

Caledon Enterprise

James Dick Construction Limited presents case in Rockfort Quarry OMB meeting

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James Dick Construction Limited (JDCL) had the opportunity to sum up their Rockfort Quarry case before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) during a May 18 hearing.

It was over a decade ago that JDCL first put in an application to create an open pit mine on the 89-hectare Rockfort Farm property, located at the corner of Olde Base Line and Winston Churchill Boulevard. They were met with immediate opposition from area residents who went on to form the Coalition of Concerned Citizens (CCC), a group that has raised over \$1 million to fight the quarry application.

Thus far, the Town of Caledon, Region of Peel, Town of Erin, Credit Valley Conservation Board, Niagara Escarpment Commission and County of Wellington have all voted against the pit application, but the decision ultimately falls to the OMB.

"Put aside the passion and the politics... and listen to the experts," urged Christopher Tzekas, one of the lawyers for JDCL. "This proposal represents a remarkable opportunity to safely and efficiently provide a scarce resource."

Tzekas noted that the Rockfort Quarry issue was extremely polarized from the start, even before an application was submitted, which made it difficult to have honest conversations about concerns.

"Almost immediately there was this declaration (of war), and regrettably, that polarized everyone and we were never able to bridge that gap. It just seemed to become impossible to get everyone to sit and think about what really matters, and talk about the issues, and try to find solutions to these issues, if that's possible," he said. "This hearing has been quite extraordinary in my experience, and in some cases we say to you, and we say respectfully to those in the room opposite, that the opposition was neither fair, nor reasonable."

According to the lawyer, much of what the opposition touts is not firmly based in science, and is "extreme".

"This is the right quarry in the right place at the right time. It's modern and well engineered to meet the demands of today's society. It's close to market and we say it's the right time," said Tzekas. "Delaying it will do nothing. Indeed, it will only risk the very serious possibility that this resource will never be used and be sterilized."

The JDCL counsel went over the high demand for

aggregate of this quality, and the fact that the area is producing none. An expert provided by the company believed that demand would continue to increase in coming years, making it necessary to ship aggregate from further afield and putting more trucks on the road for longer times.

"None of the solutions, including the use of recycled materials, is going to get us out of this crunch. Look, everyone, everyone should be striving to make as much use of recycled materials as they can, there's no question about that, but it isn't nearly enough to get us out of this," said Tzekas. "...the reality is [Peel] needs a lot of material, and the reality is it needs two or three Rockforts. That's what Peel needs to keep its needs satisfied.

"We're going to need this material and we're going to need it even as we urbanize. This is not a question of paving over green fields and therefore we need the material for that use... If we want to build higher, we need to build stronger. Our urbanization strategy, our intensification strategy is going to depend on this kind of material."

The OMB Chair spent the day listening to a recap of JDCL's case, which covered a range of subjects including but not limited to need, haul routes, mitigation factors and the environment.

The Region of Peel presented its final statements on May 19 and the Town of Caledon presented on May 20.

Final arguments will continue this week, including the CCC on Wednesday, May 26.

Check back with The Enterprise for more on the Town of Caledon and CCC closing statements.

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