

Energy from waste draws new faces

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By Erin Hatfield

DURHAM -- While familiar faces peppered the crowd of about 140 residents at Wednesday's energy from waste public information session, many people used the chance to learn about the process for the first time.

Lately, Michelle Bullied, of Bowmanville, said she has seen more stories in the newspapers and heard more people talking about a proposed energy from waste facility.

"It just seems like a really important issue that I never paid much attention to before," said Ms. Bullied. "But now it seems it is really happening and I should be educated on it."

She attended her first information session on Oct. 3 at the Garnet B. Rickard Recreation Complex in Bowmanville. The public information session was an informal drop in that began at 2 p.m. followed by a 9 p.m. presentation about the advantages and disadvantages of the preferred site for a facility.

When she walked in Ms. Bullied said it was a little overwhelming, the room was filled with poster boards explaining the Regions of York and Durham's residual waste study. Durham and York regions did a joint study to find a method of dealing with garbage, currently trucked to Michigan. A report by the Regions' consultants, Genivar and Jacques Whitford, identifies a site in Courtice as having the best balance of advantages and disadvantages.

Ms. Bullied said the information presented came across pro-incineration. But, when people started asking question after the formal presentation, she said it really got her thinking about questions she has.

"A lot of people came really prepared with things, some of my questions were answered," Ms. Bullied said. "But, I still don't know where I stand on it,"

Kris Hayes, from Courtice, who also came out for the first time on Wednesday, said he found much of the question and answer portion of the evening was misdirected.

"A lot of the questions these people are asking, I don't think they should be addressed to these people that are contracted out," Mr. Hayes said. "A lot of it should be directed to council. They should be here to tell us why they are allowing it to go on if people don't want it."

Newcomer Paul Reynolds of Courtice, said although he thinks it is good public meetings are being held, he thinks more people should be involved.

"I think people should take a little more interest in what is going on in their own backyard," Mr. Reynolds said.

But, the commissioner of works, Cliff Curtis said there were local people from the community there to gain a little more knowledge about what is happening. Earlier in the evening, Mr. Curtis said, quite a few residents had one-on-one meetings with consultants.

"People took the opportunity to express their concerns and got their answers in a much less threatening environment," Mr. Curtis said.

There were a lot of good questions asked according to Clarington Mayor Jim Abernethy, who was pleased to see new faces.

"The more people that get involved in this whole process I think at the end of the day we are building awareness of the problem that we have," Mayor Abernethy said. "An energy from waste facility, you have to look at the pros and cons of all of it but the fact is the clock has not stopped. In 2010 the border is closed and if we don't have a resolution to deal with our garbage by that time we are going to be in big trouble."

The next public meeting will be held on Oct. 9 at the Faith United Church in Courtice. The formal presentation begins at 7 p.m.