

Good morning Your Worship, Members of Council

Climate change is an issue that impacts us all. Some commentators have suggested that one of the key reasons the federal Conservative Party lost the recent federal election is that it failed to articulate a well thought out climate change policy. The vast majority of Canadians are concerned about the environment and the impact we as humans are having on it. Just last week, the City of Vancouver banned single use of plastic bags, cups, straws and containers. There is no question that residents are looking to their local leaders to implement the change they feel is needed.

I am here today to speak in support of the Mayor's recommendations with respect to the Meridian Brick/Aldershot Quarry. First, I want to assure you that as a resident of the City of Burlington, I am not opposed to the presence of local businesses in our community. I recognize the importance of a strong local economy and the positive benefits local businesses contribute. In the current climate, I believe it is important to balance these benefits against the harm that could ensue if we as citizens and you as leaders abdicate our responsibility to the environment and thereby endangering the health and safety of the citizens of Burlington.

Before I tell you why I support each and every recommendation made by the Mayor in her report dated December 3, 2019, I would like to take a moment to provide some context about the Aldershot Quarry operations. Meridian Brick currently operates the Aldershot Quarry. It owns the land and the 10,000 trees that the company intends to remove to support its quarry expansion. The company in turn owned by an Australian company named Boral as joint venture. The Aldershot quarry and the license that has been in place since 1971 have changed hands many times over the years. The quarry has recently been described by the foreign company as a

“distressed asset”. Boral’s 2019 Annual Report makes it clear that Boral’s strategy is to exit the brick market which has stagnated globally. Here is a direct quote from that Annual Report: “This year, we impaired our investment in Meridian Brick by US\$122 million (A\$174 million), as a result of continued underperformance. While our strategy is to exit bricks globally, we are working with our joint venture partners to return the business to profitability.”

The reason I mention this is because we as residents feel that decisions that impact our health and welfare as a community, should be made here, by you, our locally elected officials and local not by some foreign entity whose sole pursuit is profit.

There are serious questions about the validity and sufficiency of the studies that have been conducted by this foreign company and its consultants. There are serious questions about the impacts of the quarry’s operations on our health, including the quality of the air we breathe and the amount of noise that will be generated. There is a significant opportunity for the community to save 10,000 trees that contribute not only to cleaner air and mitigate noise impacts but also absorb and store the carbon emissions that are driving global heating. There is also a significant opportunity to protect endangered species, including the Jefferson salamanders that have been confirmed to be living in and around the quarry site. And finally, there is an opportunity to preserve the indigenous history of our City by reserving archeological finds.

In her report dated December 3, 2019, the Mayor has made 5 recommendations for ensuring that Burlington becomes a healthy and greener City. These well thought out recommendations are not controversial. The first is to investigate Air Quality by-laws already enacted in surrounding municipalities and report back with a similar by-law. Other municipalities may have been first to enact these vital air quality by-laws but the timing of this

exercise gives Burlington an opportunity to review the most current science on this issue and ensures that Burlington enacts an effective air quality by-law that that will protect the quality of the lifestyle we enjoy here in Burlington and hope to enjoy for years to come. The second recommendation will ensure that Burlington obtains top rate legal advice related to air quality and issues surrounding the quarry. The third recommendation ensures that Council will make decisions based not on rumour or foreign corporate interference in our local affairs but on science and facts that support and promote the health and welfare of our local community. In short, we as residents have been asking for quite some time that decisions for moving forward be based on facts and science and solid legal grounding and I am pleased to support the Mayor and Council in this phase of the Aldershot quarry review.