

Changing faces, changing ideas

Ironies of landfilling issue emerge at region

Three years ago this week, The Herald ran a front page story headlined "Site A cut, drilling ok'd on F only". For those not used to the jargon of the times, that story explained how Site "A", the existing landfill site in Burlington, had been eliminated by Halton regional council as a potential location for the proposed major landfill site that would one day serve all of Halton.

Thus, three years ago, council embraced Site "F", 246 acres of gently rolling farmland in rural Milton - as the most suitable location for the Big Dump. Already discussed and debated at the region for more than a year, Site "F" was selected from among 11 possible sites as the focal point for Halton's solid waste management efforts.

There is much irony in this historical anecdote, stemming primarily from the fact that Site "A" reappeared in the headlines only last week in a story which told of renewed interest in the Burlington dump and property adjacent.

EXPANSION DISCUSSED
Discussion about the expansion and/or redevelopment of Site "A" has been prompted by a private firm's proposal to bury the region's garbage in its shale quarry on the site, where mining operations are now underway.

For observers of the continuing solid waste issue in Halton, those discussions between the firm, National Sewer Pipe Ltd., and the region's solid waste management committee (SWMC) represent the culmination of Site "A's" re-emergence as a worthy candidate in the landfilling sweepstakes.

Members of the media, and to a lesser extent several regional councillors, have seized upon the discussions of

Staff Comment

By Paul Dorsey

Site "A", perhaps somewhat prematurely, as a sign that Site "F" is now "down the drain".

Adding to the irony of the situation are the alternating roles played by certain members of council both then, still three years away from the closure of Halton Hills' existing landfill site, and now, on the verge of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to haul garbage from the north to dumps in the south.

PERSUADED COUNCIL
Three years ago, the regional public works committee, chaired by one Jack Raftis of Burlington, persuaded council to abandon its intention to make exploratory tests at three possible dump sites. The major reason cited for doing so was financial: an estimated drilling cost of \$10,500 per site. Drilling was approved for Site "F" only.

Casting votes of non-confidence in the works committee on that occasion were two Oakville councillors, Carl Erikson and Terry Mannell, who criticized Coun. Raftis for failing to adequately consult both council itself and the Tremaine-Britannia Citizens Group (TBCG), the main members of which would be affected most by a landfill site at Site "F".

Today, Jack Raftis is chairman of regional council, rather than simply its works committee, and of the two rivals he referred to then as "the Bobsey twins", one has all but vanished from municipal politics.

Through some twist of fate, however, Terry Mannell has become chairman of the SWMC, a position which draws him into confrontations with Mr Raftis on surprisingly few occasions.

To the credit of Coun. Mannell and the members of the SWMC (Coun Mike Armstrong is Halton Hills' representative), the committee, though only several months old, has on its plate a veritable banquet of trash-inspired issues from the comprehensive, solid waste management system prepared for \$15,000 by outside consultants to an Acton resident's simple but worthwhile suggestion about how municipal composting could do wonders for Halton.

Somewhere in between its appetizer and dessert, to pursue a somewhat appropriate metaphor, the SWMC is considering National Sewer Pipe's contention that some 3 million tons of garbage could be dumped in the Site "A" quarry during the coming decade. Tests are still being

run by the firm.

MUCH ADU
Predictably, opponents of Site "F" - namely the town of Milton and the TBCG - made much ado about the comparative validity of Site "A" during the five-month Ontario Municipal Board hearing which ended in June with a decision in the region's favor. Despite the claim of several experts called in by the opponents that the region's consultants made inadequate tests and conclusions about Site "A", the Board ruled that Halton could proceed with its plans for the rural Milton dump.

That ruling is, of course, the subject of continuing appeals and related actions which threaten to leave Site "F" in the hands of the farmers for years to come, if not grant it to them permanently.

In the meantime, proposals like National's and controversies over other aspects of solid waste management in Halton will continue to erode the region's case for Site "F", and the region's three-year old decision to abandon Site "A" will come increasingly under suspicion.

And until the landfilling issue is somehow finally resolved, the political ironies of the situation will no doubt multiply amid the piles of garbage until there is not enough land in all of Halton in which to bury our decaying memories and waste-choked past.

Trailer stolen

A custom-built flat bed trailer was stolen from a residence on Rexway Drive last week. The trailer was valued at \$200. A set of hockey goal-keeper's pads, value unknown, were stolen from a car parked on River Drive.

A utility trailer valued at \$400 was stolen from a residence on the 8th Concession on the weekend.

Thieves stole two Pioneer speakers from a car parked on Gower Road.

A gas electric generator and a Rockwell 2 1/2-inch drum were stolen from Watson Auto Wreckers last week.

A portable radio, a gear shift knob and a car lighter were stolen from a car parked on Churchill Road in Acton. Two Toronto Sun newspaper boxes were stolen last week, one from the corner of Maple Ave. and Charles Street, and the other from the corner of Guelph Street and Hall Road.

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