

Incinerator is nothing but bad news

Mon Sep 10, 2007 (Metroland)

To the editor:

About 200 concerned citizens took time out of their day to attend a rally at the town hall on Aug. 4. I was one of them.

It was a peaceful gathering of opponents against the threat of building a huge waste incinerator in Clarington's backyard. None of the councillors acknowledged our presence. Our mayor could have acknowledged us with just a wave, but he avoided us and went in the side door.

At 7 p.m., some of us filed into the council chambers. We filled all the seats, stood up and sat on steps. Twenty-five delegates were on the agenda, slated to speak on the public's behalf. The meeting started at 7 p.m. and at 9:15 p.m. the third of the three paid consultants was still droning on, filtering out at least half of the citizens who came to be heard through their delegates.

Then, when it was our turn to speak, council decided to change the agenda, skip the subject matter of incineration altogether and jump to other business. Council knew in advance there were 25 delegates scheduled to speak. They did their best to clear the chamber by (not adhering to the agenda) before they could be heard.

We are not intruders. We are not the enemy. We are the citizens of this community who have elected these councillors to make decisions on our behalf. How can they do that without listening to us? We have alternatives. They don't want to hear them.

Over half the people I talk to about the incinerator are unaware of the project and its inevitable ramifications. This is about living in a clean, healthy community, this is about our environment, our health, our economy, our sustainability and our property values.

This is about hundreds of trucks hauling tonnes of garbage into our living space 24/7 for the next 35 years in order to keep this monster incinerator alive and running. What a legacy for our children!

This is about the very air that we breathe. Discussing acceptable amounts of dioxin gas emissions per units of energy is insulting. Let's discuss saner, healthier, cleaner methods of waste disposal like recycling, reusing, composting, manufacturer responsibility for packaging, zero waste initiatives, stabilized landfills, aggressive diversions and industrial responsibility and design.

We already live in a hot spot for asthma, congestive heart failure, cancer and polluted air. We can't afford to contaminate our air with multiple toxic dioxins and carcinogenic gases. We don't want to hear about percentages and new technologies that change on a yearly basis. A new incinerator today with new technology is be an old incinerator with old technology tomorrow. No amounts of dioxin, furans and heavy metal ash are acceptable, particularly since these substances are so toxic to young children.

Our mayor and his incinerator amigos are depending on your apathy to push this thing through. Don't give it to them. This is a serious health issue. This is front page news. It's our children and grandchildren who will suffer the long-term effects! Please think about that. Our mayor and regional councillors are not.

Judy Cooper
Bowmanville