

Spicer quarry in Upper Granville approved

Published on February 5, 2008

Decision contrary to panel recommendation, say residents

Topics : [West Annapolis Valley Ecological Society](#) , [Department of Environment and Labour](#) , [B. Spicer Construction](#) , [Upper Granville](#) , [North Mountain](#)

By Carolyn Sloan

The Spectator

NovaNewsNow.com

A proposed Upper Granville quarry has recently received a 10-year industrial approval from the Department of Environment and Labour.

Proponent B. Spicer Construction advertised the proposal last May to develop a 9.06919-acre quarry on the North Mountain. As the quarry is under four hectares, the proposal did not go through an environmental assessment process, although a public information meeting was held in July at the request of concerned citizens living in the area around the proposed site. "We're hoping to be open to the public by spring," says the company's owner, Bruce Spicer. "I feel like finally, the right thing was done. "We've sited this property specifically because the regulations told us this is the type of place to be."

The proponent faced challenges from the start, with opposition to the quarry site coming from local citizens, now organized into a group called the West Annapolis Valley Ecological Society (WAVES).

Back in the summer after the proposal was advertised, the citizens group voiced its concerns about the potential operation, including environmental effects and increased noise levels in the community due to trucks, blasting, and crushing. The local residents also expressed concerns that the quarry scar would have an impact on the visual appeal of the area, and thus, a negative impact on tourism.

After the province accepted the White Point Quarry review panel's recommendation to not approve a proposed mega-quarry on the Digby Neck, the government agreed to consider other recommendations made by the panel, including halting all quarry development on the North Mountain until a coastal management plan was in place, and requiring a process of environmental assessment for all quarries, no matter how small.

With the approval of the Spicer quarry now confirmed, WAVES says that it is an indication that the province has decided not to take into account such recommendations and will continue to limit public participation in the decision-making process when it comes to assessing applications for pits and quarries. "This will be the first quarry to be approved on the North Mountain since the recommendations of the Whites Point Quarry Review Panel," says Lisa Mitchell, as spokesperson for WAVES. "The minister of Environment has never stated publicly that he has not accepted those recommendations, however, this approval will signal such a decision."

According to Environment and Labour's communications advisor Bruce Nunn, while the panel's recommendation to reject the mega-quarry proposal was accepted, the government has yet to accept the other recommendations made by the panel. However, he adds that an interdepartmental committee, lead by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, is being formed to come up with a coastal strategy for the province. "We are putting together a coastal management framework," explains DFO's Celeste Sulliman. "Like many government initiatives, it implicates a number of different departments."

As for Spicer, it feels like the approval for his quarry has been hard-won. "One hundred per cent, over and above, [we've complied with regulations]," he says. "In my mind, it's been a really unfair process because they (WAVES) have made a lot of accusations. "If it wasn't for that group pressuring, it would have been a normal process, but they've taken it above and beyond."

Environment Minister Mark Parent said Monday that the Spicer quarry application was already in the works prior to release of the Digby Neck quarry review panel's recommendations and would have been grandfathered in if there was a moratorium.