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Export date: Thu Mar 28 17:06:23 2024 / +0000 GMT

Quarry application well underway

By Sarah Sobanski

Freymond Lumber Ltd. hosted a public information session March 20 for its proposed quarry in Faraday township. Those who attended could inquire on analyses by consultants on visual, hydrogeological, natural environment, archaeological, traffic, blasting and noise impacts to the area and its residents.

?This is part of the process. It's the law. We have to have it,? said Dan Freymond, vice-president of Freymond Lumber Ltd., on the session. ?We have nothing to hide.?

He added, ?It's a new project for us we're learning?If it all goes ahead, in a few years' time, people won't remember it was here. Bancroft is always compared to Haliburton. There's four quarries around Haliburton. We lack two more.?

The session is a step in a long application and review process required by the Aggregate Resources Act. It allows public input after applications for the quarry have been submitted.

The Freymonds had submitted applications to township, county and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry by Feb. 8, according to a summary of application process and opportunity for public input provided at the session.

Bancroft This Week spoke to consultants to address a couple of concerns previously identified by locals during its quarry series in 2016.

?Part of the requirement for an aggregate licence, there needs to be what they call a natural environment report completed,? said Robin E. Craig, the environmental consultant who prepared the report for the quarry.

Craig said he is required to look at significant wetlands, habitats of threatened and endangered species, areas of natural and scientific interest as designated by the province. The report includes the quarry area and within 120 metres of the quarry area.

Craig reported that the eastern wood-pewee, listed by the province as a species under special concern, was within the quarry's area. ?They're found on what we call edge-habitat?You hear them singing there in the spring, that usually means they're breeding there too.?

Craig explained that the birds like edges of the forest as opposed to central or dense areas. He suggested that the quarry would create more edge habitat as it moved through its different phases. The bird would migrate as new edges were created.

?To make sure that they're not impacted by the quarry, there will be no clearing going on from April to the end of July ? that's their breeding season, so no clearing will be allowed then. Clearing will likely be a winter activity.?

He added, ?They will move on their own. You know the baseball one where you build it they will come? If you create and there's pewees in the world, they will be there.?

He suggested the pewee liked the edges that were previously created by the Freymond lumber yard. That's why they were there.

?That's not to say that everything will benefit the same way, but that's the only species that is provincially identified,? said Craig, explaining that there were no water courses on the site and no streams onto or off of the site meaning fish wouldn't be impacted either.

Robert J. Cyr, associate of Explotech Engineering Ltd., which conducted the blasting analysis report for the quarry, suggested that in 70 years of research there had never been any damage from blasting within limits provincially set for air vibrations and ground vibrations to prevent nuisance and damage. Blasts have to be designed within those limits.

?When you say how far will it be felt? People will feel it a couple of hundreds of metres and with the air-over pressure possibly several kilometres away,? said Cyr, explaining there are two effects from blasting that can be felt, vibrations in the air and in the ground. ?There will be no damage potential at even the closest houses. We're going to make sure the blast is designed to stay under damage levels at the closest.?

He added, ?Each blast will last a half-second to three-quarters of a second. So the total vibration over the course of the year will only be sort of two-and-a-half [to] three seconds sort of time, the total amount of vibrations. So it's not a real long period.?

These reports, as well as all other impact analyses and reports done for the Freymonds, are available at here.]

With the information session complete, the public and agencies can submit letters of support or objection to MNRF until April 3. According to the summary, Freymond Lumber Ltd. must respond to anyone who files an objection letter under the Aggregate Resources Act on how they are proposing to resolve their concerns. Freymond anticipates providing responses by this summer.

The summary states ?the County of Hastings and Township of Faraday are currently circulating the application submission packages? and ?are also commissioning an independent third party peer review of the hydrogeological report, natural environment report, acoustic assessment, traffic impact study and blasting impact analysis.? They anticipate they'll have their reviews and comments ready for company in May, after which it will respond.

Following these steps in the application process there will be a public meeting hosted by the township and county. Anyone who wants to receive a notice for the meeting can email Christal Heintzman, planner for the County of Hastings, at heintzmanc@hastingscounty.com or Dawn Switzer, clerk-treasurer and tax collector for Faraday, at d.switzer@faraday.ca.