

# Etobicoke Guardian

## Heavy industry prohibited from employment lands

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Heavy industry that is historic to the south Etobicoke employment lands is now prohibited, with the exception of a cement batching plant and two paint businesses.

Etobicoke York Community Council voted Tuesday to prohibit industrial plants producing crude oil or coal; ammunition, firearms or firecrackers; concrete batching; primary processing of limestone, gypsum or asphalt from locating in the area.

The South Etobicoke Employment Lands run north of Birmingham Street to the railway line and from Dwight Avenue and Drummond Street west to Seventeenth Street.

Jem Cain, chair of New Toronto Good Neighbours, lauded the zoning change for the employment lands.

"We need to ensure we protect our citizens, particularly seniors and children," Cain said. "These lands are very close to parks, schools and residential homes."

Cain referenced a May 2000 Toronto Public Health study: Air Pollution: Burden of Illness in Toronto.

The study "confirmed that air pollution contributes to poor health," the report stated.

"Each year in Toronto, air pollution adds about 1,000 early deaths and 5,500 admissions to hospitals, even when the air quality index indicates the quality of the air is 'good' or 'very good' 95 per cent of the time," the report indicated.

"Nobody has reported that the air quality has gotten any better in the last 12 years," Cain said, noting she is also concerned about industry's potential impact on soil and ground water.

The area is undergoing revitalization, including the emergence of a food processing cluster, indicates a January city planning staff report.

"No portion of the SEELRA (South Etobicoke Employment Lands Review Area) is more than 350 metres from residential areas," reads the report. "Existing and potential industrial and residential uses could be negatively affected by the establishment of certain industrial uses that are permitted by the current I.C2 (Industrial Class 2) zoning and two site-specific bylaws that apply in the SEELRA area."

Area Councillor Mark Grimes declared a conflict of interest and removed himself from Etobicoke council chambers during the Feb. 14 debate.

Industrial giants and decades-long local employers Goodyear Tire, Continental Can, Anaconda American Brass, Pittsburgh Paints and others pulled up stakes from the employment lands beginning in 1987.

Within a few years, as many as 10,000 factory and ancillary jobs had evaporated, and with them the economic viability of many Lake Shore Boulevard West retailers.

Four specific properties will now be governed under the new bylaw amendment. Paint businesses at 139 and 143 Sixteenth St. have since moved. Two site-specific bylaws for 207 New Toronto St. and 260 Eighth St. that had previously permitted manufacturing, repairing or warehouse use were repealed.

However, two other operating paint and varnish businesses on Sixteenth Street will continue to be permitted to operate under an existing site-specific bylaw.

Also, a St. Mary's Cement operation at 194 New Toronto St. will continue to be a permitted use.

The St. Mary's site was subject to a thorough site-specific land-use impact assessment at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) triggered by the company's appeal of the city's interim control bylaw to the board. Michael McQuaid, lawyer for St. Mary's Cement, wrote in a Feb. 10 letter to the city.

"The OMB in its decision released on June 17, 2011...reconfirmed the land use appropriateness of a concrete batching plant on the SMC site, repealed the ICBLs (interim control bylaws) and approved SMC's proposed site plan," McQuaid wrote.

York West Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti congratulated Grimes on the zoning bylaw change to the employment lands.

"It's part of the councillor's vision to find compatible uses for those industrial lands that fit today," Mammoliti said. "What might have worked in that community 40 years ago is not the case today. Some permitted uses shouldn't be permitted anymore. This is a prime example of that."

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