

Citizens' group head calls dump hearing a 'sham'

By LISA TALLYN

Evelyn Gillies, chairperson of the Milton Area Citizen's Coalition, is not taking a hearing board's decision to locate a dump in Milton lying down.

"We can't just lay down and take it," said Mrs. Gillies, who has been a driving force in the fight to keep the dump out of Milton for years. "It floors me, I've been absolutely shocked. Reports that we had heard indicated that things were going our way.

"To have it switched around is unbelievable and ludicrous."

A meeting of coalition members, approximately 200 people who live in the vicinity of the dump is set for next Monday evening. The landfill site is between Britannia Road and Lower Base Line bounded by First Line to the west and Highway 25 to the east.

"It is like a funeral around here, like there has been a death in the family. But we are regrouping and getting our fighting spirits back."

Mrs. Gillies says the coalition, made up of the Boynes/Britannia, Tremaine/Britannia, and Site D Farmers groups, are considering appealing Friday's decision.

She says it hasn't been decided what appeal route the group will take. An appeal can be made through the courts, or provincial cabinet. The group has a deadline of 28 days from the announcement of the decision to launch their appeal.

Mrs. Gillies has some questions about the procedure used to determine the site location which were raised after reading through the 210-page document and certificate of approval for the landfill site.

"In the report they don't mention very much about the people who testified during the public hearing. It was as if we didn't exist."

"She said there was only a 'handful' of citizens from Burlington giving evidence at the public hearing in May.

"There were many people from Milton there. We spoke for an evening and a morning. But it seems there was no impact, they didn't go into depth about what was said."

"I have some real problems with how the information was interpreted. The whole thing was a sham."

June Anderson, chairman of the West Burlington Citizen's Group, says that the process used by the hearing board was fair.

"It was a good and unbiased board," said Ms Anderson. "They looked into everything

thoroughly. Two hundred days of hearings were not an easy job. I don't see how they could have chosen our site (Aldershot) from an environmental standpoint."

"We are pleased about the decision, but it's too bad that for each winner there has to be a loser."

Ms Anderson has been involved in the Burlington dump battle since 1981. She estimates that more than 1,000 Burlington residents are members in the West Burlington Citizen's Group.

"It has been a long, frustrating time. It is too bad that so much money had to be spent in the process, which could have been better spent finding alternatives (to landfill)."

She says that her group's bill for the fight is approximately \$300,000. The Milton group spent about the same amount in their battle.

Johnson bitter with decision . . .

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(Dr. Kingham) and a Q.C. What the hell do they know about engineering? It's outrageous. It shows how little they know when they say Burlington should never have been considered in the first place."

In their text, the hearing officers say the Burlington site, in Aldershot, should have been abandoned in 1982 as unsuitable. They point to a number of flaws with the location. These include: problems with surface water runoff; "potential for contaminated water leaching out of the dump underground; the nearby urban development.

Milton town administrator Roy Main, the town's senior civil servant and the man who would have the most day-to-day contact with consultants and lawyers fighting the local landfill, was taken aback with the decision.

"It certainly catches me off guard," he admitted. The report "seemed to dump on Milton fairly well, no pun intended. I'm not too pleased about the criticism Milton takes throughout the report."

As well, Mr. Main said the board, in an attempt to "beef up" its decision, "went overboard in fortifying" their position.

"They accuse Milton of wasting time. Then why did they let the hearing go on for 194 days?"

He bristled at a report accusation that Milton wanted to "have its cake and eat it too" because it did not provide tracts zoned for landfill after a previous area site had been rejected.

"There's not a municipality in the free world that would zone a dump site without testing. What am I supposed to do? Designate the whole town for landfill?"

While acknowledging that "I don't know if there are grounds for appeal," Mr. Main said there are "a number of errors of judgement" in the report. Appeals may not only halt the process they "could take it as far back as square one" he added.

The board has "misread and misinterpreted a number of factors. I still feel that Burlington is a better site."

That is not the opinion of Burlington regional councillor Joyce Savoline. Although Halton region supported both sites, indeed marginally preferred Burlington, if only the Aldershot site had been tendered for approval, "we would have ended up with zero. Thank God the region went forward with two."

Mrs. Savoline said "it's a relief that it's over, but I can't feel that anybody won anything. I feel deeply for the people who have to uproot their homes (twelve properties will be expropriated)."

