

Metroland

Clarington has no say on incinerator, says regional chairman

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By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- Saying the municipality would not be a willing host to an incinerator proposed by the Regions of Durham and York would have "absolutely no effect whatsoever" on the process, Regional Chairman Roger Anderson told Clarington councillors Monday.

The chairman was one of a number of delegations speaking on the matter during the council meeting.

"It would be nice if we could have a willing host, but it is not essential," said Mr. Anderson.

In fact, he said, that East Gwillimbury, the only other municipality with a potential site for the proposed incinerator besides Clarington, has said it won't be a willing host is neither here nor there. The site there remains under consideration, with a decision expected later this month on preferred site.

"It would be pretty easy to sit in front of all these folks ... and say, okay, I'm not going to be a willing host," he said, referring to the audience in council chambers, several of whom were on hand to voice their opposition to the proposed Energy From Waste plant. "Easy to say it now, but I don't know what you're going to say in 2011 (after the Michigan border closes to Ontario trash) because you're not going to have an answer."

There is nothing to the suggestion made by Clarington Councillor Adrian Foster that the Municipality is "Durham's ultimate waste solution," said the chairman.

"We deem energy from waste as the ultimate waste solution," he said.

But, there are alternatives to incinerating garbage which should be explored, some delegates told Council. Many touted a move toward zero waste, with some form of stabilized landfill until waste can be eliminated.

It's not like incineration will eliminate the need for landfill, said Kerry Meydam.

"With the incinerator ... you still have that residual ash, and you still need landfill," she said.

It is estimated about 30 per cent of what is sent into the incinerator would remain as bottom ash.

Zero waste, which would entail extending producer responsibility for their spent product. isn't terribly realistic, said others.

"Germany put in one of the most extensive producer responsibility systems ... but after the system was implemented, what they found was that they had huge and growing stockpiles of materials that could not be recycled," said David Climenhage. "I don't think that necessarily a zero-waste solution is something that can happen without many years and many new technologies in place to achieve it."

But, there is a need to look for other solutions, said others, some of whom were clearly disheartened by Mr. Anderson's comments.

"I'm not sure it really makes a difference whether I'm here or not," said Kristin Robinson. "It certainly seems like Mr. Anderson has made it clear my side won't be heard at all.

"I believe we can do better than burning our waste. I believe it is just a band-aid solution."