

City, county see no financial benefit in using proposed Clarington incinerator

Energy-from-waste incinerator was considered as a way to extend life of Bensfort Road incinerator

Posted By BRENDAN WEDLEY/Examiner Municipal Writer

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As debate heats up over a proposal to build an energy-from-waste incinerator in Clarington, Peterborough area municipal politicians watch.

The city and county sent representatives to meetings for the proposed garbage incinerator for York and Durham regions until September. At that point, a joint city-county waste management committee decided it didn't make sense financially for Peterborough to participate in the project.

County staff will continue to monitor the approval process for the incinerator to see if the situation changes to make it more viable for Peterborough to participate, county Warden Ron Gerow said.

"There's no financial reason for us to pursue it any further at this point in time," he said. "There wouldn't be any value because of the distance between us and them. It all boils down to dollars at the end of the day."

Durham and York region officials endorsed a site in Clarington near Highway 401 and Courtice Road earlier this month.

A final decision will be made by the councils of Durham and York regions.

The proposed incinerator is part of a long-term waste management strategy for the two regions. In their reasoning behind the plan, the municipalities point to the commitments by the Ministry of the Environment and Michigan to slowly decrease and eliminate the cross-border shipping of residential waste from Ontario by the end of 2010.

The incinerator proposal is the subject of an environmental assessment. The provincial government must approve the project before it can be built.

Peterborough county and city considered joining the project as a way to extend the lifespan of the Bensfort Road landfill site. The city and county would ship their garbage to the incinerator and in return the ash from the incinerator — produced from the waste of participating municipalities — would be dumped at the city-county landfill.

The city and county have a financial incentive to keep the landfill open as long as possible.

It took about 19 years and \$5.4 million worth of studies and hearings to get Ministry of the Environment approval for the city-county landfill expansion. The site now has a lifespan of between 17 and 25 years.

County public works director Chris Bradley has told the joint city-county waste management committee the municipalities would pay more to ship waste to the incinerator and dispose of the garbage than they would recover in tipping fees for ash at the landfill.

"At this point in time, there does not appear to be a net financial benefit for any of the participants in the process," Bradley states