

Clarington Residents Owed Apology over Remarks

“Regional Chair Anderson must respect taxpayers” says Councillor.

Oshawa—Oshawa Regional Councillor Brian Nicholson is urging Durham Regional Chair Roger Anderson to apologize to Clarington taxpayers for his disrespectful comments at Clarington Municipal Council on Monday, September 10, 2007.

Anderson is reported to have told Clarington Council that “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”.

“I find that comment to be inaccurate, offensive and not helpful to the public consultation process”, says Councillor Nicholson, “We are currently in an Environmental Assessment process, we are holding public meetings in Clarington, and the taxpayers of both the Region and the Municipality are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars doing peer reviews. Why are we spending all this money if the input from Clarington Council and its residents will have “absolutely no effect whatsoever” on the process?”

Nicholson continues, “As a member of the Regional Works Committee, I consider the opinions of the Clarington Council and the taxpayers of Clarington to be vital information in my decision making process. What is it about public comment and public participation that scares the Regional Chair? Is it possible that questions are being asked that he would prefer not be asked?”

Regional Council was asked in 2004, 2005 and 2006 to adopt a policy to add a pre-condition requiring any incineration site to be constructed must be located in a municipality that was a “willing host”. Council, led by Chair Anderson, ruled that any decision on “the requirement to be a willing host” was premature until the site selection process was completed and a host site announced.

“If it is premature to require a willing host prior to site selection, why is not premature to not require a willing host prior to site selection. Once again, we are seeing the rules change by fiat from the Chair rather than by Regional Council.”, claimed Councillor Nicholson. “If Chair Anderson wishes to have Regional Council take a position that states they will place an incinerator in a local municipality whether that municipality is a willing host or not, let him bring that forward to Council. In my opinion, he would have a rude shock if he did.”

This spring, Mayor Jim Abernethy of Clarington apologized to the Regional Chair on behalf of Clarington Council when the Chair was not allowed to speak to Clarington Council. It was said then that not allowing the Chair to speak and offer his views was an insult to the elected office of Regional Chair.

“ If not allowing the Regional Chair speak is an insult, then so is a statement by the Regional Chair that states that the opinions of the Clarington Council and its residents will have “absolutely no effect whatsoever” on the process.”, claims Councillor Nicholson. “If one was wrong, then so is the other. Chair Anderson owes the Clarington Council, and more importantly, the residents of Clarington, Durham residents all, an apology for his comments.”

“The public consultation process must be above reproach, but it is becoming clear from comments such as those made by the Regional Chair, that the process is nothing more than a public relations exercise to limit the political fallout from a decision already made.”, Nicholson concludes.

For further information,

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