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Councillors take another look at host agreement

Clarington councillors have asked the municipal solicitor for a report regarding the host community agreement (HCA) on the proposed Durham/ York incinerator to be sited in Courtice.

Last February, the majority of council members had voted in favour of a similar report from the municipal solicitor. However, a week later, Councillor Gord Robinson had changed his position, claiming he no longer had concerns with the agreement and joined with Clarington's two Regional Councillors and the Mayor, in voting down the request for a report from the solicitor.

The HCA is the package of incentives the Region agreed to provide Clarington in exchange for hosting the incinerator project. Among the incentives included in the HCA are some road works around the incinerator site and beginning the environmental assessment process for servicing industrial lands at the east end of Bowmanville.

At Monday's General Purpose and Administration Committee Meeting, Councillor Joe Neal introduced a motion recommending that the municipality commence an application in the Superior Court of Justice to determine if the HCA is binding on the Municipality, as the majority of Clarington residents are opposed to the building of the incinerator facility in Clarington. His motion also requested a report from the municipal solicitor as to whether it is within the power of the municipality to pass a clean-air by-law more restrictive than what was approved by the Ministry of Environment.

Last term, Councillor Foster attempted to pass a motion requesting the municipality look into creating a clean-air by-law, but he was unsuccessful.

Neal was prepared to have Councillor Corinna Traill second his motion, but she left the meeting (her first General Purpose and Administration Committee meeting) at 10:40 a.m., before Neal could present his motion. As no other councillor stepped up to second Neal's motion, it was lost.

Councillor Willie Woo presented a motion which he said was "more broad in nature," than Neal's unsuccessful motion.

Woo's motion requested that staff be directed to prepare a report for the January 10th meeting of council, that analyses all implications of the HCA.

"A number of us around this table told folks on the election trail that we were concerned with this, that we wanted to look at the whole kit and caboodle," Mayor Foster said in response to Woo's motion. However, he added, "A number of decisions made over the past couple of weeks have shut the door."

Woo's motion, which was seconded by Councillor Ron Hooper, was approved with only Councillor Mary Novak contributing a dissenting vote.