

Region less than forthcoming in EFW process

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Last week Monday, Regional Chair Roger Anderson addressed Clarington council on the energy from waste issue.

When questioned by Councillor Willie Woo on the subject of whether or not Clarington decides it is a willing host for the York/Durham energy from waste (EFW) facility the Chair had lots to say.

Anderson did not say he didn't care if Clarington was a willing host or not. That might well be the case, but he did not say that last Monday night at the council meeting. He replied "absolutely not" to Woo's question "Say we're not a willing host, what difference will it make to the process?"

The project team for the joint EFW is currently involved in an environmental assessment (EA) process. The site selection portion of the EA process is nearly complete, with the announcement expected Tuesday next week on which of the 3 sites on the short list will be the preferred site. The municipality of East Gwillimbury announced last Spring they would not be a willing host to an EFW facility, yet the site in that Municipality, the only non Clarington site, is still on the short list of potential sites. There isn't anyone who has been following this process for the past year, that doesn't believe the only real site ever to be on the table is the Regionally owned site in Courtice.

Anderson followed up his answers to Woo with the statement, "I hope that Clarington makes a decision in the future on being willing or unwilling. I hope you won't make that till you have all the information."

That raises a whole other point. How can Clarington have all the information on which to base a sound decision if the Region won't release the documents they used to make their decision on their short list of sites.

One of the consultants Clarington hired to peer review the Region's documents to date on the EA, stated in his report that the Region has not released a number of important reports they used in determining their short list of sites for the proposed EFW. The Region's project team had previously committed to releasing these reports in July, and to date the Municipality has not seen them. Another issue raised by the consultants is the fact there is no upper limit to the size of the proposed EFW. The consultants indicated a number of issues which they felt needed to be addressed, from a Clarington perspective, which was what they were hired to do, and for which we will pay them.

On Monday, Wendy Bracken, a Newcastle resident, who has been speaking out against the proposed incinerator for Clarington urged council to pass a motion immediately asking the Region to address these issues before they make the site selection next week. Council did not heed Bracken's urging and received her presentation for information.

When council decided to hire their own consultants to review the Region's documents to date, they did so because they wanted a Clarington perspective on the process and they wanted to protect Clarington's interests. Why then is council reluctant to ask the Region for this pertinent information, information that we all have a right and a need to see. The Region is always concerned about the transparency of the process. This type of behaviour is far from transparent, and it's no wonder that citizens are very cynical about the undertaking.