

## *Maracas Valley Action Committee*

Notes on a Public Consultation Re: Environmental Impact Assessment for a Quarry at Acono Road, Maracas Valley held on Saturday September 15<sup>th</sup> at the Maracas Presbyterian School from 4.00-6.00 p.m.

The meeting started fairly promptly at 4.00 p.m. at which time there were about 35 people present (~80@4.55 p.m and between 80-100 total). Dr. George K. Sammy of Ecoengineering Consultants Ltd. briefly outlined the scope of the project on behalf of his clients, Caribbean Quarries Ltd. to mine limestone from a limestone outcropping, the position of which was identified on a map provided. This would involve:

- Blasting and use of heavy equipment
- Crushing
- Transport of materials by trucks

He noted that there are no plans for a washing plant.

Under the Quarries Act, the EMA determined that a CEC, involving an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), was required before approval could be granted for this project to proceed. An initial application was made to the EMA for this on May 4<sup>th</sup> 2007. Terms of Reference (TOR) were circulated to various organisations and individuals and final TOR were issued by the EMA on August 7<sup>th</sup> 2007. A copy of this document was circulated at the meeting.

Dr. Sammy then went on to explain key elements of the study to be undertaken over the next few months. This would involve:

- Public and non government participation in a survey
- Air quality monitoring
- Water quality monitoring
- Identification of flora and fauna which could be disturbed
- Impacts associated with noise and vibration

Among others

The projected timeframe was that the survey would commence on September 25<sup>th</sup>; two public meetings would be held in November; a document would be prepared which would be available on request by the end of November; public comments would be required to be lodged with the EMA within 30 days of publication of report; CEC projected to be granted by end of April 2008. It was noted that the CEC would have a series of conditions; a copy would be on view at the quarry and also available for purchase at EMA. It was noted however, that if a CEC was not granted, quarrying could not take place.

Questions were then invited, these to be recorded using a microphone and recorder.

In response to the first question by Jemma Taylor, it was established that Mr. Russell Nath was the owner of Ortinola Estate and of CQL and that he had obtained no concessions from TIDCO for the reconstruction of the Great House. Mr. Nath explained that he had made several efforts over the last two years to raise sufficient capital to continue with the master plan for the Ortinola estate, which was to provide accommodation suitable for corporate retreats and eco-tourism. These efforts were unsuccessful, so the quarry project was envisaged as a means of raising the required funding. A lively discussion then ensued during which several people (Jemma Taylor, Resident close to Ortinola, long time resident, Francis Beddoe (Pres. General of Progressive - - Union), Vincent Cabrera (new resident), Simon Nakhid, Randolph Hezekiah (Pres.MVAC), Clermont Andrews, Amral Khan (Pres.AVDAC), Mario Nero (aspiring politician), CEPEP

Contractor, Cathal Healey-Singh (an environmental engineer who offered his expertise free of charge), a 70 year old resident, ? Daniel, Hamlyn Pantin among others) expressed the following views:

- Eco-tourism and quarrying were not compatible
- Residents of the area were very happy when the Nath family bought the estate for the reasons stated and still had nothing personal against them; they were prepared to support the retreat/eco-tourism thrust, but were totally opposed to quarrying
- Since its inception Ortinola Great House was the venue for more noisy Carnival fetes, Weddings and Sports days than quiet retreats or eco-tourism, which were a continual source of disturbance and distress to the neighbours.
- Residents had reluctantly learned to cope with the distress caused by the existing Coosal quarry – structural damage to their houses from blasting, contamination of water from material outflow/diesel, general pollution of the river, road congestion, damage caused by speeding/dangerous/selfish truck drivers (who also were inconsiderate towards pedestrians, especially the young and elderly), air pollution from diesel fumes, dust, etc, but were not prepared to tolerate a second quarry
- Air/diesel fumes a potential cause of asthma, particularly in children living close to the Acono and Maracas Royal Roads.
- The last remaining natural bathing pool in the area (just before the WASA substation) would be adversely affected/destroyed.
- The Coosal quarry had already cut off one tributary which fed the WASA substation; the second quarry would probably cut the remaining one running through the Ortinola area.
- As a philanthropic gesture, Mr. Nath should allocate 2 acres of his 365 acres to be used as playing field for the children of the area.
- Quality of life throughout the Valley would be adversely affected for present and future generations if this quarry was granted a CEC

One resident questioned if the consultation process was just a time-wasting effort which not affect the granting of the CEC.

There was a suggestion that the matter should brought to the attention of the mass media by various methods such as picketing the EMA, holding mass meetings, press conferences, contacting media personnel who were concerned about the environment etc.

Mr. Nath agreed to talk to Mr. Khan with respect to allocation of land for a playing field.

Dr. Sammy agreed to have a copy of the tape available on Tuesday September 18<sup>th</sup>

Meeting closed at 5.50 p.m.

P.A. McGaw  
Secretary, MVAC  
2007/09/16