



## FORCE suspected St. Mary's behind Lowndes application

BY DON REDMOND

As far as the Friend Of Rural Communities and the Environment (FORCE), the other shoe finally dropped.

The Flamborough group, dedicated to stopping the quarry application at the north-west corner of 11th Concession East and Millborough Townline, suspected from the beginning that the applicant, David Lowndes, was simply a frontman for a bigger company. In the end, they weren't the least bit surprised when it was announced in June that St. Mary's Cement Group had taken over the bid.

And while the industry giant may present a more formidable foe than Lowndes, who seemed to stumble through the application process, FORCE head Graham Flint isn't the least bit deterred.

All along, "we thought it was St. Mary's but we didn't have the smoking gun that linked them," Flint told the Compass. "Through all the research we did with players in the industry, it seemed like St. Mary's would be the one."

However, he couldn't estimate how far back St. Mary's interest in the 154-hectare site goes but believes there was always some arrangement between the company and Lowndes.

"I remember at an initial open house,

(Lowndes representative) Bob Long told a member of our group, 'you guys will burn out.' Based on that, we thought the connection might be a loose one. Lowndes would own the land and St. Mary's would be contracted out to do the work," said Flint. "In the end, I think Lowndes just gave up and held a fire sale."

However, Flint chuckled at Long's early warning. "Yes, there are lots of movements that start strong and die off but when there's this much on the line, you hold fast."

He said that while St. Mary's reputation as an industry leader in Canada will be much touted by the company, "it's important to remember that this industry leader was bought out by a Brazilian conglomerate."

Ultimately, he said, it doesn't matter whether FORCE is up against a small fish or a big company. "The issues are the same. It doesn't matter whose name is on the gate - whether it's Lowndes or St. Mary's, the (68-hectare) quarry area still cuts through our (Carlisle) wellhead. It doesn't matter what names are on the trucks, they're still too much for our roads."

"A new name doesn't change the facts. It may bring a different level of professionalism to the application but it doesn't change anything else."

Milton Regional Councillor Barry Lee told the Compass that the change in ownership for the application "doesn't change anything."

Although Milton and Halton have to watch the proceedings from the outside, acting as commenting agencies only, he noted there were still serious concerns around the application, due to its proximity.

"We have to watch this carefully and be sensitive to how it develops because if the application is approved, it will have serious effects on Milton and Campbellville. You are potentially going to see (quarry truck) haul routes going through here. There could be serious water problems."

Meanwhile, in Hamilton, Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy continued her sustained battle against the quarry application.

McCarthy instantly put pressure for a public meeting on St. Mary's vice-president John Moroz the day after the sale was announced on June 20, asking him for a public meeting, instead, "in order to provide detail to my community regarding your intentions as the new owner of the proposed quarry site. My request comes from an overwhelming response from my residents who would prefer a Public Meeting rather than an Open House."

Moroz responded to the councillor's

request, saying "we feel it is premature to schedule a public meeting at this time. We need a chance to meet the people that have done the technical evaluations, determine where more work needs to be done. When we have done this, we will be prepared to share the plan to move forward with the community. I will do my best to keep you informed as we proceed but at this time it is not possible to say whether the end of the summer or later in the fall will be a good target."

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