

A burning issue for Scugog

Councillors listen to pair of deputations opposed to Durham's incinerator plan

Thu Jun 26, 2008

By Chris Hall

 **"We only have one planet, folks." Barry Bracken**

SCUGOG -- Discussions around the incinerator proposed for Durham Region warmed up in the Scugog council chambers on Monday when a Port Perry man and his daughter appeared before councillors to voice their opposition towards the contentious project.

Already appearing before Regional councillors several times over the past year, Barry Bracken brought his argument against an energy-from-waste facility into the municipal council chambers on June 23, stressing over and over again there are better solutions for Scugog's, and Durham's, trash.

Such a facility, he said, is "neither safe nor sensible" and stressed he believes an incinerator is bad for residents' health and the environment, not a sustainable solution, not economical and does not eliminate the need for a landfill.

Mr. Bracken also stated an incinerator is not an economical or sensible source of power.

Instead, he explained, that type of facility would need to burn "limited, precious resources" and consume more energy to incinerate items than it would create.

"We only have one planet, folks," Mr. Bracken told councillors.

He also called the facility's business case "very seriously flawed" and questioned where hazardous fly-ash would be stored and how the Region would deal with tonnes of bottom-ash.

Scugog's elected officials, however, deflected the questions back at Mr. Bracken when they asked him what he intends to do in 2010 when Michigan closes its doors to Ontario's trash.

"What are you going to do when a garbage truck doesn't come around and pick-up your garbage," asked Ward 3 Councillor Lynn Philip Hodgson.

"There'll be no incinerator yet by 2010, it'll go to a landfill," replied Mr. Bracken.

He then pressed his argument further, stressing there is still time to look at other options.

"We're out of time to make that decision because people don't want a landfill in their backyard," shot back Coun. Hodgson.

Later in the discussion, Ward 2 Councillor Bobbie Drew quizzed Mr. Bracken on where he'd like to see a landfill placed in Scugog Township.

"That's beyond my experience, you need an engineer to select properties," said Mr. Bracken, adding he'd choose a landfill over an incinerator "any day."

Added Ward 4 Councillor Donovan Smith: "Anything we do, landfill or incinerator, the long-term effects are not really known."

Wrapping up his presentation, Mr. Bracken stressed he's "not an advocate for landfills, I don't like them anymore than anyone else." Instead, he said he'd push for a zero-waste strategy that's "no longer pie in the sky."

Scugog and the rest of the region, Mr. Bracken continued, should start aggressively diverting its waste and putting increased pressure on the producers of consumer goods to cut down on their packaging and provide increased funds for recycling efforts.

"We should start working towards zero-waste, we may never get there but we'll get much closer than we are now," he said.

Following Mr. Bracken's presentation, his daughter Wendy spoke briefly to councillors where she detailed a variety of health concerns.