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## **Aldershot Quarry update meeting doesn't sit well with Burlington residents**

News 01:28 PM by John Bkila Burlington Post (Thursday, November 30, 2017)

Burlington quarry not put on hold by Ontario ministry



- photo courtesy Meridian Brick

It was a tough evening.

After a three-hour meeting hosted by Meridian Brick Wednesday night at the Crossroads Centre to update residents on its plans to expand its quarry operations, it was clear the close to 200 people who showed up were not satisfied.

As each hour passed and with every question answered, more and more people got up and walked out, leaving less than half of the original attendance by evening's end.

Meridian Brick's (formerly known as Forterra) quarry, located to the west of Burlington's Westhaven Drive, was approved decades ago (since 1972) and has plans to expand east — closer to the Tyandaga neighbourhood — to mine shale (used in clay brick production).

The Burlington company had planned its Nov. 29 meeting (a previous one was held in May) to update residents on its studies — including air quality and health, at-risk species, archeological and noise control.

But residents weren't too happy to hear not all of Meridian's reports were completed and available online at [www.aldershotquarry.ca](http://www.aldershotquarry.ca) — only a stage 2 of an archeological study, a short-term predictive ambient air quality study and updates to salamander and at-risk species studies are currently posted.

Meridian cited weather had stalled the completion of some of its studies, but maintained it would post them online as soon as they were done.

“Residents will be notified when the studies get posted and we encourage you to take those studies and have them (peer reviewed),” said Meridian’s John Armstrong, who also acted as moderator for the evening.

Residents also weren’t too pleased to learn of Meridian’s phased plan to remove trees in Carolinian forested area on the subject lands of the east cell.

One resident, who said she did not live in Tyandaga, admitted she was very concerned with the level of confusion over the information being provided, noting everyone was getting plenty of statistics and assurances, but no direct answers.

After she asked multiple times if Meridian Brick had a date in mind of when it would start cutting down trees — residents had previously only been told it would start sometime this winter — spokesperson Jack Hewitt responded it would be between January-March 2018.

In Hewitt’s presentation, he stated 1.7 hectares of tree-area would be removed this winter, with the remaining hectares of land (approximately 10 hectares) in the east cell removed during stages two (between 2023-33) and three (2033-38).

The last phase of the east cell expansion is located closest to the Westhaven Drive neighbourhood, according to Meridian.

When a resident asked what was the total number of trees slated for removal, Hewitt said he couldn’t answer that as Meridian doesn’t count individual trees, but rather works in acreages — to which she responded, that was a concern.

Patrick Kelly, another Meridian spokesperson, told the Post in another interview, the centre and east cells would be progressively rehabilitated.

“Which means that there will be 30-year-old trees from the first rehabilitation phase by the time the last rehabilitation phase takes place and all 29,000 trees are planted,” he said.

Back in its May public meeting, Meridian Brick had told the community it hadn’t found any evidence of any endangered species of salamander, despite media reports at that time, and it had another follow-up survey planned for September.

Field ecologist Anthony Goodban, of Goodban Ecological Consulting Inc., said his team completed four detailed surveys and found no endangered species of salamander on the east quarry property.

Approximately 91 red-backed salamanders (not identified as endangered or at-risk species) were found, with some in the lead-backed phase, which Goodban said could be confused with the endangered Dusky or Jefferson salamanders.

He also said more studies are planned for April and June 2018 in optimal weather conditions for further investigation, with a detailed report expected in summer 2018 when the fieldwork is completed.

Meridian also echoed its previous statements that it would be mitigating the negative impacts on the endangered species it has identified on its property, including certain plants and insects.

Archeologist Robert MacDonald, from Archaeological Services Inc. (AIC), spoke on how two assessments done on the east site had found pre-contact Indigenous resources (tool stones).

He said the site has been registered in the provincial archeological database and determined to have cultural heritage value based on criteria from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

MacDonald said he also recommended additional assessments be done on the property and plans to consult with local Indigenous groups.

Keith Doxsee, Ontario Coalition of Indigenous Peoples governor of district 7 (which includes Burlington), said he was happy to hear that AIC’s plans for engagement with local indigenous groups was part of its duty as archeologists.

He asked if Meridian Brick would be consulting with local indigenous groups, as well, to which Kelly responded Meridian was working through ASI.

When that didn't sit well with Doxsee, Meridian Brick spokesperson Bob Long said the company didn't have a duty to consult with indigenous groups.

"To me, that's just a debacle," Doxsee told the Post after the meeting.

After acknowledging the Mississaugas and New Credit First Nation whose traditional territory he said the public was gathered on, Doxsee said doing so was important because it showed recognition and respect of indigenous peoples, both in the past and present, and "helps establish a healthy and reciprocal relations, which are key to reconciliation, which is the responsibility of everyone."

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