

Incineration presentations in recess

Clarington Council is on recess until 5 p.m. Wednesday. An 11 p.m. Council meeting deadline was initiated by Clarington council last December, when they adopted a new Procedural By-Law.

In addition to the regular meeting agenda for Monday night, Mayor Abernethy scheduled four speakers to present information on incineration. Twenty-one citizens had also registered to speak to council on incineration Monday night.

Councillors adjusted the meeting agenda to deal with all other agenda items before beginning the presentations on incineration. The first presentation was given by Magnus Schonning, the First Secretary of the Swedish Embassy in Ottawa, who took the floor at 9:30 p.m. Before Schonning was finished answering questions from council members, Mayor Abernethy announced that the 11 o'clock deadline had arrived and the meeting would have to be recessed until a later date. Councillor Woo tried to introduce a motion to continue the meeting until the agenda was completed, but received no support.

Before he began his presentation, Schonning told councillors that he was not representing any interests other than his country's brand as leaders in sustainable development. Schonning reported that the number of incinerators in Sweden has grown from 18 in 1985, to 29 in 2004. Their rate of harmful emissions from waste incineration has decreased over that same time period. Schonning had no information on the health effects of emissions of nano particles (one billionth of a particle), that as this is such a new science no studies on the subject have yet been published. Those opposed to incineration cite the emission of nano particles, from an incineration stack as extremely harmful to human health.

Sweden's waste hierarchy includes four "R's" rather than our three "R's" of reduce, reuse and recycle. They have included the Recovery of waste, as the fourth "R" in their waste management strategy. Swedish legislation forces companies to take responsibility for their own packaging.

As of 2005, 34 percent of Swedish Municipal Solid Waste, by volume, was recycled and re-used, 60 percent was recovered, and five per cents was disposed of in land fill. Of the waste recovered, 50 percent is turned in an energy from waste facility, and 10 percent is composted. Swedish energy from waste facilities provide district heating for entire communities, replacing individual gas and oil furnaces. A good waste management strategy has to include aggressive diversion strategies, according to Schonning.

Clarington councillors took turns asking Schonning questions, till the clock ran out. He was left standing at the lectern, as the councillors left their seats. Council will re-adjourn on Wednesday, at 5 p.m.

The three other speakers the Mayor had lined up - representatives from the energy from waste (EFW) facility in Peel Region, the Region's consultants on the proposed EFW project, and members from Durham Region Waste Management Advisory Committee - will have an opportunity to address council on Wednesday evening. Mayor Abernethy says he will be arranging similar information meetings on landfill and zero waste.