

From: Kahn, Sandy [mailto:SKahn@markham.ca] **On Behalf Of** Heath, Jack
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2006 2:05 PM
To: Fisch, Bill; Campbell, Andrew; Kelly, Denis; Macgregor, Bruce
Subject: FW: Incineration Proposal

I sent this to Regional Councillors and will bring 30 copies for tomorrow's meeting.

-----Original Message-----

From: Heath, Jack
Sent: June 21, 2006 1:53 PM
To: 'Sharon &/or Jim Bradley'
Cc: Vito Spatafora
Subject: Incineration Proposal

To Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment. Thank you for your comments. Well presented.

OPTION 2(a) and 2(b). I support keeping incineration option 2(a) and 2(b) on the table.

LANDFILL IS UNACCEPTABLE. Our first decision is whether we should continue sending huge quantities of waste to landfill. This is environmentally unacceptable to me. Sending York's residential waste to someone else's jurisdiction, Michigan, is also politically and economically crazy. Because of the border, we have no long-term assurance and a breakdown could cripple our economy. But a landfill in Ontario is no better. Even if we wanted to, we couldn't site a dump in York Region anyway! Especially on the moraine! When Vaughan's Keele Valley closed a few years ago, residents even held a community party.

FIRST, SET HIGH DIVERSION TARGETS. The key to success is ensuring we set high targets for diversion, achieving them, and sustaining those levels after the facility opens. Green bins, blue boxes, yard waste collection, new types of diversion, pick-up timetables, clear bags, etc. are the tools. A York Waste Diversion Strategy is under discussion already. I set it in motion in the 2006 budget. The strategy is bearing fruit as the Region and the 9 municipalities will soon commit themselves to raising diversion targets dramatically. It needs to be more aggressive but the things you talk about are being addressed. Will you be attending the Richmond Hill meeting when the strategy goes to the public?

WHY SHOULD OPTION 2(b) REMAIN on the TABLE? Option 2(b) is my favourite because it includes post collection diversion and should add several more diversion points. Markham staff has said we can reach 85% diversion. At least 75% is do-able with hard work. Markham is presently at 68%. This year we are concentrating on apartments, special events and our own buildings as well as improved education. Markham isn't special. Just like the rest of the Region, the residents wanted better programmes. We were the first to have green bins but within a few years everyone will have them. That is what the Diversion Strategy is all about: how to reach maximum diversion and how to pay for it. Option 2(a) is the more tried-and-true incineration system and is working well across northern Europe. It may be the cheaper one but we won't know until we get back the tender results in a year or so. Option 2(b) may produce more valuable energy which could impact the financial equation plus there is less to burn. I look on 2(b) as a Municipal Recycling Facility added on the front end of an energy from waste plant. How could that not work? Both options could have a District Energy component which is often found at a European plant. They need customers for heating and cooling in the nearby vicinity but, since we haven't done any siting work as yet, we don't know what could be nearby!

THREE SPECIAL INITIATIVES. At the York Solid Waste Committee meeting, I introduced a resolution to ask staff to work on three items over the summer:

1. Communications. Commence a much improved public consultation and communications programme in the late summer and fall.

2. A contract with the public. Develop a process leading to a Memorandum of Community Agreement to set standards and criteria for both the community and the two Regions as to what would be acceptable to our residents if the decision is to go ahead. This could start through the EA Joint Committee in September with community and interest group input on such matters as: diversion targets and how to maintain them, limits on emissions at least as good as The Netherlands where dioxin emissions are negligible compared to 20 years ago, the highest safeguards of environmental leadership on water, land and air, the basic principles for a host community agreement, and many other items. Community agreements have worked well in Europe and have produced environmentally sensitive systems and general acceptance of the plants among the public and environmental groups. Stay tuned for developments.

3. Letter to Queen's Park and Ottawa. Draw up a resolution to go to the provincial and federal governments requesting improvements in legislation to ensure that the project has a fair chance of success. The resolution could go into extended producer responsibility, potential taxes on landfill, etc. It would come back to our committee and then Council in September for final review. Municipal government in Canada is limited in what it can do with regard to waste management. A three pronged attack is the answer. Your input would be appreciated.

IS 21ST CENTURY INCINERATION TERRIBLE? Incineration is no longer the major polluter of 20 years ago when its reputation as an emission nightmare was made. Energy from waste can also make a contribution to Ontario's energy shortages, although it would be nowhere near the whole answer. Can we do better here in Canada than in The Netherlands? I think so. Can we drive up diversion first? I think so. But that will be up to you and other residents to ensure we stick to our promises. In Holland they have a hierarchy of waste diversion which has, as its highest objective, producing less. It goes down through re-using, recycling, waste to energy, and at the bottom, landfill. We can learn from the Dutch!

WAS THERE ENOUGH TIME FOR INPUT? You feel there wasn't enough time for input. But relatively speaking this Environmental Assessment has just begun. They take so long. Thursday is a decision just to take landfill off the table. We are a long way from actually making a final decision to go ahead or not. On the EA, that will be sometime late next year at the earliest. To build it, a few years after that and only if the MOE gives approval! You are right though - more public input is needed. See my recommendation above. We received dozens of presentations and heard that people want: additional diversion, improved incineration systems a la Europe, extended producer responsibility, more action by government at all levels, guarantees on low emissions, attention to concerns about environmental damage, and reduction of greenhouse gases. We did an Ipsos-Reid survey which showed almost 4 out of 5 residents feel we cannot continue exporting our waste and the same number feel we should build an incinerator after we have done our best at recycling and composting.

EUROPEAN POLITICIANS. Politicians in Europe told me that, because their local facility reaches for the highest environmental standards and maintains that level, it is not a political issue. I asked the management in Amsterdam whether Greenpeace had any problems. "Not at all, but Greenpeace won't put that in writing." The issue of the number of trucks does come up, but they suggested that proper siting and proximity to main highways is the solution.

WEB SITES TO LOOK AT. There are many websites on incineration - some in favour and some opposed. I visited the four below and recommend you check the websites out. I have lots of written material too.

Amsterdam: www.afvalenergiebedrijf.nl

Alkmaar, The Netherlands: www.hvcgroep.nl

Malmo, Sweden: www.sysav.se (but I can't seem to find the English button)

The Netherlands Ministry of ... The Environment: www.vrom.nl

CONCLUSION. This is a long process. In the future we will be discussing costs, siting, environmental safeguards, and more. If the recommendation passes tomorrow, I trust you will weigh in again to ensure we keep the environment as the number one component of the project.

Regional Councillor Jack Heath

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