

Courtice to move forward as preferred incineration site

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By Jennifer Stone

NEWMARKET -- Despite protests to the contrary from a number of Durham citizens, Courtice is the best place to build an incinerator, says a joint Durham York committee.

Durham council will now be asked to approve that recommendation, as will council in York Region.

But, the site selection process, done by the Regions' consultants was flawed, said delegations to council, many of whom also maintained incineration is not the way to go.

The report which led to the Courtice site being named the preferred location was a "severely flawed report that does not stand up to any kind of scrutiny," said Newcastle resident Wendy Bracken, one of a slew of Durham residents who made the trek from Durham to Newmarket for the Tuesday meeting. About 10 delegates spoke out against the plan.

Specifically, said Ms. Bracken, there are issues in terms of how air quality was judged.

"The differences between the Courtice and East Gwillimbury airsheds are extreme," she said.

But those considerations will be made later in the process, when more site specific studies are done, the committee heard. Those studies can't be completed until both site and technology have been determined.

Consultants hired by Durham and York recommended several months ago the Durham-owned lands near Hwy. 401 and Courtice Road as the best site for the proposed facility.

The recommendation will go to both regions' councils for approval. If approved the recommendation will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment as part of the environmental assessment that is currently underway.

The process is currently underway to select the type of technology, as well as the vendor, to be used, should the incinerator be built. A short list of vendors was also approved by the committee Tuesday and will now be forwarded to the two councils.

Final approval of the project is up to the Province.

The proposed incinerator would handle waste left after diversion. Originally, Durham and York were 50-50 partners on the proposed project but last year, York backed down on the equal partnership, saying it will instead only be in for 12 per cent, since it had found another way to deal with its waste.

When the short list of recommended sites was released, four out of five were in Clarington. The fifth was in East Gwillimbury, which has since stated it would not be a willing host to such a facility.

That's something a number of people have asked Clarington to do as well. Some members of the general public, and more than 40 physicians from the area, have also signed a petition asking the Municipality to state its unwillingness to host.

A peer review conducted by consultants hired by the Municipality of Clarington led to the recommendation that two geographically diverse sites be carried forward until technology was determined and site-specific health studies had been completed. Clarington council, in a 4-3 split, voted down that recommendation.