

The ROCKWOOD Miller

Deadline missed for Eden Mills solar application

Proponents say project could be a 'showplace' for Ontario's green energy program

"Delayed, but not dead," That's how Eden Mills Community Hall spokesman Tim Laing assessed an application to generate clean electricity – and much-needed revenue – with two solar panels on the roof of the Eden Mills Community Hall.

As co-owner of the Hall with the Eden Mills Community Club, Guelph/

Eramosa Council agreed last Tuesday to submit an application on behalf of the Eden Mills Community Club to the Ontario Power Authority's microFIT energy generation program, launched three years ago as part of the province's renewable energy initiatives.

But, Laing said they could not meet the deadline. "We found out that the name on the application can't change – so despite the superb efforts of the Township and hours on the phone with the Ministry (of Energy) an application signed by the

Township is considered a brand new application and it doesn't serve to keep our place in line," a frustrated Laing said on Monday.

"We looked at it from every angle that we could. Trying to get clarification from the Ministry was difficult...so right up until 5 o'clock on Friday we tried to come up with a solution, but there was no point in filing and application and going through all that work, that really wouldn't do the job", Laing said, repeating that they are delayed, but not dead, as another window



Eden Mills Community Hall spokesperson - Tim Laing

for applications opens in September and they will re-apply.

Under the microFit program, homeowners and other eligible participants can develop small or "micro" renewable electricity generation projects up to 10-kilowatts on their properties. They are guaranteed a set price over 20-years for the electricity they produce and deliver to the Ontario power grid.

Six months ago, Council endorsed the Club's application when told the only way the Hall – the social centre of the village – would survive financially in the future is with the money raised by generating and selling up to five-kilowatts of power. Last summer, the province froze microFit applications and invited groups to reapply, but with new rules.

Last week Laing told Council that the new rules made it "impossible" for the Club to reapply because the "community"

category no longer exists, and ground-mounted solar panels, like those planned for Township property beside the Hall, are no longer accepted.

At the suggestion of Mayor Chris White, Council agreed to file an application on behalf of the Club under the "municipal" category. White said doing so would "fundamentally change nothing" in the Hall's operating agreement with the Township, and would benefit the village's Going Carbon Neutral initiatives. "They (the Club) have their funding in place, they have their insurance – I don't think this changes anything. We don't take any financial responsibility or any liability or anything – its just some government gobbledygook," White said.

Councillor John Scott recalled the Club's earlier contention that roof-mounted solar panels would be "problematic," and generate less electri-

city, but Laing said with cheaper material costs and a higher rate for roof-generated electricity, the lost revenue would be covered. He also said they would be able to angle and tilt the roof-mounted panels to the south for maximum efficiency. "This is really just to keep our place in line so we don't lose the power allocation," Laing said, adding that they will still pursue a ground-mounted application, once the new rules for exemptions to the ground-mount ban are released.

On Monday, Laing said they will also appeal directly to the Minister of Energy to point out that it is "grossly unfair" to remove the "community" category for the program. "As part of the over-all Going Carbon Neutral strategy and goal for the village, solar was to be a very big part of that and a visible symbol of trying to do the right thing. That's exactly the kind of project the Ministry could embrace easily and it would be a showplace for them," Laing said.



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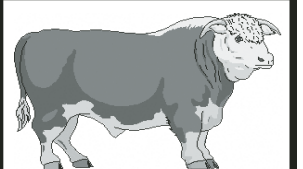
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