

Bulletin #27 Winter 2016



Snow Dancing

A long awaited aggregate committee for Caledon

During Caledon's last election, a little more than a year ago, several candidates for office, including our current mayor, promised that if elected, they would instigate a process to establish a standing committee of Caledon Town Council on aggregate issues. Many voters who heard these promises were encouraged, especially those who live in Ward 1 where almost all of Caledon and Peel's aggregate extraction occurs and where serious municipal water issues exist. A standing committee of council has the resources, staffing and status that an aggregate committee requires to be effective. In among the election promises was the promise that there would be citizen participation on this committee.

In the meantime there have been a number of issues at the Town that took precedence, but it now seems that the process is ready to begin.

[REDC's Board was asked for our thoughts about this committee and prepared some suggestions and recommendations](#) that have been sent to Ward 1 Councillors Doug Beffort and Barb Shaughnessy and should lead to a committee structure with teeth. We hope that these will help to improve the less than inspired and intermittent communication about aggregate issues from the Town and close those gaps in the transmission of information that no one seems ready to take responsibility for.

REDC believes that Council should step up to the plate and form a standing committee that includes citizen representatives who have the required experience, have demonstrated a balanced approach to aggregate issues and have the confidence and respect of their fellow community members.

Radon Gas and Aggregate Extraction

The Concerned Residents Coalition (CRC) challenge to Hidden Quarry in Rockwood is currently in the pre Hearing stage at the OMB. The Quarry has brought together a broad coalition of political and community interests working to stop the proposal. James Dick Construction Ltd., the proponent, has appealed to the OMB as it pursues a licence to extract mineral deposits from property it has owned in Rockwood for 20 years.

CRC is conducting an ongoing round of public events to fund its case. Among the many issues that CRC has raised about Hidden Quarry is the increased release of radon gas by the act of blasting for aggregate. Radon is a naturally occurring, colourless and odourless radioactive gas.

A recent fund raiser was an information evening on radon gas - a serious carcinogenic, implicated in lung cancer. It was news to many of us that high levels of radon gas can also occur naturally and can seep through cracks in our basement walls. FYI: [Canadian Cancer Society](#); [Health Canada](#)

Aggregate policy: is there change in the air?

There is little disagreement that aggregate is essential to build infrastructure until other means of construction replace it as the material of choice. But do we need new licences to meet the supplies required? How substantial are current stockpiles? How many years worth of aggregate is still in the ground, waiting to be extracted from properties with existing licences? What's convenient and most profitable in a private business plan may not be in the interests of surrounding communities. Right now aggregate developers do not have to prove need in order to apply for their licences, no matter how much aggregate is already available in licenced pits and quarries.

132 - 208 years of aggregate available through current licences as of 2010

Years ago when REDC joined Gravel Watch, Ontario's umbrella organization for activist groups, we became acquainted with the work of Dr Larry Jensen a geoscientist and one of GW's founders. Through his work Dr Jensen has provided a scientific basis for estimating resources available in licences as of 2010. Since then there have been more than 200 licences added and few surrendered. [Dr Jensen estimates that there are between 132 - 208 years of inventory of current resources: this exceeds any projections of future need.](#)

At this time, however, Ontario's aggregate policy supports the industry's right to mine for gravel without having to establish need. Communities are forced to comply with a policy that requires they submit to aggregate extraction 'close to markets'. Aggregate producers, on the other hand can extract and transport their product to whatever market is the most economically advantageous and keeps their costs down. And those that have licences with no time limit can return to mine decades after the local community has expanded its development in the belief that extraction has stopped - the Brock Pit in Tottenham is a case in point.

... a new day?

There's a new group of gutsy municipal politicians on the scene who are challenging the status quo publicly. One example is Mayor Rick Bonnette and the Halton Hills Council who passed a resolution last Spring asking the province to amend the Provincial Policy Statement and Aggregate Resources Act to require that aggregate operators applying for licences demonstrate their product is needed.

More recently, on Dec 10, Peel's Regional Council, which includes representation from Caledon, also passed a resolution that asked the province to review aggregate reserves in licenced operations and also review policies that prevent supply and demand analysis when granting new aggregate licences.

Last September MNRF put out tenders for a contract to conduct a study of aggregate supply and demand in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). The contract period is from November 2015 to Spring 2016 and the study "is to produce an up-to-date report on the current and future supply, implications for projected demand, and economic contributions to the province."

FYI

Interested in watersheds and headwaters? [Take a moment to review the Ontario Headwaters line up of short videos on its You-Tube channel.](#)

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[Credit Card donations can be made online.](#) Please address cheques to REDC Inc. Mail to REDC Inc. Att: Treasurer, 17895 Heart Lake Road, Caledon Ontario L7K 2A3

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