

CITIZENS AGAINST MELROSE QUARRY

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MEDIA RELEASE -- September 7, 2017

Hamlets of Blessington and Milltown to Return to Tyendinaga Township

On July 25, 2017, Hastings County planners presented an overview of the draft *Hastings County Official Plan* at Township of Tyendinaga council chambers. At the end of the presentation, citizens raised concerns about the proposed removal of Blessington's designation as a hamlet. The plan to remove the hamlets of Blessington and Milltown from the list of hamlets/rural settlement areas was not addressed by planners in the main presentation. Residents questioned whether the proposed change in Blessington's municipal status would facilitate zoning for the proposed new quarry, given that lands designated as 'rural' are subject to somewhat different provisions in the plan than those for hamlets. Residents referred to section 2.5.3.3 of the plan which states, "care shall be taken to ensure that commercial, industrial and residential uses permitted in hamlets are mutually compatible. New commercial or industrial uses should not be permitted in areas which have developed predominantly with residences or in the logical path of future residential uses or in areas where it could have an adverse effect on the surrounding uses..." Residents were assured that the removal of Blessington's status would have no impact on zoning decisions for the proposed Melrose Quarry. They requested information on the criteria used to make the proposed change to these hamlets.

On August 31, 2017, an open house hosted by Hastings County Planning Department at Tyendinaga Recreation Hall (Melrose), attracted between 40-50 citizens who voiced their concerns over aspects of the draft *Hastings County Official Plan*, most notably their deep concern over the removal of Blessington's designation as a hamlet. During that meeting, citizens were unconvinced that Blessington's size and character differed significantly from the township's remaining hamlets. There did not appear to be standard criteria used to determine the status. The planner reminded citizens that there was still time for municipal councils to advise Hastings County of recommended changes to the draft official plan. Citizens were also invited to send their concerns in writing to Hastings County, and to engage local council members. They were advised that a public meeting would take place on September 28, 2017 at 1:00 PM, at The County of Hastings Administrative Building.

According to *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015* public engagement is a key part of the planning process. Changes to the Planning Act require municipal planning authorities to explain the effect of public input on planning decisions. CAMQ is thrilled that council members have listened to residents, and is pleased that council has asked for both Blessington and Milltown hamlets to retain their existing designations. These hamlets are part of Tyendinaga Township's heritage, and their continued existence is important to the residents who live in these communities. Thank you, Tyendinaga Council!

For more information, contact Sue Munro, Chair, CAMQ – (613) 968-5943, smunro08@hotmail.com

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