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Citizens' group supports township's gravel pit polic

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By Gail Martin Independent Editor



A local citizens' group has put its support behind Woolwich Township's new requirements for gravel pit applications.

Tony Dowling, of BridgeKeepers, made an appearance at this week's council meeting, held on Jan. 19. Dowling's group has been voicing opposition to a proposed gravel pit planned for the West Montrose area.

That application has since been referred to the Ontario Municipal Board, after the applicant, Capital Paving, objected to some of the requirements that Woolwich Township has placed on the application.

At issue is whether the township's official plan amendment regarding gravel pits, OPA 13, applies to the Capital Paving application, since the original application came in before OPA 13 was approved.

At the council meeting, Dan Kennaley, director of planning and engineering, said that the township has requested more information from Capital Paving, to support its application, but Capital Paving opted to ask the OMB for a ruling instead.

"They have advised us that they have filed a motion at the OMB to consider this a complete application, a view that the township disagrees with."

At the meeting, Dowling said his group supports the township, in its efforts to require a complete application from Capital Paving.

"We reaffirm our support for the direction the township has taken, in its aggregate policy," said Dowling. "We support the township's position that Capital Paving's application is not complete, and OPA 13 should apply."

Dowling brought with him Nick McDonald of Meridian Planning Consultants, a firm that has expertise in gravel pit applications.

McDonald told council that he had reviewed OPA 13 in detail, and felt that it was not only "very well written," but also that it contained no unusual requirements.

"These are all typical study requirements," said McDonald. "I support your efforts in requiring the right information from Capital Paving."

Council chambers were filled with other community members, including representatives from the Conestogo-Winterbourne Residents' Association, which has concerns about another gravel pit application in the Conestogo area, between Peel Street and Jiggs Hollow Road.

That gravel pit, proposed by Kuntz Topsoil, Sand and Gravel, was discussed later that same evening.

Dan Kennaley, director of planning and engineering, asked council to register its objection to the application, as it seeks approval under the Aggregate Resources Act.

Kennaley noted that gravel pits require approval at both the provincial and local level, and told councillors this objection would help ensure that no approval would be granted by the province until the township had a chance to review the application.

"This is a place holder," said Kennaley.

"If we didn't object to it, and no one else objected, it may be possible to approve (the pit) without municipal planning approval," said Kennaley.

Councillors unanimously supported the motion.

Kennaley estimated that the entire process to review this gravel pit application could take from six months to a year.

The township is expecting to deal with up to five gravel pit applications this year, including the West Montrose and Conestogo pits.

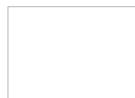
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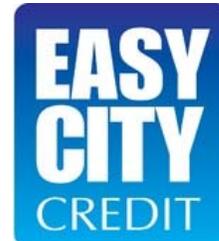
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