

Incineration meeting to be continued ...

Council tests new procedures, winds up carrying over meeting to another day

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By: By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- This week's Clarington council meeting will now play out like a two-part miniseries.

Under a new procedural bylaw that kicked in Jan. 1, council meetings, which traditionally start at 7 p.m., must end by 11 p.m., barring a two-thirds majority of councillors saying they should carry on beyond that hour.

Unable to get the majority to allow the meeting to go on Monday night, council will reconvene Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Monday's jam-packed agenda included a public hearing that took up the first hour of the meeting.

Council then strayed from the agenda, allowing a few of the 27 registered delegations to speak.

The meeting was also to include several presentations by guests, invited by Mayor Jim Abernethy, to speak about energy from waste, or incineration, but only one of the four presentations took place. The vote to end the meeting took place before the presenter, Swedish Embassy First Secretary Magnus Schonning, was formally excused from the podium.

Mr. Schonning does not intend to return to complete his delegation.

The planned presentations had raised the ire of those opposed to the proposed incinerator, and led to a protest outside town hall before the council meeting began.

"If this is the mayor's idea of a public information session, then he is sorely mistaken," Wendy Bracken, a Newcastle resident who has been vocal in her opposition to incineration, said in a news release.

That many who had asked to speak were not heard Monday was a problem, she added.

Having meetings carry over also presents some problems for councillors who work outside their council responsibilities, said Ward 1's Adrian Foster.

"If we start having two council meetings a week ... boy," he said. "It gets really awkward for anybody who's not doing this full time."