

Sunday, October 28

The Mayor is puzzled?



So, our Mayor is puzzled, astonished, surprised over Ajax's decision not to support the Region's plan to push an incinerator on Clarington/Durham Region without clear answers to the many outstanding questions that should have been answered before getting to this point in the process.

<http://www.newsdurhamregion.com/news/Durham/article/88270>

We might use other terminology for the Mayor's confusion and position on this incinerator. How about baffled, befuddled, bewildered, dazed, discombobulated, disconcerted, disorganized, distracted, flummoxed, flustered, fouled up, glassy-eyed, gonzo, misled, mixed up, muddled, nonplussed, perplexed, perturbed, punch-drunk, punchy, screwy, shook up, slaphappy, spaced out, stumped, taken aback, thrown, unglued, unscrewed, unzipped... How about **just plain wrong**.

What is perplexing to me and to many others is how our elected regional representatives could so easily believe everything they are told by those who have a vested interest in having this incinerator built, without question, yet will not consider information and objections brought forward by:

- **residents** who have done their homework and presented documented reports, studies, concerns
- **16 Clarington doctors** who have signed a petition declaring their health concerns as well as their opposition to this incinerator
- **43 Durham Region doctors** who have done the same
- **Peer Reviewers** hired by the municipality of Clarington, at great expense to us, who have outlined shortcomings and problems with the EA studies to date on this project

How can they have such tunnel vision? How can they be so blind? How can they be so obtuse?

How can the Mayor continue to say that he has not made up his mind on whether Clarington should support this incinerator or not, all the while promoting it to everyone and every group he comes in contact with? All the while showing promotional videos from proponents, but never, not even once truthfully considering "the other side" of the story? Does he think residents of Clarington are as blind or as undiscerning or myopic as he is? This man is not a leader. He is a follower (of Mr. Anderson and cronies).

I will level this charge today at our two other regional representatives - Charlie Trim and Mary Novak. Both have also continued to say that they haven't made up their minds yet and are waiting for all the information to be in. Well, they have shown their true colours recently and there is no doubt where they stand either. Both are fully in support of this project, even without having all the answers. Even with having hardly any clear-cut answers at all.

There is no technology chosen to date, although Mr. Anderson has repeatedly said it will NOT be plasma arc or the newest tech since it is too expensive. Money before health and safety - is anyone surprised at that? Mass Burn is what is being seriously considered.

You may say, "how do you know?". Ask yourself, how did we know the preferred site would be not only in Clarington, but specifically in Courtice? How could we have known that more than a year ago? How did we know that no other alternatives would be seriously studied or looked at well before they made public that "thermal technology" would be the preferred option? How have we known before the "studies" have even been done, what each step would be?

We knew because it has all been pre-planned, pre-ordained. And Clarington has been the target all along, one reason being our uber-weak political representation. While the local councillors are still not willing to declare us an unwilling host, even though they by now have seen the shortcomings of the studies, the process, the beat-around-the-bush "spin" put on this whole project, the regional councillors have determinedly, unequivocally, and unmistakably supported the Region's "vision" to burn our garbage from the start.

Oh to be blessed with honest, intelligent, open-minded representation such as Ajax has. We can only hope for better choices in 2010, and will actively work toward that goal. That includes the "Elect the Chair" campaign. While we know our Mayor and 2 regional councillors will never support that, we can hope our local councillors come to their senses and push for election of the regional chair, as residents have repeatedly asked them to do.

A question to our Mayor and regional councillors - why is it that you promote the "new" incineration technology, which STILL cannot remove the harmful ultrafine and nanoparticulate from the stack emissions, but continue to talk about the "old" landfill technology, and will not admit that there is new technology in stabilized landfill that collects leachate, prevents it from contaminating our groundwater, can collect the methane gas produced and with technology can safely burn it for energy, and does not pollute the atmosphere the way incineration will? Even the Region's consultants admitted in their brief "alternatives to" study that the greatest impact on the airshed would be from incineration, not from landfill (not even from old-style landfill, which is the only type they "studied").

With all the lip service paid to global warming and climate change, our environmentally non-friendly Region of Durham (proven during the greenbelt debacle) wants to contribute even more through stack emissions to the problem.

And the claims that forest fires contribute more to greenhouse gases than incinerators is disingenuous at best. Naturally occurring forest fires are not remotely related to intentional burning of waste. There are better alternatives but those have not even been considered by this Council or the Region's Consultants. One more chink in the EA armour.

Our elected (and non-elected) representatives should err on the side of caution when it comes to our health. Also when it comes to the financial commitment. Use the Precautionary Principle, which is normally used first and foremost in the scientific community. It has been totally disregarded by not only the Region but by the consultants who are promoting the vision of the Region. Yes, there is a huge and ever widening credibility gap. Especially when questions are asked at the public information sessions and no clear answer is ever given - just a bunch of spin and non-answers. I have not spoken with ONE person who asked a question at a PIC who was satisfied with the answer they received. NOT because it was not the answer they wanted, as suggested by Mr. Cliff Curtis who is Commissioner of Waste... er, Works, but because they didn't get any answer at all. Just spin.

It is depressing to see what is happening to Clarington. It is more than depressing to see people putting their houses on the market already, so convinced are they that this will be pushed through in spite of what the final true answers are. It is a sad state of affairs for Clarington, for the Region of Durham, and for the GTA overall. It is depressing that seeing facilities that look "clean" in Europe seem to be the deciding factor, nevermind all the invisible emissions coming from the stacks; nevermind that their waste stream is different than ours; nevermind that we will not have the best available technology - we will have the

most affordable technology. Nevermind that European standards are much higher than Ontario standards for emission control. Nevermind that Ontario has only guidelines, not requirements for emissions, and that while there may be a financial cost for exceeding limits placed upon incinerator facilities, many consider it simply a 'cost of doing business'.

Those who support this project should spend a little time doing some real homework. That includes our elected (and non-elected) representatives. It is more than obvious that our Mayor does not understand the EA process or how it works (or is supposed to work) at all. It is a process for ASKING questions of the proponents, and making sure those answers are received. He seems to object to all the questions being asked by residents and peer reviewers, since our Council is not asking the questions that need to be asked.

Also see Metroland articles and editorials:

[Ajax council raises good questions on incinerator](#)

[Is Ajax standing up for Clarington's interests?](#)

[Take a stand, Clarington, says incineration opponent](#)

[Energy from waste draws new faces](#)

[Durham Environment Watch](#) - good source of information for incineration issues and media articles

[Watchdog Incinerator Posts](#) - previous posts regarding this incendiary issue

Posted by Clarington Watchdog at [10:09 AM](#)