One delegation booted, two required to write apology letters

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By Jennifer Stone

One anti-incineration delegation was booted from Monday's council meeting, and he and another speaker must write apology letters prior to being allowed to speak to council again, as a result of comments made at the podium.

Orono resident Jim Richards was asked by Mayor Jim Abernethy to rescind a comment labelling Regional Chairman Roger Anderson a "bully". When he refused, the mayor told him his delegation was over.

Then, Scugog resident Barry Bracken took the podium. He, too, referenced the Regional Chairman.

"Mr. Anderson and his cronies are bent on moving this project on without appropriate consultation," said Mr. Bracken of the proposed incinerator.

The criticism was not well-received by the mayor, who at that point, gave Mr. Bracken a warning, and asked him to retract his statement, which he did. He was again asked to retract when he said Clarington's Regional Councillors were acting "like sheep."

"I guess I can, but you might not like what I have to say next," said Mr. Bracken.

"Then, your delegation is over," said Mayor Abernethy, who later moved that both men must "write a letter of apology to council before making any further delegations to this council."

"Don't hold your breath," said Mr. Richards from the gallery, at which point, the mayor kicked him out.

The letter requirement left one councillor confused.

"This seems fairly extraordinary," Councillor Adrian Foster said. "I have spoken to Mr. Richards (previously) about phrase and tone. But what was so heinous to bring the wrath of council down? I didn't find the comments so distasteful."

But, a message must be sent, the mayor said.

"I'm asked for an apology," he said. "What we're trying to do is bring the level of decorum back to our council chambers.

"It's important that people come in and voice their opinion, but when they start to discredit other individuals, and use this council as a platform for it, I don't think it's wise for us to allow it to continue."