



Published by
MRK Communications Ltd.
 35 Crawford Cres., Box 129,
 Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0
PHONE: 905-854-3333
FAX: 905-854-4761
EMAIL: info@haltoncompass.com
CLASSIFIEDS: 905-854-3333
EMAIL: classifieds@haltoncompass.com
 COMPASS ONLINE AT:
www.haltoncompass.com

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Publisher: Stephen Baker

Editor: Don Redmond

Production Supervisor: Julie Dubeau

Editorial Contributors: Stuart Service,
 Dave Redinger, Diane Dineen, Bill Vance,
 Donna Danielli

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St Marys looks to alter GRS testing

BY DON REDMOND

The groundwater recirculation testing being done by St. Marys on their proposed quarry site bordering Campbellville and Flamborough may get a tweaking before Round Two.

That revelation came to light when three weeks ago, Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy held an info-update meeting in Hamilton with the Combined Agency Review Team (CART) members, as well as Milton Councillors Jan Mowbray and Cindy Lunau and Burlington Councillor John Taylor, all of whom have wards bordering the proposed quarry.

According to McCarthy, the councillors were surprised to hear from an Ministry of the Environment official that St. Marys was planning to alter their groundwater recirculation system (GRS) testing with their next round.

"We were told by Bill Barnswick that St. Marys has abandoned their present structure for GRS testing and no reason was given for the change," McCarthy told the Compass.

Mowbray noted that they were told "St. Marys is going from their original (water) injection proposal (to something else). It came as a big surprise. St. Marys claims the first round (of GRS testing done three months ago) was a big success but you have to think that maybe it wasn't or else why would they change it?" McCarthy agreed, noting, "why change the testing now? We asked Barnswick but were given a reason."

In fact, Barnswick, the Director of West Central Region out of the MOE's office in Hamilton, was something of a surprise visitor at the meeting, McCarthy added, noting "I guess one of the CART members or a Hamilton staffer tipped him off to the meeting because I organized it and I hadn't invited him."

When McCarthy pressed Barnswick in an email, asking again about the GRS change request by St. Marys, Barnswick responded that he could only "confirm that (St. Marys) have asked for a change as part of their request under the Permit to move onto the next Phase - Phase 2. (The MOE is) reviewing that request along with the data submitted from Phase 1 and have not made a decision on how to proceed with respect to the data submitted nor their request for a change."

However, St. Marys' vice president of operations John Moroz told McCarthy that this

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Halton on pace to reach 60 per cent waste diversion goal

BY STUART SERVICE

Halton Region is meeting its early waste diversion goals six months into introducing weekly collection for recyclables and kitchen scraps.

Since April, the Halton Waste Management site has seen 31 per cent less trash hauled to the Hwy. 25 landfill. Halton's waste diversion rate is currently between 55 and 60 per cent, or 13 fewer loads of garbage headed to landfill per day, giving the HWMS enough room to survive beyond 2030.

Regional Director of Waste Management Rob Rivers told the Planning and Public Works committee the pre-GreenCart trend in Halton projected the HWMS to reach capacity by 2023.

"Over the last ten years we hovered around the 40 per cent (waste diversion) mark," Rivers said. "Our goal was to get out to 60 per cent, because when you look at the permitted landfill capacity, we had enough capacity to get us to the year 2023."

In July and August, regional staff kept track of the roadsides of 500 homes over a four-week period. Ninety per cent of those households participated in weekly blue box collection and 73 per cent for the green cart.

Recyclables collected each month has increase by 550 tonnes and 2,000 tonnes of organic waste is picked up monthly.

"On average," Rivers added, "we have less than three bags per household on garbage day" every second week.

Oakville Councillor Allan Elgar said that since the "stutter start" to the waste collection program, "I haven't had a complaint in a few months now, compared to what it was like in the early spring."

The Region received about 29,400 complaints in April, likely from pick-up delays during the first month. The number of phone calls regarding waste collection is currently about 7,800 calls per month.

To spread the word on the Blue Box and GreenCart programs, the Region created frog mascots for both containers, used newspaper and transit ads and canvassed door-to-door. The promotional method by the Region was awarded a silver Waste Minimization award by the Recycling Council of Ontario on October 21.

"We can conclude that we had a meaningful and effective campaign and residents understood the importance and wanted to make a difference by supporting our new program," Rivers said.

Rivers' presentation compared Halton's diversion rate to those in neighbouring regions and cities. The City of Toronto diverts 59 per cent of its waste from landfill and Durham and Markham Regions redirect 56 and 68 per cent of their trash, respectively.

"I have every confidence that our staff can do better than Markham," said Burlington Councillor John Taylor following Rivers' presentation. "There's no doubt."

St Marys looks to alter GRS testing...

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had been his company's intention all along.

"As you are aware, we have always proposed to use a GRS to mitigate any effects that dewatering the quarry will have on the groundwater levels," Moroz told McCarthy in an email. "In our original Work Plan, we proposed that the second phase of our pumping test would assess a trench-type of GRS whereby the water pumped out of the quarry would be passively returned to the groundwater system through the trench."

"The third phase of the test would then assess a recharge well system where water pumped out of the quarry during dewatering would be returned to the groundwater system using recharge wells," he added.

"Our intentions are to test both types of GRS. We have asked to move up the testing of the recharge well system in order to address public concern about the recharge trench technology," Moroz concluded.

Mowbray said she believed the trench-style GRS is similar to what Dufferin uses in its Milton quarry operation.

Both McCarthy and Mowbray were also critical about the lack of information being provided to the councillors by CART (similar to Halton's version, the Joint Agency Review Team or JART).

"At this point, we expected a lot more information than we received," said Mowbray.

In a newsletter being sent out to her constituents later this week, McCarthy told residents of the GRS testing shift, noting, "Looks like there are mutterings of St. Marys getting ready to make kind of changes to the MOE for their Water Taking Permit requests. While details are sketchy as to what they are proposing to change, it looks like they have had to rethink their strategy on how to prove their theory of water recirculation."

"Not surprisingly, they must be frustrated with their inability to support an application for a zoning and official plan amendment change, and feel they need to have a way out if they can not prove one system works," she added.

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