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Landfill short list greeted with disbelief

By Dfanne Cornish

"We're damn mad and we're not going to take this lying down," Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller said Friday morning shortly after learning that the short list of candidate sites for a Peel landfill contain two sites on the Halton-Peel boundary, just north of Norval on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard.

The Interim Waste Authority (IWA), a Crown agency of the Ontario government created to undertake concurrent searches for landfill sites in the Greater Toronto

Area (GTA), released the short lists Friday, reducing the number of candidate sites in Peel from 21 to five. The two Norval area sites are among the five.

AT Monday's Town Council meeting, councillors voted un-animously to seek funding from the Ontario government to help fight the landfill proposal.

Originally, the long list of candidate sites contained three sites in the Norval area, roughly bounded by Mayfield and Heritage roads and Winston Churchill Boulevard.

While Miller's immediate reac-

tion to the short list announcement was anger, two Norval area residents who have fought against retention of the are sites on the candidate list for the past five months expressed disbelief and frustration with the turn of events.

"I find their (the IWA's) mentality unreasonable," Norval resident David McPhail said Friday afternoon during a telephone interview.

McPhail, president of a citizen's group called Stop the Credit River Valley Dumps in Halton and Peel, said his group, along with the Brampton West Concerned

Citizens' Group, has fought retention of the Norval area sites purely "on environmental grounds."

Despite the sites' proximity to the Credit River and rejection of the area as a possible location for a landfill about a decade ago McPhail said "it's ridiculous" that two of the area locations remain on the candidate list.

The site was rejected a decade ago because it was shown to be hydrogeologically unsuitable.

"What this has done (is to show that) the IWA willfully disregarded information provided to them," McPhail charged. "They elected to ignore (previous) hydrogeology reports and information on Upper Canada College," located near the candidate sites, he said.

"They (the IWA) say they consider public input; I believe they didn't," McPhail concluded.

Pamela Soward, who lives across the road from the Norval area sites, said she and her husband received information about the short list

selection early Friday by courier.

"I am shocked; I think it's unbelievable," she said Friday afternoon as she sat down to read and study the material.

"I've tried to understand their reasoning," Soward said, adding that she's completely confounded by the selection of the Norval area sites. "They're the most environmentally unsuitable sites" to be considered for landfill, she said.

Soward indicated that she has felt, from the start, that the eventual site that will be chosen for the Peel landfill "is a foregone conclusion."

"I think, for political reasons, that's where they want it," she charged. "How they think they can get it through an Environmental Assessment, I don't know," she added.

Ironically, Mayor Miller was attending a day-long workshop on planned growth for the GTA in

Continued on page 4



Wet windy conditions could not dampen spirits as the Acton Santa Claus took place Saturday. For more on the parade see page 2. Photo by Scott Augustus

Environmentalists call for probe of Council

By Dianne Cornish

The suggestion that Halton Hills Town Council might be acting improperly by not enforcing the Third Line reconstruction bylaw caused a storm of protest Monday night.

Angry comments from council members ensued when Diane van de Valk, a member of a citizen's group called FOAD (Furiously Opposed to Acton Dumping) criticized council for not enforcing the bylaw and then said she would bring the group's concerns to the attention of Project 80 investigators.

Project 80 is a special police joint forces team investigating possible political corruption involving development in north Halton. It's made up of officers from Metro Toronto, York Regional and the Ontario Provincial Police.

Van de Valk said recent press reports about the investigation prompted her and members of the group to consider contacting the investigators with their concerns that the Town of Halton Hills is "quite selectively enforcing municipal bylaws."

Essentially, the bylaw calls for reconstruction of the Third Line in Acton upon completion of mining operations in that area of the Acton Quarry. The road bisects the quarry, and according to FOAD president Rita Landry, would effectively quash any plans to develop a landfill at the site, as has been proposed by a private operator, Reclamation Systems Incorporated (RSI).

Van de Valk's comments drew immediate fire from Councillor Norm Elliott.

"What the hell has this (the bylaw) got to do with that (Project 80)?" Elliott asked before launching into a heated tirade. "I wish your group would stop using the shotgun approach" to get what it wants, he told van de Valk.

When van de Valk suggested that she thought non-enforcement of a bylaw deserves investigation, Elliott denounced her explanation saying, "We have selective enforcement of bylaws every day of the week." He was referring to parking enforcement in Halton Hills.

Continued on page 13

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