

*Orono Weekly Times*

July 6, 2009

Letter to the Editor

*Re: July 2<sup>nd</sup> Editorial Clarington Three Keep EFW on Track*

To someone who has monitored the incinerator environmental assessment since 2006 and watched Mayor Abernethy and Regional Councillors Trim and Novak abdicate their responsibility to Clarington residents over the last term, your editorial expressed what vigilant and very concerned citizens have witnessed to date.

Durham's proposed incinerator is known to have significant health and fiscal impacts yet over the last two years, Clarington Council did not hold a single public meeting to engage residents and solicit their views. As the editor noted, Clarington's three regional representatives have not brought forward any Council resolutions to the attention of Regional Council that were contrary to their obvious pro incineration stance – this task was left to citizens and local councillors who spoke as delegations at Regional Council.

In 2007, Mayor Abernethy and Chief Administrative Officer Frank Wu were instrumental in scuttling crucial public meetings by withholding key peer review and staff reports at the request of Durham Region. Mr. Wu went so far as to deny that the staff report was signed though knowing it had been because he signed it himself -- this was later confirmed. Mayor Abernethy let this happen.

On Monday July 6<sup>th</sup>, Clarington's peer reviewers presented their findings to GPA committee – this after the June 24<sup>th</sup> vote at Regional Council. Mayor Abernethy, Novak, Trim and joined again by Gord Robinson, moved to reduce the ability of staff to participate fully in the EA Review both before and after submission to the Ministry of the Environment. They supported an amendment that appears to have been driven by CAO Wu recommending that Clarington should act according to the Host Community Agreement, which requires that Clarington not oppose the incinerator.

What Mayor Abernethy, Trim, Novak and Robinson cannot seem to grasp is that due diligence in an environmental assessment should not be construed as opposition to the incinerator. They have demonstrated that they have very limited understanding of the EA review process where issues, errors and omissions must be identified and addressed, especially by the host municipality. It should be obvious that the final EA study documents will require as much scrutiny and stakeholder engagement as did past stages. Information that did not appear in earlier reports should be reviewed to ensure the interests of the municipal corporation and the public are protected and that key commitments are kept and captured in the final documents – this does not happen automatically, especially not with hostile proponents.

Mayor Abernethy, Councillors Trim and Novak, once again joined by Councillor Robinson, appear not only content to lie down and roll over for the Region, they have cut loose Clarington residents to fend for themselves during the MoE review.

Linda Gasser, Orono