

Jan. 20, 2011

Mayor Foster and members of Council,

As a ratepayer in both Clarington and Durham Region, I was appalled today when along with a few other residents, tried to attend the first meeting of the new EFW Advisory Committee as an observer, and was refused entry to a meeting in a public building (Durham Region Headquarters). I doubt if this is what the Minister of Environment had in mind when he mandated that the Region(s) form a public advisory committee. Seems the Regions have put together a draft Terms of Reference that excludes the general public.

I would suggest that with a membership of two dozen people representing the various municipalities and the Regions, and only 3 members of the public allowed to speak (also dictated by the Minister), not much will be accomplished in terms of true democracy. The three 'public' members, representing Durham Environment Watch, Durham Clear, and ZW4ZB, while all very knowledgeable and dedicated, will be outvoted in every key instance.

In addition, I take issue with the fact as well that the reps from the municipalities are all bureaucrats; they are not accountable to 'the people', only their political bosses. There is no sound reason why interested citizens cannot attend these meetings. We deserve better than this!

I would also question why, with only a 20% stake in this costly venture, York Region has such a large contingent of senior bureaucrats listed. This too is unacceptable in my mind.

Having spoken to the person heading up the meeting today (Jan. 20) (Mirka Januszkiewicz from the Regional Waste Management division) and not getting a straight answer as to why those of us ready to attend were being denied, she finally told me to speak to the Commissioner of Works, Mr. Cliff Curtis. I asked for him and it took about 20 minutes to get a reply from one of his aides that the decision had been made to ban the public. When I asked who made that decision, I was not given a satisfactory answer. Again I asked to speak with Mr. Curtis, but was informed he was at a meeting, and I would have to wait. Meanwhile, the meeting behind closed doors was well underway. I then 'demanded' that they send him a note on his Blackberry, which they did, but it still took over a half hour for a reply. The reply was simply that we were banned from entry.

I find the entire matter to be totally unacceptable. Here we are, faced with the biggest capital project in Regional history, a garbage incinerator at a cost that will approach \$300M, not to mention an annual operating cost of somewhere between \$14-16M for the next 25-30 years. This so-called made in Durham solution will bring us no closer to a sustainable future for waste management. In my opinion, it will, in spite of assurances from many Regional politicians and the incinerator salesmen the Region hired to act as consultants, present a major health risk to Durham residents and beyond. It will have a negative impact on real estate values in Clarington and a major impact on our main

industry; agriculture. In spite of this, in keeping with their secretive and deceptive manner, the Region will not allow the general public to witness the meetings now being scheduled.

This is our Municipality, our money and our health. This is being paid for with public money, being built on public lands and the meetings are held in our own Regional offices, yet, we the public are denied admittance. I doubt if the Minister of MOE intended for this latest scam by the Region to be seen as secretive. I trust that the Minister would encourage open dialogue, transparency and public participation.

Having said all of this, I am asking that you, my Council, and the Council of the current host municipality, immediately inform Durham and York Regions that holding these meetings behind closed doors will not be tolerated. As well, I would ask that you inform the Regions that you want the composition of this committee to be fair and equitable to both Regions in terms of membership, and that you desire to have political representatives sitting as members, not civil servants who don't have to answer to the public.

I would further request that you likewise inform and petition the Ontario Minister of the Environment of these same concerns, and ask that he step in and tell the Region(s) how these meetings will be conducted and by whom.

Thank you,

Jim Richards
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