

Is Ajax standing up for Clarington's interests?

Sun Oct 28, 2007

By: Metroland Durham Region Media Group

Clarington residents must be wondering why their own municipal council is having such trouble grappling with the energy from waste facility when a neighbouring Durham council has made up its mind.

This past week Ajax council voted "No" on a proposed Durham Region incinerator. Their reason for coming to this decision was simple -- there are more questions than answers about this technology.

A draft report from Durham Region doesn't give any answers concerning the ultimate costs to taxpayers as well as the bills for such items as roads to the facility, charged Ajax councillors. Given the increase in the overall tax levy Clarington residents had to deal with last year, that should be a concern for councillors who want to hold the line on taxes.

Then there was the issue of ash that results from the incineration process. What happens to it after the garbage is burned? Ajax Councillor Colleen Jordan said she's seen a British study that found there is no safe way to landfill the ash from an incinerator.

If Ajax councillors have so many concerns about unanswered questions regarding this proposed EFW facility why haven't Clarington's Regional councillors raised similar issues? Why does Mayor Jim Abernethy show his incineration video, supplied by the very people promoting the technology to anyone who will watch, but still remains largely silent on whether Clarington will be a willing host to such a facility?

An environmental assessment is being done on the facility right now and most of our local representatives are hinging their support on it. With any luck at all most of the questions about EFW safety will be answered and we'll know where council stands on the issue.

But it's frustrating to see another municipality take a stand on a facility that could potentially be built in our backyard and hear nothing from our own representatives.

And the longer our council remains silent on this issue the clearer it's becoming where they stand.