

Take a stand, Clarington, says incineration opponent

Municipality should do just that, soon, says councillor

Wed Oct 24, 2007

By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- The Municipality must take a stand and proclaim itself an unwilling host to Durham Region's proposed incinerator, says an opponent to the proposition.

Clarington will take a stand, but which side it will come down on isn't yet certain, said a Clarington councillor.

"I hope you realize it is crunch time," said Barry Bracken, who has been vocally opposed to building an incinerator in Courtice to deal with garbage from Durham and York regions.

The Courtice site has been identified by consultants as the best place to build the energy-from-waste incinerator, which would process a minimum of 150,000 and a maximum of 400,000 tonnes of trash from both Durham and York regions, and produce power for the grid. Regional council is expected to vote in December on whether to accept the preferred site.

Originally, Durham and York had been working on a 50-50 partnership for the proposed plant, but recently, York pulled their commitment back to 12 per cent. At about the same time, council in East Gwillimbury -- the only York site on the shortlist produced by consultants -- announced it would not be a willing host to the facility.

Clarington should do the same, said Mr. Bracken.

"In my mind, you have already procrastinated too long, but in this case, late is better than never," he said Monday, during a meeting of Clarington's General Purpose and Administration Committee.

Some councillors have said part of the hold-up in Clarington proclaiming its relative willingness to host is that they are awaiting further information. But that doesn't seem to be the case, charged Mr. Bracken, noting Mayor Jim Abernethy's showing of "the European incinerators' infomercial" -- a video produced by incinerator builders -- at "service clubs and other private events."

The video was shown as part of the Mayor's address to the Clarington Board of Trade in September.

Clarington will take a stand, said Regional Councillor Charlie Trim, who chairs Durham's Works committee and the Joint Waste Management Group formed by Durham and York. But, Coun. Trim said he "wouldn't hazard a guess" on which way Clarington would lean.

There is a need to let people know where Clarington stands, he said.

"I think it would alleviate concerns, doubt, and put the municipality's position up front and centre," he said.

It's important to have detailed health assessment information before making any decisions, noted the councillor.

"I would have to see the details, but certainly, it has to be a safe option," he said. "The health of the community is utmost."