proposed blasting quarry.

The Mega Blasting Quarry is proposed by Votorantim Cimentos/CBM (CBM Aggregates, the building materials division of St. Mary's Cement Inc.).

The proposed tonnage limit for the CBM Quarry is 2.5 million tonnes per year, and on average CBM anticipates shipping approximately 2.0 million tonnes per year once operations are in full production.?

The proposed location is in the vicinity of Charleston Sideroad and Main Street. The area is approximately 260 hectares, proposed to be licensed, with about 200 hectares proposed for extraction.

The application proposes redesignating the land from the general agriculture, rural and environmental policy area to an extractive industrial B designation, which would permit above- and below-water extraction.

Blasting is proposed as part of the operations.

The proposal includes that the site is de-watered, with a ?discharge pipe? to the nearby TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley golf course for irrigation, with excess water ???stored and potentially discharged from the pond system to the Credit River.?

The first public meeting for the quarry was held in 2023, where residents began the long journey of advocating and expressing their concerns.

Since the first public meeting, Genevieve Scott, Lead Planner for the Town of Caledon, shared that a second submission was brought forward in 2023, with modifications to the proposed dewatering plan and the introduction of a new groundwater mitigation system, as well as the establishment of the Caledon Aggregate Agency Review Team (CAART).

There was a third submission from March to May of 2025, which included updates to the Private Well Complaint Procedure, a revised entrance location on Charleston Sideroad, moving the entrance 200m further west from Main Street, and an air monitoring program.

Karen Bennett's presentation with Glen Schnarr and Associates Inc. included a summary of the main concerns raised, including impacts on the natural environment, the Credit River, safety concerns due to increased heavy truck traffic, public health concerns, and more.

Bennett discussed the ?Private Well Complaint Procedure,? which states that if well interference is determined to be due to aggregate extraction, the licensee will be responsible for remediating it.

Also stated was the blasting procedure: that those within 500m of the blast will be notified, and that there will be a 'prevention of flyrock from leaving site.'

Multiple delegates and residents came forward during their registered delegations or the public question period to voice their concerns about the proposal.

Delegate Joanna Valerini said neither Ontario nor Caledon need an aggregate operation such as this.

'The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has confirmed that we have a resource of aggregate for the next 35 years, without the need to add new pits or quarries or expand existing ones,' she said. 'The risk is too great.'

In resident Gord Boughner's delegation, he stated 'mega money means mega risk,' and went on to say that the applicant 'does not care about Caledon' and 'their priority is foreign shareholder value.'

Boughner voiced concerns that wells 'will be impacted,' the trucks per hour, as well as noting that with the oversight corporation by Votorantim Cimentos, is 'putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.'

'This is a generational impact that will span over 40 years with approximately 500 million litres of groundwater being removed annually. Many of us will likely never see the rehabilitated lakes. Yet we will live with the consequences: lowered water tables, trees being removed, massive berms being built with only saplings,' says Boughner.

Two delegations were provided by members of the Forks of the Credit Preservation Group (FCPG).

Anthony Fairclough, a member of the FCPG, raised concerns about air quality and the expected traffic issues associated with the proposal.

'An intersection that's already close to failing storage capacity thresholds cannot logically absorb any more new truck traffic without risk,' said Fairclough, noting the Highway 10/Charleston Sideroad intersection is already operating at near or at capacity.

He noted the toll that exhaust emissions and dust from aggregate operations take on the public's health.

Debra Wilson, with FCPG, spoke to many issues the megaquarry could cause to private wells.

'Votorantim says they have identified 23 wells that could be negatively impacted, we are very concerned, they have referenced this in every single report. This is one quarter of the wells in our community [Cataract],' says Wilson. 'If you were living in my house, how comfortable would that make you feel? A local resident having to take on a deep-pocketed multinational corporation.'

Residents during the public question period called out the lack of health experts in peer reviews, the impact on the Credit River, the lack of sustainability for their lifestyles with temporary water in the event of well issues, road maintenance, and more.

Mayor Annette Groves and Caledon Councillors echoed many of the speakers' concerns.

'This is not a done deal,' said Groves, adding her concerns and questions about monitoring the site, enforcement, private well issues, flyrock, and dust mitigation.

Referencing concerns about the Minister of Natural Resources enforcement, Groves said, 'I'm just frustrated because we've been asking for enforcement. We asked for enforcement on our roads with the gravel trucks that we have today. I don't see any enforcement. So, I'm not confident, I'm not confident at all.'

Councillor Christina Early said this process has been a 'horrible stress for the community,' and added that, with truck prohibitions

just passed for the community of Alton, an area near the proposed site, the proposal could add 70 trucks an hour.

Both Early and Councillor Lynn Kiernan, who resides and represents the Ward of the proposed site, voiced concerns over the lack of questions answered that night at the public meeting in Alton.

'I often sit in these public meetings, and residents come forward, and they ask questions, and [the response is] 'we don't have that information, that's forthcoming, We're still working on that.' Then why are we having a public meeting? I say, if we're not ready, don't have the meeting,' said Kiernan.

Wilson with FCPG says that everyone at the meeting was able to 'press some good questions.'

She attended the first public meeting as well, adding that residents remain concerned and involved, and that this meeting showcased what everyone has learned over the past few years.

With the public meeting last Thursday, Wilson says she left feeling many of her questions unanswered.

'I would have to say there was nothing that I heard come out for any of the questions that were raised that gave us clarity on where things were happening,' says Wilson. 'I think everybody's looked at the reports and they're not finding the answers and that's why the questions keep coming up.'

She added that, like many, she was disappointed much of the information provided was either the same or only slightly modified from the first public meeting.

Town Staff stated at the meeting that they are 'trying to get a report to' this term of Council as soon as possible'.

'If the company has truly heard what the residents were saying that night, then I would hope over the next few weeks, we see some new information from them and some new, more solid answers as to how they're going to fix these very serious concerns,' added Wilson, speaking on the final report.