

Too many questions



By Nate Smelle

SINCE FIRST LEARNING OF the Proposed Freymond Quarry a few weeks back it has felt like I am back in school. Doing my homework like a good student, I have recently spent many late nights studying the more than 500 pages of reports focussed on the various potential impacts this project could inflict on neighbouring property owners and communities.

The main impacts outlined in these studies include: how much heavy truck traffic will be created by the quarry; how much noise and air pollution will be generated by these trucks, the blasting and the heavy equipment used for extraction; the archaeological significance of the site; and potential threats to the surrounding lakes, groundwater, resident wildlife and vegetation.

In an effort to improve my education on this subject I have hiked the property line dividing the proposed site from the neighbours, and I have toured the Freymond Lumber yard with the owner of the proposed quarry Lou Freymond. This crash course in Quarry 101 has helped paint a picture for me of what this project will look like in terms of both the costs and the benefits that come with its approval.

Having friends literally on both sides of the quarry debate I have been doing my best to remain neutral until the public has all the facts. Asked on numerous occasions at the Canada Day celebration in Bancroft last week whether I was in favour of the quarry or not, I could tell that my time on the fence was over. All the final numbers may not be in with respect to how many tons of aggregate would be removed from the Proposed Freymond Quarry every day and each year, however with the numbers I've been given to work with I cannot support this project.

The way I see it the Proposed Freymond Quarry will cost the community far more than it will benefit the community. The three and five jobs the proposed quarry would bring to the area are simply not enough to create a significant, lasting positive impact on the local economy and the community as a whole. The fact that there would only be a few to a handful of jobs created by the quarry does not leave people with a very impressive impression of the project. It wasn't these numbers that called me to oppose the quarry though, for all we know these jobs could pay \$50,000 a year. If this was the case these three to five jobs could actually provide a bit more of a boost if those hired were advocates of shopping locally. The number that really got me thinking thrice about the quarry was the number I misinterpreted in last week's article. In the article, Public gets its first look at proposed quarry that appeared in the July 3 edition of Bancroft This Week, I stated that the report indicates that 27 trucks would be traveling in and out of the quarry twice a day if Freymond's was to extract 400,000 tons of aggregate annually. In actuality estimates in the report reveal that 27 trucks to be traveling in an out of the proposed site during the peak hour of the day.

According to my calculations that's a pretty heavy dose of diesel and dust of the neighborhood to breathe in everyday. That's not the type of atmosphere that I left the city to breathe in. Furthermore, the one of the many big questions that remain is who is going to pay to maintain our roads as this heavy traffic wears away at their integrity?

There are just too many red flags, too many versions of the stats and too many questions still unanswered to approve this project. As always I am open to be convinced otherwise.