

Clearview residents not digging quarry agreement

Safety, environmental issues concern Walker Aggregate neighbours

NEWS May 07, 2019 by Ian Adams Wasaga Sun



A gravel truck travels east on County Road 91 through Duntroon. - Ian Adams/Torstar

Is it safe for a fully-loaded gravel truck to make the 200-metre descent into Duntroon?

Residents of the area say no — especially when there are hundreds of trucks every day.

"I'm not aware of any traffic study that's been conducted to analyze not only the flow, but the implications for the community from a safety perspective," said Wendy Franks, who is also part of a group known as Quarry Aware.



The Niagara Escarpment Commission's public input process into the township's application to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan to add a special policy to apply to the Sideroad 26/27 road allowance has renewed the focus on the deal to transfer County Road 91 to Walker Aggregates, and the safety of trucks hauling from the company's quarry west of the hamlet.

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The deadline for public comments is May 24.

The deal to transfer the road — and have it closed off to through traffic — was part of the 2012 agreement reached after a lengthy joint board hearing that ultimately approved Walker's application to expand its operations.

According to emails obtained by Simcoe.com through a Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy request, Walker received its approval to haul from the its expansion area in 2016, after work on County Road 91 was complete.

The emails, between Walker, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the township, indicated the site plan condition requiring improvements to 91 prior to hauling material had been met.

A number of emails that form Simcoe.com's request remain outstanding, withheld either for reasons of solicitor-client privilege, or because of third-party notification provisions in the MFIPPA.

Franks' mother challenged Walker's application to expand its operations more than a decade ago; she is now a party to the Niagara Escarpment Hearing Office tribunal challenge of the township's application for a development permit to upgrade 26/27.



STORY BEHIND THE STORY:

Reporter Ian Adams has been following the story of the quarry's expansion, and plans to upgrade the road network, for more than a decade.

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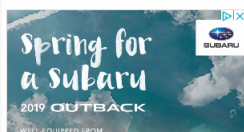
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That process is on hold while the township's application to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan is processed.

Quarry Aware is raising a number of issues both with the deal that will eventually see ownership of the road transferred, and improvements to 26/27.

The sideroad, only accessible in summer, is to be upgraded and widened. The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust is also a party to the challenge of the township's development application on the basis it negatively affect a nearby cold-water stream used as a spawning area for brook trout.

The Trust has also argued an environmental review failed to identify a number of wetland areas either within or close to the road allowance; the Trust asked the minister of the environment to suspend the hearing process, but he declined.

Franks said there are three issues: truck safety; the environmental implications of upgrading 26/27; and the lack of a valuation of the 91 road allowance.

Quarry Aware claims the value of the road lies in the aggregate underneath; their estimate, based on an expert's opinion, is that it's worth about \$80 million.

"If a fair market value assessment said it was worth \$15 (million) or \$17 or \$20, I don't think we would be making such a fuss; it's a factor of eight," she said.

Clearview Township chief administrative officer Steve Sage said to his knowledge, there was never a valuation of the land, and \$7.5 million from Walker was based on the estimated value of the road improvements.

He also maintained that Walker can't touch the road allowance without applying for an amendment to its permit to extract material.

On the matter of road safety, Sage said 91 has been engineered to make it as safe as possible.

"There's close calls on all roads. We have a lot more dangerous roads than that one," he said. "I'm not trying to belittle it, but we make our comments on safety based on data, and I don't see it. If someone has better data, then please share it"

The OPP was not able to provide specific statistics on collisions along that stretch of road. The last serious collision involving a gravel truck appears to have taken place prior to road improvements.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, a traffic impact study was done for the expansion; the study only examined the volume of truck traffic that would come from the quarry.

The MNRF referred questions on road safety to the township.

Sage, and Mayor Doug Measures, maintain concerns about truck traffic should not lie with Walker, but trucks hauling from pits to the west that use 91 — in spite of haul route agreements that require trucks heading east to turn south on Grey Rd. 31, then come east using County Rd. 124.

Questions to the MNRF about haul route enforcement were referred to the township; Measures and Sage said the township does not have the authority to pull a truck over.

"The haul route is not physically enforceable, but where it is enforceable is on the pit licence. The MNRF can't pull trucks over either, but they can deal with the breach of the site plan agreement with the pit owner," Sage said. "We've been trying to think of ways to minimize that east-west truck traffic. Our residents are seeing all this truck traffic, and I've had complaints about truck traffic on days when the (Walker quarry) isn't open."

"When I was a councillor I heard the concerns at the public meeting, heard lots of concern about the safety," Measures said. "My concern is for the number of vehicles that use that road that are beyond the authority of the quarry agreement."



by [Ian Adams](#)

Ian Adams is a reporter for Simcoe.com, covering community news and events throughout south Georgian Bay, and municipal councils in Collingwood and Wasaga Beach.

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MAY 11 SATURDAY
Bake Sale and Coffee/Tea Room
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MAY 11 SATURDAY
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