



Legislative & Planning Services
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September 16, 2014

Ms. Kim Wingrove
Township of Guelph/Eramosa
8348 Wellington Road 124
P.O. Box 700
Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0

Dear Ms. Wingrove:

RE: Region of Halton Technical Comments
“Hidden Quarry” – James Dick Construction Ltd.
Proposed Class ‘A’ Category 2 License – Aggregate Operation
Township of Guelph/Eramosa Zoning By-law Amendment Application ZBA 09/12
West Half Lot 1, Concession 6, former geographic area of the Township of Eramosa

The following correspondence is provided to outline technical comments on the natural heritage related matters as they relate to the above noted Zoning By-law Amendment application and *Aggregate Resource Act* application. These comments are not intended to supplant our July 5, 2013 letter as the requested additional studies and updates to the existing studies prepared in support of this proposal remain outstanding.

NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM RELATED TECHNICAL COMMENTS:

- a) **Field Survey on Adjacent Lands:** Wildlife Survey records contained in Appendix C of the NE Report indicate whether species were observed on adjacent lands but do not indicate on which area of adjacent lands (i.e. north, south, east, west side?). The extent of Field Surveys and Species observations conducted on adjacent lands in Halton Region should be clarified and detailed.

- b) **Significant Woodlands on Adjacent Lands:** According to our mapping, candidate significant woodlands are located just south of the property, along the south side of Highway 7, within the 120m Adjacent Lands study area surrounding the proposed new extraction operation. This woodland is identified as vegetation community FOD5-6 in the NE Report. A portion of this woodland area would likely meet criteria for designation as significant woodland in accordance with Section 277 of the 2006 Regional Official Plan (Interim Office Consolidated Official Plan). Regional Staff note that the Level II Report should have assessed the significance of this feature in accordance with Regional Significant Woodlands Criteria and demonstrated no negative impact in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement. However, it is recognized that the potential to negatively impact this feature is low given the substantial setback from quarry operations, physical separation from the quarry site by Highway 7, and mitigation measures already proposed. Therefore no further assessment of this feature is required in regard to the present application.

- c) **Surface Water/Fish Habitat Monitoring:** Regional Staff recognize that JDCL has agreed in correspondence (Harden response to Burnside June 10, 2014) to conduct flow and water quality testing of the Brydson Spring to establish baseline conditions including temperature, but not to undertake ongoing monitoring of the spring. Staff note that the Brydson Spring may contribute to base flow and water temperature attenuation of sensitive ecological receptors downstream of the subject property (Blue Springs coldwater fishery, PSW) and therefore recommend that ongoing monitoring of the spring (including water flow, quality and temperature) be undertaken in addition to baseline characterization of the spring, particularly given that no direct monitoring of downstream ecological receptors is planned.

Please note that Regional Staff do not concur with the statement (provided by JDCL correspondence dated August 1, 2014 in response to Halton Region Comments) that monitoring of this feature is redundant, because the source of the spring has not been satisfactorily identified. Staff recognizes that baseline characterization and ongoing monitoring are subject to landowner permission to access the spring.

- d) **Haul Route Study:** Regional Comments of July 5, 2013, requested a Haul Route Study, prepared in accordance with Terms of Reference to be prepared in consultation with staff from Halton Region, Milton, and Halton Hills. Although this request remains outstanding, Regional Staff understands that the Terms of Reference for this study are currently being developed. It is recommended that the Terms of Reference require criteria for route selection to include impact minimization and avoidance for environmental features and functions in Halton Region and that any negative environmental impacts resulting from the chosen route should be identified and evaluated, be deemed unavoidable, and mitigated as appropriate.
- e) **Blue Springs Creek Tributary and Associated Wetlands:** The proposed quarry operation has requested a reduced setback to a tributary of Blue Springs Creek traversing the subject lands. Typically, setbacks to watercourses are applied buffers for their protection from development related impacts and to ensure maintenance of their ecological functions. The Natural Heritage Reference Manual provides guidance to municipalities on appropriate buffer widths to achieve this objective.

In considering this requested setback, Regional Staff understands that the GRCA and MNR have evaluated and provide comments/clearance on this reduced setback/buffer. Regional Staff encourage the proponent to maintain the greatest setback possible to this tributary in order to implement the Natural Heritage Reference Manual and the PPS to minimize impacts Blue Springs Tributary and downstream significant features.

- f) **Greenbelt Plan - External Connections Policies:** Regional Comments of July 5, 2013, request that various supporting materials be updated to reflect the policies of the Greenbelt Plan, 2005. On further review, staff notes that lands within Halton Region immediately to the south of Highway 7 are within the Greenbelt Plan's Protected Countryside and are designated Greenbelt Natural Heritage System (NHS). As such, Key Natural Heritage Features (KNHF) and Key Hydrologic Features (KHF) within the NHS are located on adjacent lands south of Highway 7 (i.e. the tributary and woodland area referred to above), along the south side of Highway 7. The proposed quarry, however, is outside of the Greenbelt Plan Protected Countryside; therefore the only policies in the Greenbelt Plan, 2005, that may apply would be those policies pertaining to External Connections (Sec. 3.2.5). Policies within the Greenbelt Plan related to External Connections beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt were reviewed. The external connections to

which these policies apply are illustrated on Schedules 1 and 4 of the Greenbelt Plan. As no external connections are shown in the vicinity of the subject property, External Connection policies of the Greenbelt Plan would not apply in this instance.

- g) **Missing Materials/Correspondence:** Regional Staff note that the following materials were not copied to the Region or provided through the Township's website. To complete regional records to this point, the following materials are requested:
- i. Figures 10 and 11 were missing from the Natural Environment Report (the NE Report).
 - ii. Peer Review Comments prepared by Williams & Associates Forestry Consultants Ltd., dated June 13, 2013.
 - iii. Agency Review Comment prepared by GRCA, to GWS, dated July 15, 2013.
 - iv. MNR Comments to JDCL, dated July 11, 2013.
 - v. MOE Comments to MNR, dated April 15, 2013
 - vi. Response Letter regarding "Hidden Quarry – Response to MNR Comments" to JDCL prepared by GWS, dated May 27, 2013.
 - vii. Response Letter regarding "Burnside Review of Summary of Drilling and Testing of New Well M15 at Hidden Quarry Site" to Burnside, prepared by Harden, dated January 14, 2014.
 - viii. Response Letter regarding "GRCA's Letter of July 8, 2014", to GRCA, prepared by JDCL, dated July 10, 2014.
 - ix. Site Visit Notes regarding "June 7, 2014, Site Visit" prepared by JDCL, dated August 22, 2013.
 - x. Materials in response to GRCA's Letter of November 4, 2013, dated December 5, 2013.
 - xi. Materials in response to GRCA's Letter of November 4, 2013, dated January 23, 2014.
 - xii. Drawings submitted to GRCA on March 19, 2014.

In the meantime, please forward any further materials to Adam Huycke, Planner at (905) 825-6000 Ext. 7604 (adam.huycke@halton.ca).

Sincerely,



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Cc Greg Sweetman, James Dick Construction Limited
Ron Glenn, Director of Planning Services and Chief Planning Official
Adam Farr & Jeff Markowiak, Town of Halton Hills Planning Services
Barb Koopmans, Town of Milton Planning and Development Department
Liz Howson, Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd.
Linda Sword, Concerned Residents Coalition