

Uxbridge hears incinerator concerns

Bowmanville residents make trek to council chambers

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By Jeff Hayward

UXBRIDGE -- Concerns about the impact of a proposed incinerator on Durham drew residents to Uxbridge from the eastern reaches of the region Monday evening.

Bowmanville residents Louis Bertrand and Kristin Robinson braved wet snow to speak to Uxbridge council about the proposed Energy from Waste incinerator, which a consultant has recommended be built near Courtice Road and Hwy. 401 in Courtice.

Also speaking on the incinerator the evening of Nov. 26 was Port Perry resident Barry Bracken and Uxbridge resident June Davies.

Ms. Robinson questioned Regional Councillor Howie Herrema, the lone regional representative at the meeting in the absence of Mayor Bob Shepherd due to flu, why Durham needs the facility. She suggested the incinerator can be avoided if recycling guidelines are changed. "Why can neighbouring regions recycle things we cannot" she asked.

Coun. Herrema defended the Region, acknowledging other regional municipalities are accepting more items than Durham in blue bins. However, the councillor claimed those items are not staying in those regions. "My understanding is some of these municipalities are paying to ship off (certain recycled items) to other countries," he said.

Mr. Bertrand lamented the financial and possible health impact of the facility, which is slated to cost \$250 million. "(It is) the most expensive way of dealing with garbage," he stated. "The capital and financing costs overwhelm any energy recovery. Residents could suffer a hefty tax increase." He noted potentially harmful emissions from the incinerators, which he referred to as "nano-particulates", are "much smaller than what present day filtration technology can remove."

Mr. Bracken added Halton Region backed away from a proposed incinerator because it could not be proven it was safe. "Halton applied the precautionary principle," said Mr. Bracken.

Coun. Herrema said many of the concerns brought forward during the meeting were addressed during a Region tour of European facilities earlier this year, which he was part of. He said following the tour some of the smokestacks on the incinerators overseas were 300 feet high, but "you couldn't see emissions."

But Coun. Herrema noted Nov. 26 the process to build a facility in Durham should be "transparent", adding he will invite Region officials to speak to Uxbridge council regarding progress on the project.

Ms. Davies made her second speech to Uxbridge council in a month regarding the incinerator, expressing similar concerns as her counterparts Monday evening.

She previously urged Uxbridge Mayor Bob Shepherd to take a stand against the proposal, but Mayor Shepherd responded with, "I honestly believe we're making the right decision at the right time." The mayor said the alternative is a landfill.

But the group speaking Nov. 26 said aggressive waste diversion is needed, with any excess going to a 'stabilized' landfill. Mr. Bracken said a stabilized landfill (he said there is one in Nova Scotia, the only facility in North America) provides "mechanical and biological treatment of waste prior to landfilling" among other benefits.