

Staff recommend no decision be made on EFW site at this time

December 5, 2007

Clarington councillors faced renewed calls on Monday, to declare this municipality an unwilling host for the proposed energy from waste (EFW) facility.

The request to declare Clarington an unwilling host for the joint York/Durham EFW came from a number of Clarington residents who continue to be outspoken in their opposition to the EFW.

The renewed call, follows comments made by Clarington staff and the peer review team hired by the Municipality to study the Regions' EFW documents. A report issued by Clarington staff Monday identify a number of flaws and significant concerns with the Site Selection Process conducted by the Region's team.

Last September, the Region's Project Team Consultants for the EFW project, identified a site in Courtice as being their preferred site for the proposed facility. Five of the initial six potential sites on the short list were Clarington sites. Two of the Clarington sites were later removed from the list. The only non-Clarington site on the short list, was a site in East Gwillimbury in the Region of York. The Region of York originally entered the EFW project with Durham as 50/50 partners. They have now cut back their share of partnership to 12 percent.

Using a rating system, the Region's Project Team Consultants identified a number of advantages and disadvantages for all the sites on the list. As the Clarington 01 site, had an overall rating of 'Advantage' in all five criteria groups, it was put forward as the preferred site. Clarington Staff and their Peer Review Team are concerned that there are flaws in the evaluation process used to identify a preferred site, according to the report issued Monday. Because the Regions Project Team Consultants relied on their professional judgment in selecting the preferred site, the process used to arrive at a preferred site is not traceable. A more appropriate mechanism would have been to assign a relative weight to each criteria group, according to Staff and their consultant team. "How the evaluation was carried out and the professional judgment applied is not clear," according to the Staff report.

Clarington Staff and their consultants met with the Region's Project Team on October 10, to review questions and seek clarification on a number of issues. The Region's Team did not provide answers to almost half of the questions asked by Clarington staff and their team of consultants. For 62 of the 127 issues raised, the Region's Project Team Consultants responded that the issue would be addressed at a later date.

"Based on the actions taken by the Region's Project Team to date, they appear not to be committed to carrying -out the environmental assessment studies in a transparent manner," according to Linda Gasser. Nor are they undertaking the environmental assessment at a level of detail that would assure us that Clarington's concerns about public health and safety around this project would be fully addressed, she said The best way to proceed the interests of Clarington and Durham residents is to say we will not be a willing host community, Gasser told Councillors on Monday. "Declaring Clarington an unwilling host for the York/Durham EFW would give the Region incentive to negotiate and at in better faith than they

have to date", she said. "I believe the compliant attitude shown by our regional representatives has emboldened Durham Region to the point where they may no longer consider Clarington issues seriously," Gasser stated, "because they might assume we would be a willing host community, at a political level anyway."

Mr. Barry Bracken, praised staff and their consultants for the excellent work that went into the report that was before councillors on Monday.

"I respectfully submit," Bracken stated, "time for procrastination is over. It's time to declare Clarington an unwilling host". "What is the Region going to offer you that could possibly offset the harm to health and welfare of your community?" he asked.

Wendy Bracken asked councillors to be protective of their residents. The Peer Reviews have revealed flaws in the site selection process which have resulted in unfair treatment of Clarington residents, she told councillors. "Be prudent," she told councillors. "Safe answers for handling our residual waste will not be found in an environmental assessment that has been flawed. Please stand up, you. have the strength of the peer reviews to support you, and declare Clarington an unwilling host for the proposed facility.

Councillors deferred acting on the staff recommendations contained in the report until next Monday. This followed Councillor Trim's motion to give staff time to consider comments made by the public at Monday's meeting.