

## Public speaks out against incineration ... again

May 29, 2007 By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- Follow staff's recommendations to review all information put out by York and Durham on incineration and get serious about aggressive diversion of waste, members of the public told Clarington council Monday night. Monday's council meeting came on the heels of a resolution passed last week by East Gwillimbury, the only other municipality besides Clarington with a potential host site for the proposed incinerator. The motion says East Gwillimbury would not be a willing host. The short-list provided by consultants shows one site there, with the remaining four in Clarington.

Clarington council appears sharply divided on the issue, with the four local members of council out-voting the three Regional councillors to accept a staff report calling for an extensive, potentially expensive peer review of the work done so far by the joint Durham-York waste management group.

The local councillors also out-voted the Regional group to not allow Regional Chairman Roger Anderson to speak as a delegation to council.

Some felt Clarington should take a similar stance to East Gwillimbury before September, when a site decision is to be made on the project.

"In the meantime, it is up to you, the elected officials in Clarington, with the support of your public, to tell Durham Region that we are not a willing host community," said Jim Richards, an Orono resident.

Others didn't go that far, but said Clarington must ensure it does a thorough, independent peer review, as proposed by Clarington staff, regardless of whether the Region has said it will pick up the tab.

The Region had agreed to cover "reasonable costs" associated with such a review, with a suggested cap of \$200,000. But the studies proposed by Clarington's planning department could cost upwards of \$500,000, said officials.

The money shouldn't be an issue, said residents.

"I am confident that Durham Region council doesn't want a heated public bicker-fest around how much the Region is willing to pay to ensure that our public health is protected, that our natural environment and resources are not impacted, that potential host community issues are addressed to our satisfaction, that it is we who will make our decisions around whether or not we would be a willing host, and, that the economics of the project are fully understood by all," said Orono resident Linda Gasser.

Residents are prepared for much greater diversion efforts, said Wendy Bracken.

"We commend the Region for the green bin and blue box recycling programs already in place and we crave more green initiatives to keep the ball rolling," said Ms. Bracken, who said she was entirely opposed to incineration, preferring the Region work toward zero waste, with stabilized landfill as an interim solution.

Not only are there potential immediate impacts, but repercussions could be felt well into the future, said Newcastle resident Lucy Wunderlich.

"The public needs to know that incinerators have a finite life. One day, 25 years from now, this multi-million-dollar project will not be able to do its job any longer," she said. "What then? I feel an incinerator is setting our children up. We are just passing on the garbage problem to the next generation."

Not enough study has been done to ensure incineration is the best way to go, said Courtice resident Kerry Meydam.

"It... concerns me that York and Durham councils made the decision to adopt thermal treatment -- incineration -- as its preferred option without adequately investigating either the impacts of incineration or the other alternative methods for dealing with residual waste," said Ms. Meydam.

The Region has proposed an initial cap of \$200,000 for the peer review, explained Mayor Jim Abernethy. For anything beyond that, Clarington would have to go back to the Region. The money would be up-fronted to Clarington with the costs "deducted from the combined royalty fee and not otherwise," said the Regional motion.

Delegations were asked a number of questions on what should happen to the waste left over after diversion, if not incineration, with most supporting the idea of moving towards zero waste. Some were asked at which point in the years-long process they became involved and when they began attending meetings.

Regional Councillor Charlie Trim, who chairs the Region's works department, said he had been at a meeting about a year ago where only 12 people -- four of them from Port Hope -- attended. It's only now, with the announcement that Clarington may play host, that people are getting involved, he said.

The meetings were well-advertised, said Coun. Trim "and now, they're jumping on the wagon, when in fact nobody was interested, including a lot of councillors."

Durham council was to address Clarington's peer-review plans today, after the Canadian Statesman's deadline.