



Corporate NO: R073

Report COUNCIL DATE: March 27, 2000_

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: March 23, 2000**

FROM: General Manager, Planning & Development **FILE: 18886-02000**
18942-02000

SUBJECT: Application to Remove Soil from 18886 and 18942 - 20 Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommends that:

1. City Council receive the applications to remove soil from 18886 and 18920 - 20 Avenue; and
2. The applications proceed to Public Hearing as is required in the Surrey Soil Removal and Depositing Regulation By-law, 1979, No. 5880.

BACKGROUND

Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd., with consent from the property owners, has made application to remove 175,000 cubic meters of sand and gravel from two adjacent properties at 18886 and 18920 - 20 Avenue. Both of the subject properties are zoned A-1 and are *outside* the Agricultural Land Reserve Area. The proposed extraction area of 4.1 hectares lies directly west of a reclaimed pit also operated by Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd. Although a separate application, the new pit is essentially an extension to the reclaimed pit at 18962 - 20 Avenue.

The Surrey Soil Removal and Depositing Regulation By-law, 1979, No. 5880, Section 6, requires that, prior to designating any land(s) within Surrey for soil removal, City Council must hold a public hearing on the application.

Engineered drawings from Coastland Engineering & Surveying Ltd. of the proposed operation along with a hydrogeological report from Morrow Environmental Consultants Inc. were submitted with the application and are available if required. A reduced copy of the engineered drawings is attached to this report.

DISCUSSION

General Description

The proposed soil removal operation is located within a rural area of South Surrey. The site is bounded by 20 Avenue to the north, a private property to the west, two private properties to the south and to the east the reclaimed pit that is still owned by Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd. Access to the site is proposed to be from 16 Avenue through a private property over which the applicant has secured a private easement granting such access.

Topsoil indigenous to the site is to be stripped and stock piled along the west and south edges of the proposed pit area. This will help to screen the pit activities from those properties located to the west and south. The stockpiled topsoil will be replaced over the site at completion as part of the site reclamation.

The land on which the pit is proposed is relatively level. The average elevation of the site is approximately 39 meters above sea level. The excavation is proposed to extend to an elevation of 35 meters above sea level. This results in a depth of excavation of 4 meters. Information provided in the hydrogeological report indicate that the January 2000 groundwater elevation beneath the pit area is 32.9 meters. The pit will be graded upon reclamation to meet the adjacent properties.

The engineered plans submitted have been reviewed by staff within the Planning & Development Department. The plans conform to the requirements set forth in the Surrey Soil Removal and Depositing Regulation By-law, 1979, No. 5880.

Comments on the Hydrogeology Report

The hydrogeology report is prepared by a Professional Geoscientist from Morrow Environmental Consultants Inc. The report establishes the groundwater use in the area and assesses the potential impacts of the pit development on surface drainage and groundwater resources.

As the applicant proposes to keep the floor of the pit above the groundwater elevation, the hydrogeological report alleges that no significant change will occur in the current groundwater elevations as a result of the gravel extraction. The report does indicate there is a risk of contaminating the ground water with petroleum spills or contaminated backfill materials. In sections 7.2 and 7.3 of the report the Consultant makes recommendations on how to minimize the risks and deal with accidental spills or leaks. These sections will be directly incorporated by reference into any soil removal permit granted by the City pursuant to this application.

Three properties adjoining the proposed pit, namely 18862 - 20 Avenue, 18937 - 16 Avenue and 18919 - 16 Avenue accommodate dwellings. However, no indication of their current water supply is provided in the report. Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd has subsequently provided information on these properties. Both 18937 - 16 Avenue and 18919 - 16 Avenue have drilled wells screened well below the top of the water table. The property at 18862 - 20 Avenue has a shallow dug well. The shallow dug well is more susceptible to disturbance by the proposed excavation. It is prudent for the City to take funds as security in the event this well is adversely affected by the proposed sand and gravel excavation. These funds would be specifically for drilling a deeper well if required. This has been discussed with the applicant and they are in agreement with us on this issue.

