

EFW - The business case debate

May 23, 2008

The Look

The \$9 million in the building costs allotted for enhanced architectural features came under fire.

"If you really want it looking good, why don't you put it in a hole and bury it so we don't see it all," asked Oshawa Coun. Brian Nicholson.

But others, including Regional chairman Roger Anderson and works commissioner Cliff Curtis, argued a generic building wouldn't do.

"I don't think anyone wants to see a Wal-Mart-style building go in there," said Mr. Curtis.

The Viewing Gallery

The \$1 million viewing gallery was also questioned.

"These viewing galleries often serve the vendor more than the public," said Linda Gasser, a member of the public speaking against the business case.

The Region said it would be similar to what nuclear power plants do to educate the public.

"They criticize us for hiding things, they criticize us for showing things, some people better get on the right side and figure out what they want," said Mr. Anderson.

The Math

Coun. Nicholson believes the costs associated with landfill, especially the projection of an annual five per cent increase in the price of fuel, have been inflated. He thinks current prices are driven by speculation.

But others say the business case is cautious.

"It really is a conservative, conservative business case, probably the most conservative we've ever done," said Deloitte analyst Remo Bucci.

Health

Some took issue with the business case stating energy-from-waste (EFW) is safe and healthy.

"By no means is an accounting firm an expert on the environment or human health," said Oshawa Coun. April Cullen.

But others, including Oshawa Coun. Joe Kolodzie, pointed to the existence of 420 energy-from-waste facilities in Europe as evidence that they're safe.

"If it's OK for them, why wouldn't it be OK for us," he asked.