

Metroland: Letter to Editor

Clarington councillors query \$900K Regional shortfall

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By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- Local councillors say they're concerned about the Region going almost \$1 million over budget on a materials recycling facility in Whitby without getting council approval, given there's a proposal to build a much pricier Regional facility in Clarington.

Regional councillors learned last week a new recycling facility in Whitby was \$900,000 over budget.

Problems with a high water table and soil issues drove the price up, but council was not apprised of the situation until just before the MRF was to open.

The situation is not different from what the Bowmanville Clinic at 222 King St. ran into when it wound up with increased costs for its recent expansion after issues were found, said Regional Councillor and Works Chairman Charlie Trim, in answer to a question on the overrun from a local Clarington councillor. There was a similar problem at the site of the not-yet-constructed new Newcastle Public Library branch, he said.

There are differences, said councillors.

"In regard to the Newcastle library, (the increased costs) came back to this council before it went forward," said local councillor Gord Robinson.

Regional council is to discuss the issue today (Wednesday), said Coun. Trim.

"The only problem was that it wasn't conveyed to regional council. That is the problem and the issue that is being addressed," he said, noting such large projects generally have contingencies built in to deal with unexpected costs.

It's also a little disconcerting to see the \$900,000 overrun on a \$16-million project -- an increase of about 8 per cent -- when the Region is proposing building an incinerator at an estimated \$250 million in Clarington, said one councillor.

"I wonder what 8 per cent of a quarter billion is" mused local councillor Adrian Foster.

-- With files by Erin Hatfield