

POWER meeting informed of dump dangers

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

No amount of insurance could compensate Halton Hills residents if a proposed landfill site on the Niagara Escarpment contaminated the area's water supply, said Halton Regional Chairman, Peter Pomeroy to approximately 60 citizens who gathered at Holy Cross Church Hall Thursday night to hear why local, regional government and local environment group Protect Our Water, Environmental Resources (POWER) is opposing a Reclamations Systems Inc. (RSI) application to build a landfill site in the Acton quarry.

"If a landfill was built, RSI would have to make provisions in case somebody's well became contaminated but it would be impossible for anyone to react quick enough if the water goes bad," said Mr. Pomeroy in response to people's concerns about water contamination.

"That landfill site shouldn't be built there," he said. "I really doubt RSI will get approval." RSI plans to operate a landfill in the Acton quarry, owned by United Aggregates, when the quarry is exhausted. Their application is now being reviewed by the Ministry of the Environment.

To make sure the application is denied approval is the reason POWER held the meeting.

"Tonight, we want to educate people about the possible threat to our water that could be caused by the proposed Acton Quarry landfill," said POWER president,

Barbara Halsall in her opening comments to those in attendance.

Because no one has ever guaranteed a landfill site won't leach she asked why should Halton Hills residents take the risk that a dump wouldn't leach into the aquifer (a geological formation of water-bearing porous rocks that supplies water for springs and wells) located directly beneath the Acton quarry.

"If leachate gets into our water supply, we cannot reverse it," said POWER member, Doug Young.

To personalize the issue of water contamination, POWER invited two citizens from St. Catharines to talk about the problems their community experienced after a landfill site began leaching.

St. Catharines resident, Dee Dickman, narrated the plight of one woman who started getting rashes, then headaches and was finally forced to vacate her home for weeks at a time after leachate began spraying out of her bathroom toilet, damaging the bathroom and creating a horrific stench.

"You can't imagine how this woman suffered," said Mrs. Dickman, who recalled how the elderly woman had to watch again and again as workers tore up her lawn and cultivated flower beds in a vain attempt to correct the problem.

Her husband, Mike Dickman, said town consultants had assured citizens when the landfill

was built 15 years ago, that the leachates would be held in by a cocoon of clay surrounding the site.

"They were wrong," he said. "Leachate does eventually get through clay and then, it can go anywhere."

The audience also heard from Alan Marshall, leader of the APT Environment Group in Elmira. From his own experience with the water contamination problem in Elmira, he advised citizens to compile their own data and never blindly accept government conclusions.

Unlike the situation in Elmira, where, according to Mr. Marshall, MOE officials took a lax approach to correcting the problem, POWER's fight against the landfill application is supported by local government.

"We're against the landfill," Town of Halton Hills Mayor, Russ Miller, clearly stated. "Unfortunately, we don't have the authority to reject their (RSI) proposal for the landfill."

He said Halton Hills needs a loud voice to make sure their opposition is heard at Queen's Park where the application is now be-

ing reviewed by civil servants in the Ministry of the Environment.

"We need the whole town, 35,000 people to come out and voice their disapproval," he said.

While he urged people to speak out, POWER members were distributing flyers which people could fill out and send to Ruth Grier, the Minister of the Environment, indicating their opposition to the application.

"We cannot continue to let the government to fix everything," said Mr. Young. "It's up to us to let the government know what we want and don't want."



Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER) president, Barbara Halsall, urged citizens to voice their disapproval of an application for a landfill site in the Acton Quarry at a POWER meeting held Thursday night at Holy Cross Church Hall. Also at the meeting to comment and answer

questions were (seated, left to right) Oakville MOE rep Chuck Micheall, Halton-Peel MOE rep Bob Adcock, Environmental Health representative Neil Pattullo, Halton Region Chairman Peter Pomeroy and (not shown) Town of Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller. (Herald photo)

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