

Jim Scott is back in food composting business

By DIANE DUNN
Special to the Champion

After a four-month interruption, Scott's Composting Farm is back in the food composting business, thanks to a recent decision by the provincial Environmental Appeal Board.

Owner Jim Scott had been forced to stop accepting food waste as composting material following pressure from angry neighbours and the provincial Ministry of Environment. More than a year of complaints about foul odors from his Hornby facility pushed the ministry into curtailing his business in June.

But the Environmental Appeal Board ruling means Mr. Scott can resume food composting on a limited basis — seven tonnes a day instead of his previous 40 tonne daily limit — at least temporarily.

The hearing will resume in September, although it may drag on through next spring due to scheduling difficulties. In the meantime, Mr. Scott said he plans to demonstrate

that he can operate his outdoor food composting facility odor-free.

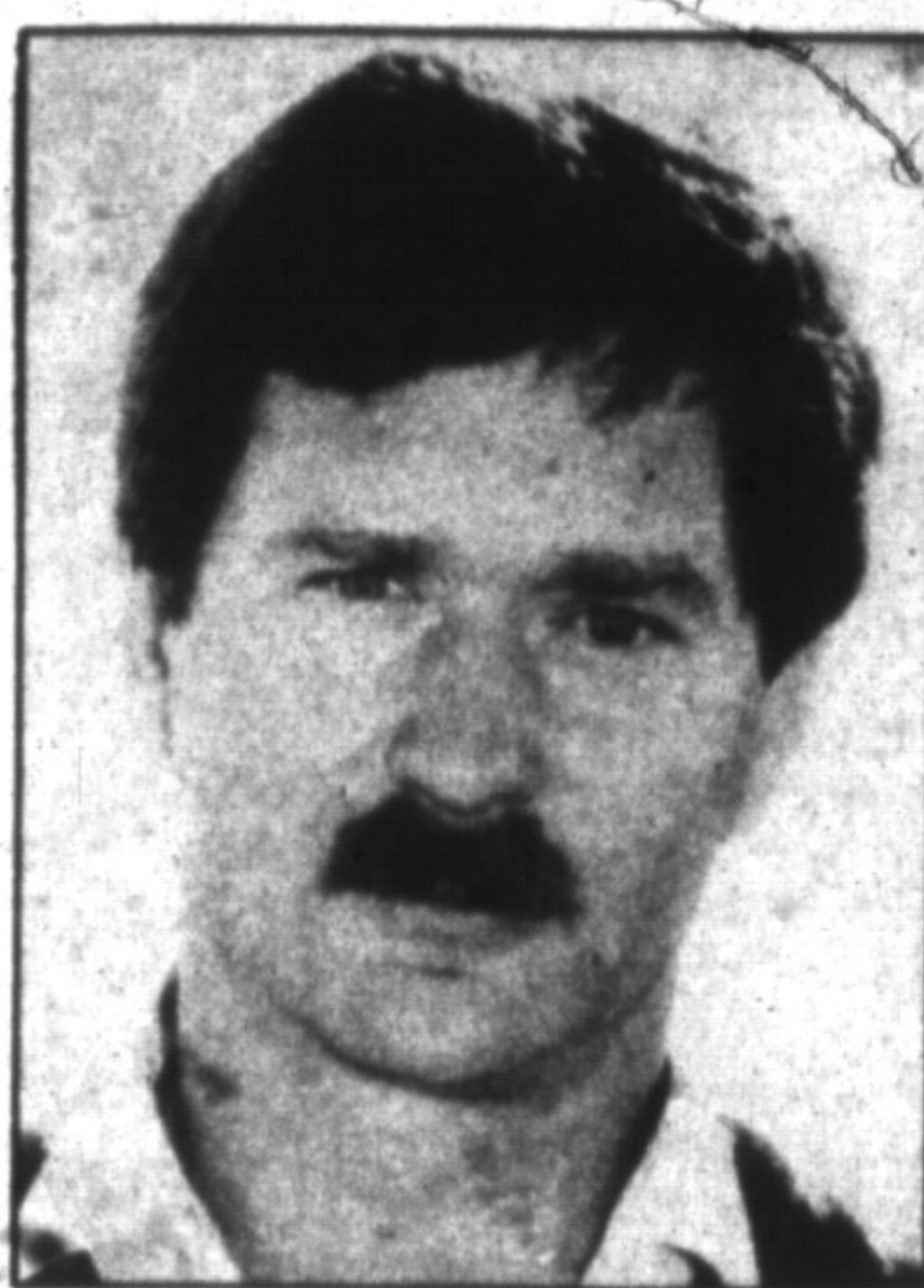
"This gives us a chance to prove we can do it properly," he said.

