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North Dufferin Agricultural and Community

Taskforce holding Valentine?s fundraiser]

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT) is looking to raise money to help continue to actively lobby for greater protectTion of prime farmland, food, and source water.

The grassroots organization is hosting a Valentine's themed fundraiser at the Dufferin Public House, located at 214 Main Street in Shelburne, on Feb. 11 at 5 p.m.

?This is your community and you change nothing by staying at home,? said Karen Wallace, chair of NDACT. ?When the mega quarry was coming in, we were told to just give up, that it was a done deal, and it wasn't. It shows you what a voice can do.?

For over a year, NDACT has been in discussions with Strada Aggregate, a company proposing to quarry below the water table at a gravel pit near Honeywood.

Strada Aggregate initially brought forward their proposal to quarry in October of 2021, with a presentation to Melancthon Council. The gravel pit, located in the area of 4th Line and County Rd. 17 in Melancthon, has been active since 2004. While close in location to the former ?mega-quarry', which was defeated more than a decade ago, Strada's proposal is one tenth the size and will be extracting 2 million tonnes as opposed to 10 million. It will also be located in an existing gravel pit rather than on agricultural land.

In January of last year, NDACT released a list of requests for Strada to follow with their proposed gravel pit. Strada Aggregate later agreed to meet with NDACT members to discuss an agreement.

?We've hammered out some of the details of the agreement and we're hoping in the next couple of months that we'll be able to make an announcement together with Strada,? said Wallace.

The Duffy will be decorated romantically in theme with Valentine's Day and will include food, music, dancing, and a silent auction, which will close at 8 p.m. Items in the silent auction have been donated from local groups and businesses, including Lennox Farms and Rawhide Adventures.

The money raised through the fundraiser will be used to support NDACT's operational fees, such as auditing, web hosting, banking, and insurance. The donations will also be used to continue their lobbying efforts within the Dufferin community.

?An event like ours can help raise awareness about this and put it in sound bites that people will understand. It helps raise awareness of how rare prime farmland is,? said Wallace.

Tickets for the NDACT Valentine's Fundraiser cost $75 per person with a limited availability of up to 80 people. Tickets can be purchased through Eventbrite.

?I would really encourage people to get tickets early,? said Wallace.