

## **Local businesses still concerned after big stink at Miller**

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By Jennifer Stone

COURTICE -- When Fred Biesenthal's wife and father-in-law applied to build the facility that now houses PI Tools, Mr. Biesenthal's business, they were required to stringently adhere to rules on issues like landscaping and architecture.

That's because the area was to be considered "prestige industrial," Mr. Biesenthal said.

"Then the Municipality takes the approach that this really isn't prestige industrial," he said. "This is garbage corners."

Nearby the Progress Drive business is the Miller Composting facility, which has, in recent weeks, attracted some negative attention due to smells emanating from the plant.

Across Hwy. 401 from the area is the Region's new Water Pollution Control Plant and the site for the Region's proposed incinerator.

"You question why they would put something that's going to smell in an area like this," said Arthur Capon, owner of the AWC Company. "I don't know if that's the plan, that it's the garbage area?"

Matters have improved since early March, when a foul smell from the composting plant raised neighbour's concerns.

"When wind conditions get to the point where something is happening, they (Miller) take measures to stop it immediately," Mr. Biesenthal said. "There are, from time to time, odours."

But since the problem happened in early March, people in the area have become "aware of the phone number (to call) and the procedure to follow," so that Miller can be made aware of the problem and take measures to stop it right away, Mr. Biesenthal said.

The PI Tools owner had raised concerns with Clarington council before the Miller facility was even approved.

"We have no odour problems now," he said in 2005. "We'd like it to stay that way. We don't want to be the odour police."

But now, the concerns are coming to fruition.

"Smell is a very difficult thing, because everybody is different," in terms of what they're sensitive to, Mr. Biesenthal said last week. "On the morning that it happened, I came in around 6 a.m. and wasn't aware of an odour. When others came in around 9 a.m., they were gasping."

Al Ramsay, Miller Waste's manager of Ontario composting operations, did not return calls for comment. But earlier this month, he said his company was addressing the odour issue.

"We can't shut down," he said then. "But you can slow down the scope of your operations so you don't have too much activity until we have a chance to investigate the source of the odour. The driving force there for us is that we must remain good neighbours to all our neighbours, whether residential or business, just as a standard protocol."

Mr. Biesenthal is a member of a community liaison committee, put together as a condition of Miller's approval. That sort of working together, at this point, is key, he said.

"My feeling is the case was made (to council, not to allow the facility to be built) and the case went against us," he said. "They're here, they're our neighbours, and we have to make it work."