

Council in Brief:

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Growth 'most formidable challenge,' says mayor

CLARINGTON -- Growth may be the "most formidable challenge" facing Clarington currently, but Mayor Jim Abernethy used the majority of his annual State of Clarington address to talk about another challenge: waste management.

The mayor's address began with councillors reading from a list of activities and accomplishments related to the Municipality over the past year.

Mayor Abernethy took a moment to "encourage" council and staff "to get ready for the challenging times ahead.

"We must continue to remember that everything we do should be done to the benefit of the people of Clarington," he said.

Ensuring people can find work locally remains a priority, he said, noting it's important "to allow people to say, 'Clarington is where I live, but it is also where I earn my living.'"

At the same time, waste management will be a challenge, he said, noting maximizing diversion will be key.

"We're going to do that by working together ... to change people's attitudes and behaviours," said the mayor.

Completion of the Environmental Assessment on the proposed incinerator is also important, he said. Two years' work has already been done on it and the EA is expected to be completed late in 2008.

"Once completed, it will answer two very important questions about Energy from Waste ... is it safe, and can we afford it," he said. Those questions can't be answered without completing the process, noted Mayor Abernethy.

"I urge everyone to be patient and allow the EA to be completed," he said.