

Warden Guergis and fellow Councillors, I stand to move for a one-year moratorium on Site 41.

There are many reasons, but first at issue here is the perceived lack of responsiveness by the County:

- As elected officials, responsiveness to citizens is one of our primary responsibilities.
- We have a duty to inform, listen and respond.
- We've failed miserably with respect to Site 41.

The development of this new landfill has been transformed from what might be seen as a local issue into something much bigger through a lack of responsiveness by the County:

- The County appears to underrate the knowledge of those against Site 41 and their grasp of the issues. I've spoken with many residents who think they have a very good understanding of the facts, but they still have questions. To take just one example, they don't understand why the ModFlow data hasn't been released. They feel that if the science is sound it should be evident to independent experts asked to participate in a peer-review.
- Many of our constituents view the County as reactive rather than proactive, defensive rather than collaborative.
- They see summarized, sanitized communications from the County painting the public as too naïve to understand the science.
- The Community Monitoring Committee, established as a vehicle for information exchange between the County and the public, has been viewed as dysfunctional.
- The County has made no attempt to fix problems with the CMC. Instead, they've been critical and disparaging of participants, frequently trying to discredit their credentials, their convictions and their character.
- People feel they've been treated like fools, fed with platitudes rather

than facts by an arrogant and paternalistic bureaucracy, and kept in the dark until they were forced to be confrontational.

In the course of proceeding with business as usual, we find ourselves out of touch with a changing landscape:

- Little allowance seems to have been made for the major shift that's taken place in public concern for the environment.
- We ourselves helped kick start this shift with our environmental programs. We can hardly blame our citizens if they find our actions at odds with our words.

It really goes without saying that such a divide from those who elected us is at odds with democracy and will have major negative impacts now and in the future. It might possibly be justified if we were on the verge of a garbage disposal crisis. But no one believes that we are. Whether it's ten years as claimed by the County or more than twenty years as claimed by the opposition, people are asking a very logical question, "What's the rush? Why won't you listen and respond to our concerns?"

We have to stop ignoring opposition to the landfill. Continuing to bull ahead with construction is not a wise or appropriate response to the huge outpouring of concern, mass opposition and anger we're witnessing. What's at stake?

- On one side, a completed dump site taking in garbage.
- On the other side, a very angry electorate, disillusioned with the political process and the way their concerns have been ignored. This isn't just a group of raving activists – it's the general population, the taxpayers, of Simcoe County.

A moratorium is the only way to calm the anger that's been stirred up by some of the tactics that have been employed by the County.

- Residents are furious at what they see as bending of procedures and changing of rules to inconvenience and hamper any opposition to County's plan to finish the landfill.

- As one result, upstanding citizens have been criminalized and seniors slapped with court charges.

The situation has deteriorated from bad to worse. I, for one, don't want to see what happens next if a "time-out" isn't called.

The \$10 million which has already been spent on the landfill is not a valid argument for ignoring the wide-spread opposition:

- It's a sunk cost. Decisions on the future must be made on the expected costs and benefits of the future.
- If the sunk cost turns out to have been wasted, the responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the County staff and council who authorized the expenditures without ensuring that the science not only *is* sound, but is **seen to be** sound. Democracy can't flourish without broad-based community buy-in and support.

What do people expect to happen during the moratorium?

- First and foremost, they expect clear answers to their questions.
- They expect us to freely share information – all of the information, not just some of the information - which led to our decision on Site 41. Whether or not we think the information is too technical, or requires explanation or interpretation, we must be willing to expose it to the ultimate court of public opinion.
- They expect us to freely share information on alternatives considered. For example, Durham council voted in June to proceed with plans for a waste-to-energy incinerator after many fact-finding trips around Europe, including Sweden. Has collaboration with Durham been explored?
- They expect us to involve them in the process, to democratize the process. Perhaps some of our knowledgeable citizens should be involved with finding an alternative approach to handling the garbage destined for Site 41.
- They expect an independent, expert review of the science.

- They expect us to develop a County Waste Management Plan including principles of “Towards Zero Waste”.

The reality is that we need more collaboration with the public for garbage disposal solutions. And that starts by giving our citizens and their concern for the environment the respect they deserve.

If the science is so compelling, why are so many intelligent people still asking for answers? If the science is so compelling, why are we afraid to share those answers with our citizens?

- Where are the public meetings to explain our decision?
- Why wasn't the MOE response to the CMC Chair's questions and the report from the tri-party meeting publicly released last spring?
- Where are the press releases, the documentation, the peer reviews, the expert testimony, the detailed, clear and concise answers to questions which so many intelligent people have been asking?
- Where is the over-arching waste management plan which was promised by the County over 2 years ago?

The half-million dollar cost of a moratorium must be weighed against the potentially catastrophic costs of a mistake. Our taxpayers are demanding insurance that our environment will be protected for this and future generations. If the cost of this insurance is a moratorium, then we owe it to our taxpayers to make the investment in time, money and effort. Our duty of responsiveness is clearly our number one priority.

I urge you to join me in voting for a one-year moratorium on construction of Site 41 to stop the downward spiral and regain some of the public trust and confidence that has been lost during the last year.

To that end, I hereby make motion as follows:

**WHEREAS** the Council of the Township of Tiny and numerous other prominent local, regional and national organizations and individuals have expressed opposition to the development of the landfill site known as Site 41; and,

**WHEREAS** the Council of the Township of Tiny and numerous other prominent local, regional and national organizations and individuals have expressed their extreme concerns about the process leading to the approval of Site 41 as well as the future safety of this site; and,

**WHEREAS** the Council of the Township of Tiny is still concerned regarding outstanding environmental issues on the protection and conservation of groundwater at this site in respect of the Township's "Environment First" Official Plan; and,

**WHEREAS** a pending order by the Information and Privacy Commissioner for Ontario remains outstanding;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Simcoe County immediately halt construction and any further development of waste facilities at Site 41 for a period of at least one year so that:

- i) The public release, and independent review, of all pertinent Information concerning the environmental impacts of operating a waste facility at Site 41 can occur;
- ii) Meaningful consultations take place with local residents and cottagers, First Nations groups and other organizations that have raised concerns about the environmental impacts of establishing a waste facility at Site 41; and that
- iii) The suitability of Site 41 for waste management use be assessed in light of the source water protection planning mandated by the Clean Water Act.