Mrs. Savoline admitted that "appeals scare

me. Time costs money." All told, expenses to the taxpayers were running at approximately \$1 million a month during the latter part of the hearing.

Halton regional chairman Peter Pomeroy, flanked by regional chief administrative officer John Fleming and surrounded by reporters, mulled over the news Friday morning in a press conference convened two hours after the decision was released.

Mr. Pomeroy said he was "extremely pleased that we have something approved. He called the 12-year process "an incredible exercise" and "the most divisive issue" to face Halton region.

The chairman said, "I anticipate an appeal at least to cabinet, in any event."

The region too, fell under criticism in the report. "It was not difficult to find examples of actions that appeared unfair," the document states.

Municipalities will pay up for 'stalling' dump hearings

By ROB KELLY

The consolidated hearing which saw Milton chosen as Halton's landfill site represents only one of the late chapters in a long struggle which can be documented with some interesting facts and figures. For example:

Hearing testimony took 194 days, involved 50,000 transcript pages and approximately 1,000 exhibits.

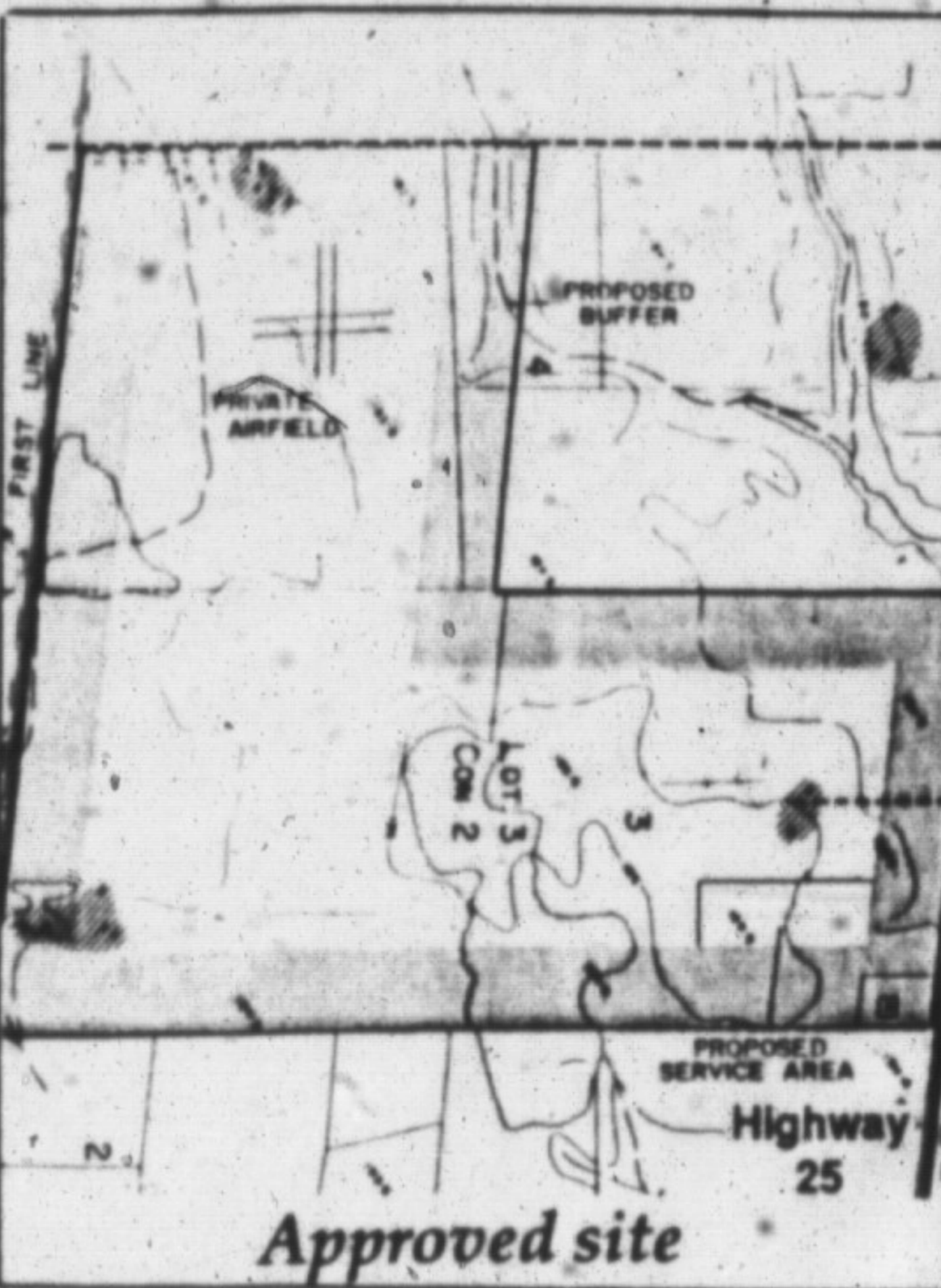
Halton region spent approximately \$7 million on studies and the hearing. The city of Burlington spent \$1.9 million, chief administrative officer Michael Fenn said, while Milton spent \$1.3 million, town treasurer Jim McQueen noted.