The properties identified on the Well Location Map (Appendix 1, Map 3) with deeper, drilled wells are not as

vulnerable because those wells are screened well below the top of the water table.

Surface run-off from the site will be directed into a temporary settling pond in the south east corner of the proposed pit. The water will then drain by pipe to existing ponds on property east of the proposed pit. These existing ponds are within the reclaimed pit already owned by Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd.

Tree Impact

One portion of the area to be excavated is currently covered by a coniferous forest. This forested area is approximately 2.25 acres in size. Within this area there are 201 native conifers and 72 native deciduous trees. The arborist's report states that most of these trees are in decline because of soil compaction and bark removal by the animals within the surrounding pasture land.

The land is designated as Agricultural in the OCP and Agriculture is a permitted use under the Zoning By-law. If it is the owners intent to use the property for agricultural purposes after the gravel excavation is complete and the top soil is replaced the City would be obligated to issue a tree cutting permit to clear the land. A sworn affidavit stating that the land is to be used for agricultural purposes will be required before a tree cutting permit will be issued. This has been discussed with the applicant and they confirm the long term use of the property will remain agricultural. A permit fee of \$500 will be collected but no securities for replacement trees will be required since the planting of replacement trees would be in conflict with the proposed agricultural use.

The plan designates a 30 meter wide no disturb zone along the North edge of 18886 - 20 Avenue. The purpose of this zone is to protect the riparian area of a small stream that runs in the 20 Avenue ditch. A protective barrier is to be installed prior to clearing. A permanent chainlink fence will be required along all boundaries of the no disturb zones at reclamation. If the area is to be used as pasture land a temporary tree protection barrier is not acceptable since once it is removed the animals within the pasture land will move into the No Disturbance zones and destroy the trees and understory.

Planning and Development Comments

Building Division staff have reviewed the proposal with representatives from Fraser Valley Aggregates. Based on this review, the proposal generally conforms with the requirements of the Surrey Soil Removal and Depositing Regulation By-law, No. 5880. The Soil By-law requires the permit holder to pay a royalty fee of \$0.50 per cubic meter of soil removed. This will produce revenue of approximately \$87,000 for the City over the duration of the permit. The Soil Removal By-law also requires that a security deposit in the amount of \$50,000 is to be held by the City to ensure by-law compliance and proper reclamation. The applicant, Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd., has operated other pits within Surrey in an responsible and diligent fashion. City staff expect similar performance at this location. The relatively shallow depth of excavation over the site poses little risk in terms of changing the local groundwater levels. Mining of the sand and gravel is planned to occur over three or more years. The truck traffic is anticipated to average 25 trucks per day. This average traffic volume is consistent with other small soil removal operations undertaken in Surrey. The applicant states that their long paved access driveway will ensure that mud will not be tracked onto the public road (16 Avenue).

Engineering Department Comments

The Engineering Department indicates they have no objections to the proposed access to 16 Avenue for the trucking operation as 16 Avenue is a designated truck route.

Summary

The proposed soil removal operation, planned over two or three years will not be an intensive operation. The projected average traffic volume of 25 trucks per day will not be significant relative to the traffic already using 16 Avenue.

The proposed soil removal will remain above the local groundwater levels. All water wells (except one) on the surrounding properties are screened at considerable depths and should not be threatened by the proposed excavation. The City will obtain a security from the applicant related to the one shallow well to allow the drilling of a deeper well on this site should the shallow well be affected by the soil removal operation.

By stripping the native topsoil from the site and stockpiling it as a berm along the west and south buffer zone areas the adjacent properties will be screened from the activity within the proposed pit. The use of this topsoil to reclaim the pit will ensure it is a viable property for the agricultural uses specified in the current A-1 Zone. A \$50,000 security deposit is to be held to ensure proper restoration.

Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd. have conducted similar operations in Surrey within the last 10 years in a very responsible and co-operative manner. It is recommend that City Council receive the application from Fraser Valley Aggregates Ltd. and proceed to Public Hearing as is required by the Surrey Soil Removal By-law No. 5880.

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General Manager

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