

Toronto area's 'garbage path' leads to Milton

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By NORM NELSON

Halton's proposed regional landfill in Milton is being offered as a partial solution to Greater Toronto Area's mounting garbage problems.

As lawyers for groups opposed to the dump battled this week in a Toronto courtroom to overturn the decision to locate the dump in Milton, the Region, on Wednesday, unveiled the location as its contingency site for possible use by Toronto area municipalities.

If approved by council at its upcoming Wednesday meeting, the Region would set aside 250,000 tonnes of the 4-million tonne landfill capacity for use by other regions.

Oakville councillor Janet Mitchell, however, says "we're being led down the garbage path."

She said she's "scared stiff" about Halton's growing involvement in the so-called Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

GTA municipalities (Halton, Peel, York, Durham and Metro Toronto), at the urging of the province, have formed a municipal garbage consortium called SWISC (Solid Waste Interim Steering Committee) to see if they can find common strategies to solve their garbage problems.

The crisis comes to a head in 1992 when the GTA, simply put, runs out of dump capacity for its garbage.

SWISC is tackling the problem in two ways. A long-term plan is being put together so that solutions will be in place by 1996 to dispose of the GTA's waste in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner.

A short-term plan is also being proposed to fill the gap between 1992, when the GTA runs out of landfill space, and 1996.

The main difference between the short and long-term solutions is that the short-term contingency options do not have to undergo a lengthy Environmental Assessment hearing (as did the Milton dump), but need approval

only under the less stringent Environmental Protection Act.

Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy, however, said he has warned the province that a contingency landfill not subjected to an Environmental Assessment hearing may be ripe for a court challenge.

He said if this week's Ontario Supreme Court decision rules against the Milton landfill, the region might not have any other choice but to re-nominate it as a contingency site.

All GTA municipalities are required by SWISC to nominate a contingency site by the end of February, and in fact two other regions (Peel and Durham) have already named their sites.

Councillor Mitchell said she's concerned about Halton nominating a contingency site before even deciding if it wants to participate

in SWISC. "You're making a decision on B before deciding about A."

Milton councillor Bill Johnson agreed, saying "you don't get into a game unless you know all the rules."

Chairman Pomeroy stressed that there are two issues — short-term and long-term involvement. Nominating a contingency site, he said, "does not stop us from getting out of the long-term GTA waste disposal plan."

Councillor Mitchell expressed the sentiments of many councillors when she said she is not opposed to sharing the Milton dump, but is concerned whether Toronto is serious about solving garbage problems or whether it is just looking for an "easy fix."

"We all know Toronto has one of the least effective recycling programs in the province,"

she said. Until they at least show some initiative, she questioned why Halton should go out of its way to help them.

Chairman Pomeroy agreed Metro has been slow out of the starting blocks on recycling and re-use initiatives, but added that Peel, the likely benefactor of the Milton contingency site, has an excellent waste management program in place.

He said he's confident that all SWISC members will be onstream with environmentally effective waste management programs.

Burlington Councillor Pat McLaughlin thought the Halton proposal was reasonable. He noted that 250,000 tonnes out of a 4-million tonne capacity is not a particularly large slice of the pie to offer.

He added that Halton has been shipping all of its garbage to other municipalities for several years, and to now refuse outside garbage at its own dump is "short sighted."

There are several conditions that regional council is being asked to attach to the use of the Milton dump as a contingency site:

- 1) Other regions using the dump would pick up any additional costs that are incurred.
- 2) To minimize traffic, the amount of out-of-region waste would be limited to 500 tonnes a day and 100,000 tonnes a year (it's currently estimated that the site will receive up to 1,000 tonnes a day from Halton). Waste would also have to be delivered in larger vehicles.
- 3) Waste deliveries from outside the region would be prohibited from travelling through the urban areas of Milton. The recommended access would be via the QEW or Hwy 5 and north on Hwy 25 to the site.
- 4) Halton would not accept waste from other SWISC members that is banned from landfill in Halton, such as cardboard, glass containers, metal food and beverage cans and many plastic soft drink bottles.

Volunteer training now offered by Board of Education

In the face of funding cutbacks, staff development and volunteer training programs are often first to feel the blade despite the importance of professional development and job satisfaction.

To combat the losses, Halton Board of Education's Adult and Continuing Education is offering workshops designed for social service agencies. A recent training survey revealed several areas of interest, and as a result, planning for programs like "How to Market your Agency" and "Group Leadership Skills" are underway.

The department also plans to offer a workshop for early childhood educators on multiculturalism. This will be a comprehensive discussion on the ways we can better understand and help children from different ethnic backgrounds.

Through the new community program, agencies can meet with staff from Adult and Continuing Education to discuss the training needs of their agency. Help can be attained in developing and implementing a training plan and if necessary, accessing funds.

For information about the community program, contact Anne Day at 845-7542.

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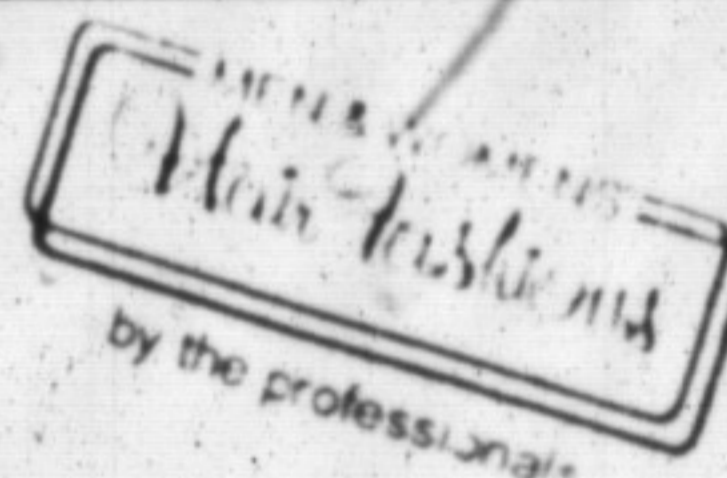
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