Citizens groups from both municipalities also carried heavy financial burdens, for private individuals. The West Burlington Citizen's Group spent \$287,253 and the Milton Area Citizen's Coalition spent \$278,416.

Costs were awarded to both citizens groups, to be paid by Halton region and the municipal governments of Burlington and Milton.

Burlington ratepayers were awarded \$244,253 of the \$287,821 they spent. Milton citizens were granted \$227,313 of their \$278,416 expenditure.

Halton region was ordered to pay \$200,153 to the Burlington group and \$174,393 to the Milton organization. The rationale given was



that the region must underwrite two-thirds of the costs born by citizens defending against regional dump choices. Halton advocated both sites.

The hearing officers, Harry Lancaster and Dr. Jim Kingham, chastised Burlington and Milton municipal governments for wasting time. Burlington's actions "led to unnecessary delays" while Milton "also consumed a considerable amount of time unnecessarily."

Consequently, and with perhaps a certain irony, the board directed Burlington to pay the Milton citizen's group and Milton to pay the Burlington ratepayers. Burlington is judged to have wasted six days of hearing time, which is evaluated as worth \$52,920 when one considers the various legal fees. Milton wasted five days, and must yield \$44,100 to the Burlington group.

The board leaves open whether the clients (municipalities) or their lawyers are at fault for the delays, saying it is difficult to determine where the motivation "for certain actions came from."

The stage is set for infighting on that issue. Assigning costs only to the municipality in general "leaves" the door open to further discussion between clients and counsel on the matter."

Thirty-four conditions are attached to the landfill approval, with numerous subsections. They fill 24 pages in the report.

Halton plans alternatives to garbage woes

By ROB KELLY

Landfill is big news in Halton this week and always a subject of controversy, but in the long term the region hopes it will become only one facet of waste management. Technology is expected to stem the garbage tide.

Already 16 per cent of Halton garbage is recycled. And by the year 2000, Halton expects to be burning 50 per cent of its refuse in an energy-from-waste incinerator.

Given that the region hopes to attain a goal of 25 per cent recycling, it is "conceivable" that shortly after the turn of the century landfill will only handle 25 per cent of area waste, Halton chief administrative officer John Fleming said Tuesday.

"Halton is out front on recycling in Ontario and we are really working hard to stay there," Mr. Fleming said.

A draft document to be introduced at the regional planning and public works committee meeting Wednesday will call for contractors to submit evidence they are qualified to build an EFW plant. That will give Halton "a short list of firms interested in working with us," Mr. Fleming said.

If all goes according to plan, a report in July will push the EFW project forward, with the facility to be built somewhere in the region by 2000, Mr. Fleming said.

But EFW plants are running into the same "not in my back yard" syndrome that has characterized opposition to landfill sites. Most critics complain of air pollution due to gases released by burning.

Experts say technological advances have made EFW a viable waste processing alternative. "We are as convinced as we ever were that it can be done safely," Mr. Fleming said.

An EFW plant would have to be located near one or several industries or large buildings. That would make it economically viable for the energy generated to be transferred to the nearby structures.

Friday at the press conference announcing Milton had been chosen for Halton's 20-year landfill, Mr. Fleming denied the EFW plant will be put near the dump because that is where its "fuel" is located.

It is far more important the plant be close to some complex which could take advantage of the energy, Mr. Fleming said.

Milton council has supported the concept of an EFW plant somewhere in the region.

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