

Consultant not surprised by peer reviewer's comments

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By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- The majority of questions raised by Clarington's peer reviewers on the siting process which led to a Courtice location being named preferred site for a proposed incinerator come as no surprise, says the Regions' consultant.

And he said it's just a matter of time before those questions are answered.

"Certainly, we are aware there are some holes but it wasn't the appropriate time to fill them" said Jim McKay, of Jacques Whitford, the consultants working for the regions of Durham and York as they work toward possibly building an incinerator which would deal with residual waste, left after recycling and other diversion has been completed.

The two regions had originally been 50-50 partners, but York has backed down on that, saying it is now in for only 12 per cent.

Clarington had hired a group of peer reviewers to look at the work done by the regions to date. All four consultants for Clarington came back with the same recommendation: take forward two sites until more information is known.

That's because there were a number of unknowns including background air quality, which could tip the scales on what is actually the best possible site, said the reviewers.

The Region has said taking two sites forward would be too costly and instead will do more site-specific studies on the preferred site, located near Courtice Road and Hwy. 401.

It's better to determine technology, complete the business plan and figure out the health impacts specific to the one site, said Mr. McKay. If "some fundamental flaw" were identified, "then we'd have to go back and look at what else we could do," whether that means measures aimed at mitigation of the problem or changing the preferred site, he said.

But "based on the work done to date, we don't anticipate that," said Mr. McKay. The consultants plan to move forward with the site-specific studies "and we believe that process will bring us to the conclusion that (the Courtice location) is the site."

Opponents to the proposed facility say the questions raised by the peer reviewer should be enough to make Clarington and the regions reconsider. The regions' consultant said it could be more of a communication than a technical problem.

"Maybe we need to identify what the holes are, and the time line to fill them," said Mr. McKay.