

*Orono Weekly Times*  
August 24, 2010

## Region breaks ground on EFW

With Wednesday's groundbreaking ceremony for the York /Durham incinerator, the project moved from the planning stage to the building stage, according to Durham Region Chairman Roger Anderson.

Approximately 100 people attended the invitation-only groundbreaking ceremony on the site for the energy from waste (EFW) facility on -Osborne Road in Courtice.

"This facility will be built on time and on budget," Anderson stated. "It will also be the best of the best."

The "seeds" for this process began in 1999, when the Region approved thermal treatment of residual waste as its long-term waste management solution, Anderson told the guests. In 2005, Durham partnered with York Region and began the environmental assessment (EA) phase for the EFW. The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) announced the approval of the Durham/York EA in November 2010, and last month both regions signed the co-owners agreement on the \$300-million facility designed to burn 140,000 tonnes of waste per year.

Anderson thanked the Ministry of the Environment (which was not represented at the ceremony) for its vigilance and for passing new emissions guidelines. "We will meet the toughest emissions standards in the world," Anderson stated.

Bill Fisch, Chair of York Region, which has a 21-percent stake in the incinerator, praised Anderson, saying, "Without his leadership I can guarantee, we wouldn't be here today." This project has undergone the most rigorous scrutiny, according to Fisch, with six years of public consultation and analysis. "After all that, we are finally here today to break ground on the first EFW in Ontario in 22 years. That is truly something to celebrate," he stated.

Former Clarington Regional Councillor' Charlie Trim was one of the dignitaries at the ceremony as he was Chair of the Regional Works Committee, the department responsible for waste, from 2006 to 2010. Anderson introduced Trim as a good friend, who exhibited great tact in leading the EFW project through the process.

"Extensive public consultation was undertaken to ensure values of the public were reflected in this decision." Trim stated. "This is a very special day in the life of Durham Region and the Municipality of Clarington."

Clarington Regional Councillor Mary Novak was filling in for Clarington's Mayor Adrian Foster who did not attend the ceremony. Anderson introduced Novak as a long-time incinerator supporter. "Congratulations to each and every one of us for achieving this milestone today," Novak stated in her official comments. She also said it was fitting that the Region of Durham was the first organization to make its mark in Clarington's new Energy Park — land earmarked at the south end of Courtice as an industrial park focused on energy related industry.

As Deputy Mayor, Mary Novak was standing in for Clarington's Mayor, Adrian Foster, who told the Orono Times he made the decision several weeks ago to not attend the event. "The groundbreaking, to my mind, was a celebration," Foster told the Times in an email, "And while I'm resigned to the fact that the plant is coming, I could not paste a smile on my face and pretend I was thrilled."

Foster campaigned on an anti-incineration platform in last fall's municipal election, and as Local Councillor for Courtice during the past term of office, voted against the incinerator at every opportunity, as did Councillor Willie Woo. Foster and Woo both voted in favour of the Co- Owners agreement at last month's emergency Regional Council meeting.

The last dignitary to make comments was Anthony Orlando, President and CEO of Covanta Energy Corporation, the US-based firm contracted to build and operator the incinerator. Ending the Region's dependence on land fill was the right thing to do, according to Orlando. "We should not be burying things in the ground for future generations to deal with," he stated.

Orlando praised the MOE for ensuring high emissions standards for the EFW, and he praised the Regions of York and Durham for the design of the facility. "We are looking to be the best of the best when it comes to safety and environmental performance," Orlando stated. Covanta has a long history of exceeding, allowable pollution levels in many of the incinerators they operate in the US.



**Dignitaries dig the ceremonial first hole for the York/Durham incinerator at a special ceremony held on the Osborne Road site in Courtice, future home of the EFW. Pictured from left to right: Anthony Orlando, President of Covanta Energy Corporation; Bill Fisch, York Regional Chair; Roger Anderson, Durham Regional Chair; Nester Pidwerbecki, Chair of the the Regional Works Committee; Garry Cubit, Durham Region's Chief Administrative Officer; Erin Mahoney, York's Commissioner of Environmental Services; Mario Ferri, Yorks former Chair of Environmental Services Committee. Also in attendance, but not in the photo, were Cliff Curtis, Commissioner of Works for Durham; Mary Novak, Clarington's Deputy Mayor; and Clarington's former Regional Councillor Charlie Trim.**

With the official speeches completed, the dignitaries filed outside, where a number of shovels were waiting in a neat pile of dirt for the official groundbreaking photo opportunity.

Following the ceremony, former Councillor Trim told the Times he thought the event went well. "It gave those involved an opportunity to convey the facts to the press," he stated.

Former Clarington Mayor Jim Abernethy, an invited guest, refused to comment, saying only, "I am no longer in politics."

Councillors Novak and Wendy Partner were the only Clarington councillors who attended the event. Councillors Joe Neal and Corrina Traill participated in the anti-incinerator protest at the gate. A group of approximately 100 protesters jeered invited guests as they drove into the ceremony site.



**There was a stand-off between Police and protestors at the gate to the EFW site on Wednesday during the groundbreaking ceremony.**

Only about 40 protesters were left at the gate when the ceremony ended. Those guests who skipped the luncheon in hopes of a quick exit were stopped at the gate by protestors and a heavy police presence. Protestors had blocked the road and would not let anyone leave the site. They then negotiated with the police to let one car through the gate every five minutes.

After five vehicles had been allowed out, protestors realized the majority of those being detained were members of the media, who they were relying on to get their story out. As a second exit from the site had been secured for the remaining guests, the blockade was no longer effective, and the protest ended.

Doug Anderson of DurhamCLEAR, an anti-incinerator group, said he was pleased with the protest saying, "It was a good day, we made our point."

Anderson's group has launched a court challenge of the zoning on the incinerator site. Clarington agreed to consider the EFW as a "public use" facility in its zoning by-law, when it signed the host community agreement with the Region' in May of last year, thus sidestepping the need for an amendment to the Official Plan. A waste incinerator facility is not a "permitted use" in the zoning by-law currently on the site. The first court date for this challenge has been set for Friday, September 23rd, 9:30 a.m. at the Oshawa Courthouse.

According to Clarington's Chief Building Official, no site plan approval has yet been granted for the EFW, nor has a building permit application be filed.

The Region was not able to provide figures on the cost to the taxpayer of the groundbreaking ceremony, nor was staff able to state whether there was an amount budgeted for the event.