

## **Public still not on board with proposed EFW**

Oct 10, 2007

Consultants gave their reasons for selecting the Clarington 01 site as their preferred site for the proposed York/Durham energy-from-waste (EFW) facility, in a public meeting held last Wednesday evening, at the Garnet Rickard Centre in Bowmanville.

The preferred site, on a short list of four potential sites, was made public on September 21st. Clarington 01 site is located south of Highway 401, west of Osbourne Road and north of the CN Rail corridor in Courtice. Other sites on the short list were another Courtice site, slightly north west of the preferred site, a site at Bennett Road south of the 401, and one in East Gwillimbury, in the York Region.

Jim McKay of the firm Jacques Whitford, one of the consulting firms hired for this project, explained that when they applied a list of advantages and disadvantages to each of the sites on their short list, the Clarington 01 site came out on top.

Among the advantages of the preferred site, according to McKay are, the distance the waste has to travel to get to the site. It shares the shortest ground transportation route with the other Courtice site, for hauling in garbage from the two Regions. That is an environmental saving, according to McKay. There were no hazard lands identified within the site, which were identified on other sites, and no aquatic features. An EFW on that site would have the least impact on water quality, McKay said. An EFW facility on that site would affect the fewest number from a residential area. It is the closest of all sites to a potential market for heat, once Clarington's Energy Park is developed.

Known disadvantages of the site are; its proximity to the 401 and its compromised air shed due to traffic emissions. The Haul Road into the facility will need to be upgraded, natural gas and water have to be brought to the site. There is high potential for archeological and prehistoric resources to be on the site, as are common on lands around the lake, according to McKay. A further archeological assessment will determine the potential of such resources existing on the site.

"Public health and safety and the natural environment, our evaluation process," McKay stated. "If it's going to cost a little more, but it's safer, that's what we want," he said.

When the meeting was opened up to questions from the public, organizers were questioned about the late start for the formal presentation which began at 9 p.m., as scheduled.

Ms. Mirka Januskiewicz, the Region's Waste Management Director, said she was responsible for setting the meeting time and the late starting time; reflected concerns she received from EFW people who work in Toronto, and wish to have dinner with their families before coming to the meeting. After dissatisfaction with the late meeting time was expressed by many public speakers, Januskiewicz announced that the formal portion of the next public meeting, to be held October 9 at Faith Baptist Church in Courtice, would begin at 7 p.m.

The audience of approximately 200 residents responded with applause several times at sentiments expressed by fellow residents during the evening.

When Mr. Don McKay had his opportunity at the microphone, to ask a question of the panel of experts assembled at the front of the room, he asked, by a show of hands, who in the audience was against the proposed EFW. When nearly every hand in the room was raised, he asked, "If the public say 'no' will you accept that and leave?" for which he received great applause. It was explained earlier in the meeting, that the consultants would engage in public polling in October, asking people about the preferred site and the process. Januskiewicz answered the question by stating that the results of the poll will be presented

to Regional Council. To which McKay responded, "the politicians have to listen to us, we're the public," for which he was again wildly applauded.

Mr. Dave Renaud of the CAW Local 222 Environment Committee asked for a guarantee that cancer rates in the community would not increase with the proposed- incineration.

Dr. Lesbia Smith, on contract by the consultant said, the regulations in place ensure the added risk to the community would not be more than 1 in a million. "The guarantee that you have is that the regulation will be adhered to, the increase will not be more than 1 in a million."

Dr. Smith's response led Dr. Paul LaRose, a physicist in the audience to respond, "we have a solution by dilution effect here. We may not all die of cancer, but we will be carriers. We will be unwilling hosts."

To the question on whether any study has been done to assess the effect that EFW would have on property values, Mr. David Merriman, with the consulting firm of GENIVAR responded that the EFW facility in Peel Region had no effect on property values in that area. "It was our position that it wasn't an effect," he stated. The resident who raised the question told Merriman that is unacceptable that this was not considered by the consultants and by council.

When questioned by Kristen Robinson as to whether garbage going into the proposed EFW would be presorted, as the burning of hazardous waste creates deadly emissions, the consultants replied that the final decision as to whether raw garbage is processed or pre-sorted will come out in the request for qualifications segment of the process. Robinson said she had an opportunity to tour the Peel facility, where garbage is not presorted prior to being burned, to which Ms. Januskiewicz stated that the Peel facility was not the best benchmark.

The public has until October 28 to submit their comments to the consultants regarding their preferred site. Comments expressed publicly and submitted in writing will be included in the consultant's report to council. Regional council will decide in December whether they accept the consultant's preferred site recommendation.