

Grail Springs may suffer slow demise to quarry

An open letter to Faraday Council regarding proposed quarry and it's effect on it's neighbours

Dear esteemed Councillors and Mayor for the township of Faraday,

Thank you for the meeting on Sunday and your attention. I don't envy the burden of your task and pray you think long and hard over all ramifications and chain reactions to your decisions. Public speaking is entirely out of my wheelhouse of experience and I do feel amiss for not speaking up more on behalf of Grail Springs, my family and the long-term sustainable economy of tourism for the greater area. And so, I write, pray and appeal for your attention now.

My family has five properties on Spur Lake which abuts the Freymond property and proposed quarry therefore we perhaps have more directly to lose in the very near future than any other family or business from this proposal. As the proposed quarry hypothetically goes forward and grows the fate of Grail Springs and her neighbours hang in the balance. Literally like the canary in the coal mine, as the quarry goes forward Grail Springs will suffer a very slow and very sad demise as the two cannot realistically co-exist. This surely cannot bode well for the area residents and cottagers either who will also see property values and quality of life change and not for the better. I do wish to cut to the chase and bring to your attention the obvious risk that the quarry will bring to what is recognized as the best Wellness Retreat in Canada. Grail Springs brings millions of dollars to the local economy not the least of which brings living, breathing affluent folks the world over who never knew Bancroft, or her sister townships existed at all. Grail Springs provides sustainable jobs and income for 40 families in the area not to mention the tax dollars that are also distributed. To her credit the owner of Grail Springs, Madeleine Marentette practically invented wellness tourism 25 years ago which is now becoming a worldwide movement as people's lives become more and more complex and less and less healthy. Wellness tourism is growing and is already huge with trillions of dollars flowing into that market and a key element of wellness tourism is purity. Our clients come from all over the world and most come back for the peace and purity of the area. Will they come back when the noise, dust and stamp of human development also surround them here in this jewel of nature? It's hard to fathom why they would? Tourism is low impact and will sustain a healthy long-term future of the area and Council should keep the faith on this. Bancroft and her surrounding townships are on the cusp of a huge boom in tourism as places like this are quickly disappearing especially ones that are so close to mega cities. I have nothing against the Freymonds, and Fowler Construction and wish nothing but the best ? but a quarry is entirely at the opposite end of the spectrum of an established wellness concern like Grail Springs. The two businesses simply cannot happily coexist long into the future. Our returning guests will simply find somewhere else but likely never a more beautiful place. The two businesses just don't jive, and this is the elephant in the room, which seems like is being ignored. We feel we do need rightly deserve consideration for our investment and belief in the area as a place to grow and thrive. Going forward with this proposal and ignoring the obvious risk to an existing and well-established business is simply naive and reckless. I do hope that you truly consider the 40 families that directly depend on Grail Springs and all the indirect businesses that we also support. I did go to the tour of the Fowler operation in Rama last year I was impressed by their operation but at the end of the day we are talking about two businesses that are on the opposite ends of the land use spectrum. Both well-established but one proposing a change that could entirely wipe out the other. I trust these important facts are in your thoughts as you ponder on this decision. I thank you for your attention and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Norrie

General manager

Grail Springs Retreat Centre for Wellbeing