

Editorial reflects local sentiment

A copy of the following letter to Kathryn McGarry, Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources and Forests, was submitted for publication, with the Citizen's editorial of August 3, 'A gross dereliction of duty,' attached::

Dear Minister McGarry

Re: I believe the link to the article below, which is authored by the Editor of the local paper, a fourth generation local resident, accurately reflects the general sentiment of the local community. Three environmental regulatory agencies vetted my application over an 18 month period and ultimately approved my modified proposal prior to the Town of Mono's Appeal. The Town gave me no opportunity for input prior to their appeal. The editorial expresses the concern of the majority of local rate payers that the Town of Mono has provided scant justification, other than some general environmental catch phrases, for their Appeal.

The Orangeville Citizen commentary is fairly accurate. I would like to make a couple of minor clarifications as well as add some additional facts. The Hearing took 10 days with an additional 10 days of pre-conferences and teleconferences. Very few NEP (Niagara Escarpment Plan) private landowners can endure such a process and hence are deterred for applying for any improvements or activities on their private lands. The original application was to host the Canadian 2014 National Water Ski Championship as a test event for the 2015 Pan-American Games on my private property. The average attendance at an Ontario waterski competition in 2015 was 27 competitors. 93% of the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area is privately owned. Recreation is one of the NEP's primary objectives. The NEC annual report boasts of generating 100's of millions of dollars from recreationally related activities.

Former gravel pits owned by the industrial conglomerates who were both responsible for and profited from destroying the natural escarpment environment have been further rewarded with the right to use their sites for landfills, five-story hotels and recreational resorts. 100's of former aggregate sites remain neglected or even abandoned as blights on the landscape, by their owners out of fear that an attempt to improve them in an economically justifiable manner will result in a regulatory ordeal similar to that of my own. It has been more than three years since the inception of the current application (June 2014) and eight years as a private landowner with multiple blocked proposals, with no right to do anything on a former 200-acre industrial site including, no residence, no access to hydroelectricity or the right to have a port-a-potty or a tent. The justification for the Town's Appeal cannot be explained or rationalized by environmental or municipal regulatory concerns. Their actions can only be explained once you take a closer look at the power of personal relationships in a 3300 household community and the intentional misuse of a regulatory process for a purpose for which it was never intended.

I look forward to a fair resolution and positive outcome of my situation.

Cliff Singer

Mono