

# Wolves or Sheep... we will soon find out

by [Brian Nicholson](#) on Saturday, 27 November 2010 at 7 p.m.

*"I am anti incinerator but cannot withhold a vote for Roger Anderson for doing his job. He was legally obligated by the previous council to sign that document. I am disappointed and saddened that it has been signed and hold the last council responsible for putting our communities into this position. And until I am sworn in on December 8th I have no power or authority to try and change it."*

This comment strikes me as a strange attempt to justify a vote that requires no justification. If a member of Oshawa Council wishes to support Roger Anderson for Regional Chair then they should do so because they believe he is the best candidate for the job. Each elected representative has the personal authority and responsibility to cast their as they choose and be held accountable for their decision. So why the need to try to change history in order to try to justify a choice?

The out-going Regional Council gave the Regional Chairman the authority to sign the deal with Covanta provided that the Province of Ontario approved the Environmental Assessment submission and that the deal met the criteria approved by Council. **It was an OPTION given to the Regional Chair not an ORDER.** Whoever is spreading that spin is either woefully uninformed or is trying to mislead. Further the authority was given to the REGIONAL CHAIR not to ROGER ANDERSON. If the agreement was not signed prior to December 8th, it would have become the responsibility of WHOEVER is REGIONAL CHAIR after that date to make the decision.

It did not MANDATE that the Regional Chair MUST sign the agreement and it definitely did not MANDATE that it must be done so prior to the end of the current term. It provided a CHOICE. One that could have been made after December 8th.

Roger could have reviewed the decision of the Minister, sought further input from Council or the public, considered the recent Election results (especially the massive anti-incineration vote in Clarington) and most importantly, recognized that the situation has changed dramatically since the vote in June of 2009. Nothing in the Council resolutions, the Municipal Act, the agreement or the EA approval prevented any of these from occurring.

So the question we have to ask here is **why the rush?**

Given that the authority provided by the Council resolution continues after December 8th (should the Chair wish to invoke that power) why not wait and allow the newly elected Council a chance to at least comment on the agreement or on the project? Was there some fear among incineration proponents that the project might not have majority support in the new Council to proceed? Were they fearful that the authorization would be withdrawn by Council? It would not be hard to conclude that it was not confidence in the correctness of the choice that motivated the decision but fear that the decision would be reversed by the new Council?

Any group confident of the correctness of their decision and of the community support for it, DOES NOT rush an agreement signing under a self imposed deadline but allows for full debate and consultation with those newly elected.

The Province passed legislation putting severe restrictions on out-going Councils to prevent them from taking actions that could negatively impact the incoming Council. It is called LAME DUCK legislation. It is a safeguard that makes a lot of sense.

Now we have a situation where a majority of those elected on October 25th have publicly indicated that they do not support this incineration agreement.

So what did our Regional Chair do when confronted with that fact? Did he recognize this fact and seek further consent?

NO!

Did he recognize that he individually has no power and must represent the will of the Council, both out-going and in-coming?

NO!

Did he recognize that of the 16 members of Regional Council who gave him that authority that fully 10 of them are not part of the incoming Council?

NO!

Over half of those supporting the incinerator project (Scott, Shepherd, Herrema, Pearce, McMillan, Abernethy, Trim, Emm, Crawford, Johnson) leave office on November 30th. Why are those leaving office given more credence than those incoming?

Of those who are returning to office only 6 (Novak, Pidwerbecki, Perkins, McLean, Ryan, O'Connor) have endorsed the agreement. How is this democracy? Why do the six incinerator supporters on Council overrule the other 22?

Given that this seems to be more of a DEAD DUCK Council rather than even LAME DUCK Council., does not simple respect not demand that the new voices of the people be heard? Why sign an agreement without the knowledge that it will be continued and not overturned?

Roger Anderson made his decision and is accountable for it and I am sure he is comfortable with his decision.

However, the new Regional Council may not agree. Now that the agreement is signed, it will require that the contract be cancelled if Regional Council is not willing to proceed. This will mean paying financial penalties to COVANTA and possibly others to break the deal. Why would A Regional Chair put Council in such a predicament? Is he counting on the penalties acting as a deterrent to cancelling the deal? Is this democratic? Is this in the best interests of the Region? The answer is obvious. The answer is NO!

What we have here is power politics. A Chair who is a strong supporter of incineration and fearful that Council may not agree, has chosen to sign now and take his chances with future decisions. He is betting that Council will not cancel the deal and he may be right given some of the spin making the rounds this month.

So let's be clear here, the decision to sign the agreement prior to the swearing in of the newly elected Council was his alone. The decision to not to allow the new Regional Council to express its views on the agreement was his alone. No amount of spin is going

to change that point. Either the new Council ratifies that decision by inaction or it steps forward and cancels the deal.

Now we as voters get to see the mettle of those we have elected. Those who oppose incineration have a chance to stand up for their beliefs. Will they?

I wonder if some of our newly elected Regional Councillors would even be considering their choice for Regional Chair had they told the voters prior to the election that they had no intent to actively oppose the incinerator.

Why have the wolves that argued for change and accountability during the campaign now turned into sheep when they are needed most?

Can you imagine how many votes would have changed had the above statement been made and publicly released just a few short weeks ago.

Transparency and Accountability must be more than election slogans soon forgotten after the vote.

If you believe Roger is the best candidate then say so and explain to us your decision and rationale. Don't hide behind spin or the blame game.

If you truly oppose Incineration and consider it detrimental to our citizens, then it is time to stand up and fulfill your mandate.

You were elected because you said you offered a better choice to the voters. This is not the time to make the voter's regret their choice.