

The Orono Weekly Times

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Can stupidity be confused with courage?

To the Editor,

Re: Enough Is Enough
(Letters: Wed., April 28)

It is nice to see that Mayor Jim Abernethy has a fan, but attempting to portray as “courageous” his support of Durham's proposed garbage incinerator coming to Clarington is a serious, if not impossible, stretch of anyone's imagination. Can a fan's admiration cloud their perception to the extent that they begin to confuse stupidity with courage?

As to the “Energy From Waste” angle, according to information from Durham Environment Watch, incinerators contribute a greater quantity of greenhouse gases per kilowatt hour generated than do coal-fired generating plants which are notoriously known for their 'dirty energy'. And this says nothing of all the other toxic pollutants released when burning garbage. Is a vote in favour of such a process then to be considered courageous, or a sign of stupidity?

Of all the currently available methods of waste disposal, incineration is by far the most expensive! Cost estimates to design and build the proposed incinerator are now approaching \$1/4 billion, which will, in one-way-or-another, be borne by the taxpayers. And, at an annual operating cost of approximately \$14 million to incinerate 140,000 tons of garbage, this translates to about \$100 per ton. Costs for the status-quo range from \$60 to \$80 per ton and new methods of compression and storage, with all compostables and recyclables removed from the waste stream, leaves a perfect opportunity for future mining. Is then the choice to go with incineration to be considered courageous or again, a sign of stupidity?

While 25 of Durham's Regional Councillors have voted to keep incineration out of 'their' local communities, all three of Clarington's Regional Councillors, Jim Abernethy, Charlie Trim and Mary Novak, voted to bring the incinerator 'home', and build it in the most densely populated South-West quadrant of Clarington. Can this really be misconstrued as courage or is it just plain stupidity?

Witnessing real courage is, in most cases, not pleasant. And sadly, this is most often exemplified when seeing a child or grandchild battle a rare form of Cancer, the cause of which remains yet a mystery (and many now suspect is due to carcinogens in the environment). Such a child will endure treatments seemingly worse than the disease while they see days of playing with friends fade to a distant memory. Sadder still is that, even through it all, many will, in the end succumb.

Yes folks, there are many instances in this world today where you will see real courage demonstrated -- the vote by Abernethy, Trim and Novak, to bring incineration to Clarington is, most certainly, not one of them.

Please ask yourselves, have these 'Incinerator: YES' votes now set us up for a never-ending series of sequels to that sad story, OR, come election day, can we give sanity the nudge it desperately needs to prevail.

Bert Kortekaas,
Courtice