

We are not worthy, Clarington tells Whitby

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By: By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- Sorry, Whitby, but Clarington just isn't up to the challenge your mayor issued.

That's the message from Clarington council, which accepted only a watered-down version of the challenge originally issued by Whitby Mayor Pat Perkins.

"The Town of Whitby challenges the Municipality of Clarington to a friendly competition: the municipality which achieves the highest diversion rate in 2008 will provide official congratulatory remarks at a 2009 televised council meeting," wrote Mayor Perkins in a February letter.

But Clarington shouldn't participate until there's an "even playing field," said Clarington Regional Councillor Charlie Trim.

Whitby achieved a 68 per cent diversion in 2007 -- about 20 per cent better than Clarington. And this year Clarington will prepare to make changes, to be implemented in April 2009, that will bring Clarington's collection schedules in line with Whitby's.

In Whitby, garbage is collected every second week, while recycling and green box waste gets picked up weekly. Clarington has the opposite schedule, with garbage picked up weekly and recycling every second week.

"With the new changes coming in April 2009 and multi-residential (recycling pickup) trying to find its way on stream, it's a lot to pile on to a number of people," said Regional Councillor Mary Novak.

But, the likelihood of losing shouldn't deter Clarington from participating, said local Councillor Adrian Foster.

"Frankly, winning or losing, we all win in this," he said. "I think, win or lose, we all win by playing the game. You just have to say congratulations, so the stakes aren't particularly high.

"We could have public participation, public education. I would truly like to see us do something instead of do nothing," he said.

So Clarington will participate only during Pitch In Week, which traditionally happens in April.

"Pitch In Week is a level playing field," Mayor Jim Abernethy said. "We could counterchallenge Whitby to a Pitch In Week challenge . . . and wait till we are on a level playing field for the rest."
