

Where is our voice at Region?

Our Mayor would have a hard time convincing anyone that this council is not divided, after Monday evening's council meeting.

Mayor Jim Abernethy was raked over the coals Monday night by Local Councillors Gord Robinson and Adrian Foster for not representing Clarington Council's view at the Regional level of government.

Clarington Council has over the past few months passed several resolutions pertaining to the Region's proposed EFW facility. Council has adopted motions requesting the Region to commit to protecting the health of Clarington residents by using the best available technology, to continue pursuing aggressive diversion targets, and most recently, to delay making a decision on final site selection. ,

However, none of Clarington's resolutions ever get adopted by Regional Council because none of Clarington's Regional Councillors bother to seek Regional support for Clarington's position.

That is why we had a situation last week when a local councillor, Adrian Foster, felt compelled to register as a delegate at last Wednesday's Regional Council meeting, to bring forward Clarington's position. Foster said he had to address Regional Council because he felt Clarington Council's views were not being heard at the Region.

At Wednesday's Regional Council meeting, Oshawa Councillor Brian Nicholson introduced a motion requesting the Region commit to using the best available technology for the proposed EFW. A similar resolution from Clarington was included in the correspondence section of that meeting's agenda, and it was 'received for information' -- which means, 'do nothing'. Nicholson's motion received unanimous support from Regional Council. Clarington's Local Councillors might do well to look to Oshawa's Councillor Nicholson in the future, to champion Clarington's position.

What does it say about our Council when a Local Councillor has to go to the upper tier level of -government to speak up for our Municipality, while our three elected Regional representatives say nothing?

Clarington's three Regional Councillors voted on Wednesday to accept the Clarington 01 site as the preferred site for the proposed EFW facility. Abernethy and Novak spoke to the issue and explained why they were voting in favour of the motion. Councillor Trim was not heard from at all during the 12-hour meeting other than to vote.

When Clarington Council adopted the recommendation from their staff to request the Region delay site selection for the EFW facility, that is the position our Regional Councillors should have supported at the Region. Our local councillors have long felt they are being shut out of

this EFW process. Small wonder. Why bother even making resolutions at the local level, if they are not going to be supported at the Regional level. -

Declaring Clarington an unwilling host community for the proposed EFW facility, as Clarington council did at Monday night's Council meeting, was a reaction to the frustration Local Councillors are feeling with the process. If local councillors felt they were involved in the Region's EFW' process, the); might not have felt the need to declare Clarington an 'unwilling host'.

The question now is, who will present this resolution to the Regional government?

. Regional Chair Anderson has already stated that the handling of waste is a Regional responsibility, and the Region will make the final decisions on garbage issues, so the 'unwilling host' status will probably not alter the process currently underway.

Mayor Abernethy claims he cannot decide if he is in favour of the EFW until he knows whether it is safe or not. He argues that we won't be able to answer the question of safety, until the environmental assessment (EA) that the Region is currently involved in for the EFW project, is completed.

The issue then will be, whose definition of 'safe' will we accept? Clarington staff and their peer review team .have identified several flaws with the findings of the Region's EA team to date, which also seems to fall on deaf ears at the Regional level.

It's time our Regional Councillors did the job they were elected to do: represent their constituents, at all levels of government.