

New Toronto plant raises residents' ire

By JOANNA LAVOIE
Weekender Staff

New Toronto residents are adamant they don't want a concrete batching plant and salt storage/distribution depot setting up shop in their neighbourhood.

"We hear loud and clear that the community does not want that kind of operation in their backyard and I tend to agree," said Ward 6 Councillor Mark Grimes (Etobicoke-Lakeshore) at an emotional public meeting attended by about 150 people.

Grimes, who was faced with dealing with this dilemma when he was elected councillor in No-

vember 2003, is currently looking into locating another suitable site in his ward for land-swap agreement with Toronto Redi-Mix (693316 Ontario Ltd.) and Draglam Salt.

"We are working towards getting them out of there. We said to the applicant 'Would you consider swapping acreage for acreage?'" explained Grimes when discussing the potential relocation of the cement-batching/salt-storage company to a city works snow-dumping yard in the Horner and Evans Avenue area.

"They just want to make concrete and move forward."

See OWNER, page 3

Owner has right to develop: city

From page 1

The facility, which would be located on a 15-acre property bounded by New Toronto Street to the north, Birmingham Street to the south, 16th Street to the west and 13th Street to the east, has been an especially contentious issue since its new owner moved to the industrially-zoned site last October.

With the city failing to reach a decision about the company's site plan application within the 30-day time frame, Toronto Redi-Mix and Draglam Salt filed an appeal with the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), to be heard on May 6.

"Legally they have the right to develop the property the way they wish," City of Toronto senior planner Mike McCart said at the meeting last Tuesday night.

Community representatives in

attendance at the Grimes-hosted session, including Toronto Economic Development Corporation vice-president of development, Brian Athey, and members of the New Toronto Good Neighbours Association (NTGNA), expressed their concerns about the effects of the facility on residents in nearby homes and apartment buildings.

"This is an offensive use of the land and nobody disputes that," said electrical contractor Robert Sloan, a 40-year Etobicoke-Lakeshore resident who supports Grimes' land-swap idea.

"I think that would be a fabulous solution."

New Toronto resident Daniel Skrobot agrees.

"We all feel the same way. I don't think there's anyone in this room who wants concrete batch-

ing on this site," he said explaining rezoning of the site can't be site-specific and is therefore challenging to do.

NTGNA steering committee member Chris Goddard also strongly encouraged attendees to fill out environmental impact sheets for the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). In these comment forms, which are due to the ministry by April 25, Goddard explained residents can share their views about air quality, noise, emissions and land contamination.

"We want to make a difference in the community," said Jem Cain, the group's co-chair discussing the MOE-required Certificate of Approval the concrete company needs to start operating in the area.