Jerry Greenfield, a spokesperson for Hornby residents, who's deeply troubled by Mr. Scott's operation, said the decision was reasonable. "I'm not jumping for joy, but I feel it's fair."

Mr. Scott is appealing a Ministry of the Environment's change to his composting licence that could permanently block him from taking in food waste at his Britannia Road site. Along with its ruling allowing the temporary and limited inclusion of food waste, the board issued some conditions.

Before any processing, Mr. Scott must submit an outline of his composting plans to the board, as well as other parties attending the hearing. He must then set up a monitoring program to measure wind direction and velocity.

Also, three times a day, he's required to check the farm and the surrounding area to determine if any



Jim Scott

odors are coming from the site.

As well, a record of the findings must be kept in a log book, and weekly reports filed. On top of that, Mr. Scott is only allowed to process 42 metric tonnes of food waste per week.

Mr. Scott said he agrees that for all concerned, the decision was fair. He

also believes it will allow him to show the community that his composting company can work.

"I think it's positive. It gives me a chance to prove that food wasn't the sole culprit for the odor," he said.

Mr. Scott's composting facility began operating in late 1990. His approval certificate was expanded in February, 1992 to include leaf and yard waste, food waste, tobacco stocks, gypsum paper, mineral food additives and wood chips for composting.

As well, the volume of waste allowed was increased from 20,000 to 30,000 metric tonnes per year. The site went from operating 200 days a year to 300 days.

But in June, the province amended Mr. Scott's certificate to prohibit food waste, "to prevent adverse impact to the natural environment and preserve the health and safety of the public."

The smells were pervasive and attracted seagulls, said Mr. Greenfield.

"The community was exposed to the serious odors 24 hours a day.

The seagulls came and invaded the park (Drumquin). When the food (processing) stopped, the seagulls went away."

Mr. Scott admitted there had been an odor problem, but said he's better able to handle the situation now. He told the hearing the odors were mainly due to the wet weather conditions last year.

He also said he has experimented with varying methods of mixing raw material in an effort to contain smells, and believes that with the aid of a recently hired consultant, he is on the threshold of success.

"I want to assure the people that we're taking the precautions. We can compost anything that comes through. I think they (the board) gave us something that we can work with and the community some safety. It's a good balance."

Some people said they shouldn't have been subjected to the odors to begin with. "It should have been put in a spot where it would not affect the residents," commented George Powers, who lives near the site.

Calls him 'careless'

Scott takes issue with Barry Lee's comments

The owner of Scott's Composting Farm wasn't impressed with recent remarks by Halton regional councillor Barry Lee that the company "is an illegal operation."

"Councillor Lee was careless in saying our operation was illegal," said Jim Scott. "I feel that the statement was very detrimental to our business."

"And if the Town is investigating aspects of our zoning, their staff should refrain from personal opinion until all the facts are in."

Mr. Lee made the comment at Halton Region's planning and public works committee meeting August 9. Mr. Scott is appealing a Ministry

of Environment order that could permanently stop him from processing food waste at his Britannia Road composting facility.

The region, which currently trucks yard and garden waste from its landfill site to Scott's Composting Farm, was considering boycotting the company in support of a bid by the Town of Milton and a group of residents to prevent resumption of food composting there.

"I believe it's wrong for the region to support Scott's," Mr. Lee was quoted as saying in the August 13 issue of *The Champion*. "It's an illegal operation. It's wrong to indirectly support Scott's."

Golf proceeds boost DARE program

A Halton Regional Police drug prevention program for students has received a \$5,000 boost thanks to the support of Fortinos Supermarket and Pepsi-Cola.

The money was raised for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program through a charity golf tournament co-sponsored by the companies.

Police come into classrooms and teach the DARE Program to students throughout the region. It centres on lifestyle skills which help young people to make appropriate decisions.

To date, more than half of grade 6 students in Halton have taken DARE classes. Many of them were in Milton schools.

"DARE is an important and worthwhile portion of the grade 6 education curriculum," said Halton police acting inspector Dan Okuloski, "and we're hopeful through donations such as this will permit the program to be expanded to include all grade 6 students in Halton."

The program survives on donations through corporate and community events such as the golf tournament.

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