

Alexandra Hall
[REDACTED]
Town of the Blue Mountains

Committee of the Whole
Town of the Blue Mountains
Meeting June 26th, 2023

June 22nd, 2023

Re: Astec's Request for Exemption under the Noise By-Law

Dear Members of the Committee of the Whole,

Thank you for the opportunity to make this deputation and share my opinion on this issue.

My name is Alexandra Hall, and I am a resident of the Town of the Blue Mountains. My home on [REDACTED] is adjacent to Astec's property and over the past year I have participated in the Astec Community Engagement Committee.

I have read the Staff Report and recommendation on this issue, and I continue to have significant concerns with the impact that this issue has on residents and the process that has been followed.

1. Despite requests from residents, Astec has never provided noise decibel readings for any of the complaints that have been submitted over the years. The Staff Report states that this information has been provided to neighbours when there has been a complaint. Why is this information not actually being provided to residents? Also, the report prepared for MECP by Astec states that the company is not actually able to effectively monitor noise levels at receptors on their property, so the data is only based on modelling. How can the Staff Report state that noise levels are being reported and shared with those who have submitted a complaint?
2. After the last Council meeting when this issue was last discussed, the group of residents who participated in the Astec Community Engagement Committee reached out to the Town requesting to be engaged in the process to develop this Staff Report and find a resolution to this issue between the Town and Astec. Why did the Town not respond or even acknowledge multiple emails from residents? How does this treatment of residents align with the Town's Strategic Priorities particularly around Communication and Engagement? On other recent noise exemption requests, the Town refers to standard policies and procedures being followed. Why aren't residents who reside within a certain distance from Astec formally being notified of any of their exemption requests like the Town did with Winnifred's recent request? It's no wonder that residents are disillusioned with the Town's handling of noise complaints and exemption matters.
3. I have actively participated in Astec's Community Engagement Committee and spent significant personal time trying to find an acceptable resolution. I am shocked and disappointed that despite repeated requests Astec has still not provided the Acoustical Engineer's Report they claim to have commissioned in December 2022 which they have based many of their recent decisions around.

4. The Staff Report makes no mention of any further mitigation measures that Astec previously claimed to be interested in exploring. Are the shipping containers truly the appropriate noise mitigation barriers? Will Astec choose to remove them whenever they please? What happened to exploring other more permanent and appropriate options as well making visual improvements such as planting trees?
5. The prior Council motion had requested that information is provided on the ownership of the land between Astec and the residential properties and any changes in ownership from when it was municipally owned. Why isn't this addressed in the Staff Report and information being publicly shared?
6. It's not appropriate to designate the Astec site as a "Class 1 area". It's ridiculous to anyone who lives here to consider Thornbury "a major population centre" and to have Thornbury and Toronto as "Class 1 area" comparators. It seems that HSG Engineering made visits to the site during daytime hours and as previously noted there appears to be no reliable noise monitoring data collected by Astec. Why isn't Astec providing reliable noise monitoring at the closest residential receptors like you would expect to see from other similar companies?

Residents are entitled to a reasonable quality of life and part of that is periods of relief from noises deemed likely to disturb. This is standard in communities across Ontario and simply because the Town of the Blue Mountains does not prioritize updating its Noise By-Law this does not mean that industrial noise can go unchecked at any hour of the day at the closest residential receptor. Astec is in the business of heavy industrial manufacturing which is the most intensive industrial classification, and they use, make, and test large equipment that have been well documented by occupational studies to produce significant levels of noise.

Like so many other communities across Ontario who have proper Noise By-Laws and keep them updated, there is a reasonable solution and established examples to be follow. There should be permissible noise levels at different times throughout the day based on the closest residential receptor and companies – particularly heavy industrial manufacturing sites adjacent to residential areas – should be required to reliably monitor these levels and decrease them into the evening and overnight so that residents can expect some relief. Residents are not asking for anything exceptional or unreasonable.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Hall