

## **Clarington councillors offer mixed review of stabilized landfill**

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By: By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- The chairman of Durham's works committee says he "certainly will not support stabilized landfill if it's like Otter Lake."

Clarington Regional Councillor Charlie Trim was among a group of 15 regional councillors and staffers who made the trip to the Halifax area landfill to look at one of the possible alternatives to incineration.

The Otter Lake stabilized landfill facility is considered by some to be an option for waste management. There, secondary separation of recyclables takes place, and work is done to capture some of the negative by-products of traditional landfilling.

But Coun. Trim said he wasn't pleased with what he saw --- despite the fact that he didn't see one of the major components of the facility.

"Unfortunately, we didn't get a chance to see the actual site; we didn't see the cells where they put the garbage," Coun. Trim said during Monday's Clarington council meeting. "They said it was out of bounds because of construction work."

Cost was an issue, Coun. Trim reported.

"The cost in 2007 to each homeowner was \$180 per year (for waste collection in the Halifax area) and you all know what you're paying on a local basis here," he said.

Not really, local Councillor Adrian Foster said.

"To be honest, I haven't a clue what portion of my tax bill goes for garbage," he said.

In Durham, homeowners pay between \$140 and \$180 per year for the same service, depending on where they live, Coun. Trim said.

Regional Councillor Mary Novak said she was disappointed with the lack of diversion being done, noting that of the 155,000 tonnes of waste a year brought into Otter Lake, where garbage bags are opened and any recyclables or organics found inside removed, 135,000 tonnes winds up in landfill.

But Mayor Jim Abernethy reminded her that the Otter Lake facility only provided secondary separation -- homeowners separate recyclables and organics themselves before collection. It's only items that are inadvertently trashed, when they could be recycled or composted, that come out at the Otter Lake facility, he said.

Not only are they ensuring proper separation is done, but in Nova Scotia, they ensure commercial and industrial waste is also subject to recycling and composting, said Mayor

Abernethy, who visited the site on his own last year. In Durham, commercial and industrial facilities don't necessarily receive recycling service.

People in the Halifax area are diverting "50 per cent across the board," Mayor Abernethy said. "That's higher than what we're doing."

The facility also has technology to capture any leachate from the waste, a concern with traditional landfilling, since it can impact water sources. As well, there is work done to capture another byproduct of landfilling -- methane gas. But at least some of that gas is released into the atmosphere through hand valves, the Regional councillors reported.

"Certainly not everything's bad" at Otter Lake, Coun. Novak said. "I just don't think, at this point, it's everything I thought it would be."

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