

## **Dumping on Clarington again?**

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By Erin Hatfield

DURHAM -- An off-handed answer to an impromptu question revealed a Clarington landfill is included in a contingency plan for Durham's garbage.

At the Dec. 5 meeting of the Region's finance and administration committee, Regional Chairman Roger Anderson veered from the agenda to ask Cliff Curtis, commissioner of works, where staff is in developing a plan for Durham's waste should the Michigan boarder close early or if a planned incineration facility gets held up or doesn't happen at all.

"I know staff has been working on it and I wanted to make sure it hadn't slipped through the cracks," Mr. Anderson said. "If the energy-from-waste process doesn't work out we have no spot to put our garbage at the end of 2010. We need something in place to deal with it until we come up with a long-term, permanent solution."

Mr. Curtis said for the past six months talks have been under way with the operators of three landfill sites in Ontario.

"We don't want to landfill, but it has to have somewhere to go," he said. "The stuff doesn't stop coming; people still put out garbage."

The sites being considered are: the Hale site, just outside Newtonville in Clarington; the Toronto-owned Green Lane Landfill; and, a Waste Management Inc. facility in the Sarnia area.

The details of the contingency plan will be before the works committee on Jan. 9.

The mayor of the community at the heart of Durham's waste plans, Jim Abernethy, said he will never support landfilling in Clarington.

"I will not be supporting any motion to landfill in Clarington," he said. "I know that Regional Council had given direction to works months ago to investigate what landfill sites were available, but this is news to me."

Mayor Abernethy isn't the only one who says he hadn't heard of Hale being in the running. Jimmy Hale, the owner of the 500-acre landfill, officially called Clarington Waste Processing Centre Limited, said he hasn't spoken to anyone at the Region.

"Yes, I have a licenced landfill site. It is all current with the Ministry of the Environment," he said. "We could solve the Region of Durham's problem - no problem, but no one has approached me."

Not only does Mr. Hale say he would be willing to take Durham's garbage, but he also has the capacity to do so for 25 to 30 years.

"We have all the leachate system in. (We) spent over \$10 million putting it in and it's all monitored by the ministry," he said.

The Hale site does have an existing certificate of approval for landfill, according to Clarington planning director David Crome.

However, it's not as simple as negotiating a deal. Should Durham wish to deposit trash at the site, it would be considered "a significant update" and therefore, the "modern conditions" of a certificate of approval would apply, said Mr. Crome.

As well, an Ontario regulation is in place requiring a Provincial environmental assessment for any deposit of waste or increase in waste being dumped at the site.

Beyond that, the Court of Appeal recently upheld a decision by the Superior Court that the "legal non-conforming" status of the site has "ceased to exist," said Mr. Crome.

As a result, before any waste could be taken there, the municipality would have to approve a zoning bylaw and an environmental assessment would have to be completed. After that, a provisional certificate of approval would need to be granted by the Province.