

# Cost of EFW document sparks debate

By Katie Richard/The Oshawa Express  
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Sorting through endless documents and reading thousands of pages of studies has become like a full-time job for many residents concerned over the looming Energy-From-Waste (EFW) project.

But the latest document, the Certificate of Approval (C of A) submitted by the company building and operating the facility, comes with a price tag higher than just man hours.

The region says the cost of a hardcopy of the some 800-page document is \$675. That works out to about .83 cents per page.

“The \$675 is the cost to us from the consultant,” says Commissioner of Works Cliff Curtis, adding Covanta supplied this number.

“The document...is fairly lengthy. It occupies two four-inch binders. There’s a lot of coloured ink and manual labour in it.”

But for Linda Gasser, who sits on the provincially mandated EFW advisory committee, it’s just not acceptable.

She says she, along with other Durham residents, asked for hard copies of the C of A the day after it was submitted on March 3. Days later she was told it would cost \$675.

“Citizens who wish to remain productively involved asked for these copies... and require these hard copies as soon as possible so that we could maintain our involvement in the project and review these very complex and detailed documents,” she says. “Every day that goes by is a day we can’t spend reviewing what is likely to be thousands of pages, reviews which must take place in our limited spare time.”

But a motion made by Oshawa Councillor Nancy Diamond at the most recent regional council meeting assured a hardcopy of the C of A would be coming Gasser’s way.

“I have great difficulty in open and accessible government when it’s \$675,” says Councillor Diamond. “Surely we can provide a copy to the representative of each of those committees. If we have nothing to hide, we should provide the information.”

Commissioner Curtis says the full C of A is available on the region’s website and the works department is in the process of working out an agreement with the Municipality of Clarington to have a hard copy of the document at a Clarington library and Town Hall.

He also says the region has not even received all the hard copies it is supposed to get, adding the works department has just one hardcopy.

The rate to print the copies is entirely up to Covanta’s consultant, Commissioner Curtis adds.

But some councillors say they feel the region should supply hard copies.

“If that’s the cost...in the overall cost of the project than I guess we need to absorb it,” says Councillor Diamond. “We’re not getting a request for 50 copies. The motion is for three copies.”

But Commissioner Curtis says if one copy is supplied, it will be difficult to turn down other requests.

“We didn’t make the copies. It’s not ours. It’s not up to us. It’ll cost us a lot more (than \$675),” says Regional Chair Roger Anderson.

Pickering Councillor Jennifer O’Connell says she thinks it’s an unfair expectation to expect the public to sit at a library and read nearly 1,000 pages of a document.

“I think it is imperative that we provide copies. This is the cost of doing business,” she says, adding accessibility issues are also a concern.