

Regions never agreed on price tag: director

Regional News

Jun 16, 2007 10:49 PM

By: Serena Willoughby

York will only pay for the waste capacity it needs, the region's director of waste management says.

In undertaking a joint study with Durham on the possibility of building a \$250-million incinerator, the amount each region would pay was never agreed upon since the size of the facility was never determined, Andy Campbell said.

"When we started this process two years ago, the plans for Dongara weren't finalized," Mr. Campbell said.

Dongara Developments is to begin construction on a facility that will turn garbage into pellets to be used to manufacture cement. The facility will take about 100,000 tonnes of York's trash per year, once construction is finished in 2008.

Durham officials cried foul this week over claims York drastically reduced its share of the proposed facility.

Since the region produces about 160,000 tonnes of garbage and with more capacity identified at Green Lane landfill, Mr. Campbell estimates York will only need about 20,000 tonnes of capacity from the proposed incinerator.

That equals a 12-per-cent interest in the proposed incinerator for York, leaving Durham to pay the rest.

Last month, critics of the incinerator called into question a "put or pay" clause. The clause would mean if the region doesn't produce a set amount of waste for the facility, it would pay fines because less energy will be produced. At that time, Mr. Campbell said the region was trying to ascertain exactly what York's needs are.

With Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill all using green box programs for organic waste and the northern six municipalities scheduled to implement similar programs in September, the region be divert more, potentially lessening the need for the incinerator.

Meanwhile, York and Durham are feeling pressure from community groups raising environmental and health concerns about the proposed facility.

On Monday Ed Candolini, who represents a residents' group called Communities First, made a presentation to Markham council recommending it challenge the region on why it has a stake in the incinerator at all.

"There is absolutely no requirement today or in the future for such a facility for Markham or York Region's residential waste," Mr. Candolini said.

York's consultants are preparing a study on the health impacts of the incinerator. Results will be presented later this month.

"We want to make sure it is safe. We need to look at everything before making a decision," said Mario Ferri, Vaughan regional councillor and chairperson of the region's solid waste management committee.

While one site for the proposed incinerator has been identified in East Gwillimbury and others in Clarington, a preferred site will be recommended to York and Durham regional councils in the fall.

York will host a public consultation session June 19, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., at Roman Palace Banquet Hall, 1096 Ringwell Dr. in Newmarket.

The session will provide background information and staff will discuss the results of a preliminary study of the health and ecological impacts of the proposed energy-from-waste facility.