

June 21, 2021

ATTN: Evelyn Eichenbaum
Municipal Clerk
Haldimand County
53 Thorburn St. S., Cayuga, ON N0A 1E0

RE: Comments on Haldimand County's Official Plan Update Phase 1
Empire Communities

Ms. Eichenbaum,

On behalf of Empire Communities, please accept this letter with respect to the County's Official Plan Update – Phase 1, being considered at the June 22nd, 2021 Council in Committee meeting.

We are in support of the County's proposed Official Plan Update, as it adequately addresses the County's growth needs over the next 30 years.

We also wanted to reiterate our support for staff's recommendations as it relates to Empire's landholdings in north-east Hagersville, abutting the Lafarge quarry. The amendment proposes a site-specific policy (HCOP-62) that establishes a Holding provision on portions of Empire's lands within 300 metres of Lafarge's blasting line. The Holding provision would not be lifted until such time as the quarry ceases operations or otherwise amends or modifies its operations to mitigate impacts within this buffer. It is acknowledged that development within that buffer cannot move forward unless those Holding conditions are met.

This is a fair and logical policy that still allows development to continue on the portions of Empire's lands outside of the 300-metre buffer. As part of Empire's recent Draft Plan of Subdivision and Zoning Amendment applications (PL28T-2020-196 and PLZ-HA-2021-009), technical studies were included analyzing noise, vibration and blasting impacts on the proposed development. The studies conclude that residential development beyond the 300-metre setback from the blasting line can be supported without affecting the quarry operations to the north.

We've also had a chance to review the correspondence from Lafarge's Planning Consultant, MHBC, on the Official Plan Update and our applications. The comments generally speak to adequacy of the setback and where the setback should be measured from. We note that it is fairly common for quarries to encroach, if not directly abut, residential uses.

An example, as referenced in the staff report, is Lafarge's expanded quarry in Dundas, Ontario. In that situation, the quarry limits were expanded such that they were located immediately across the road from existing dwellings. This would equate to a distance of approximately 30 metres between the quarry's property line/licensed boundary to the residential property line. The limit of extraction is located approximately 60 metres from the dwellings. However, the technical studies indicated that within 225 metres of a residence, the operator must adjust its blast procedures to mitigate impacts.

Another quarry (of which MHBC was also the Planning Consultant), located in Burlington and operated by Nelson Aggregate Co., included similar conditions. The quarry proposes an expansion with the property line/licensed boundary directly abutting existing residences. The limit of extraction is as close as 77 metres from a residence. The technical studies similar conclude that blasting procedure modifications are required as it approaches residences.

These examples demonstrate that the crucial setback is not measured from the quarry's property line or licensed boundary, but from where the quarrying activities (e.g. blasting) occurs. That is, impacts should be measured from where the quarrying activity takes place.

As discussed above, the technical studies provided in support of our application concludes that development beyond 300 metres of Lafarge's blasting setback will not hinder nor affect Lafarge's continued operation of its quarry. In addition, the continued quarry operation will not cause any undue impacts on the residential uses.

For these reasons, we believe the proposed site-specific policy protects the long-term operational and economic viability of the quarry, while also addressing the Provincially and County-mandated need for housing in the community.

Please feel free to contact me at 416-444-3300 ext. 3000 with any questions or concerns.

Regards,



Stephen Armstrong
Principal