

# Landfill etiquette still source of controversy

By ANGELA BLACKBURN  
The Champion

For the second time in as many weeks, Halton staff were sent back to do more homework on discontent at the Milton dump, following Wednesday's regional planning and public works committee meeting.

Regional council recently reduced dumping fees for garbage loads over the \$5/150kg limit to 15 cents per additional kilogram. It means anyone dumping, for example, 160kg would pay \$6.50 instead of the \$24 applied since user fees were introduced six months ago.

Two weeks ago, staff acknowledged the fee concern, recommended the change and otherwise reported that the fee was a success in recouping operating costs for the waste container station (not landfill or recycling).

Milton Councillor Barry Lee hit the roof at what he saw as a lack of acknowledgement of problems in that report, and its premature arrival at committee.

After a meeting with Mayor Gord Krantz and Mr. Lee, staff were back Wednesday recommending user fees include an option to pay \$1.50 per household garbage bag to a \$5 maximum.

The committee also heard from Milton residents with complaints not just about price. Anne Katz said she felt like a "criminal" when she recently registered over the \$5/150 kg limit, had her driver's licence confiscated, her questions referred to the Region, and was told to pay up when she had only \$10 with her.

Finance commissioner Joe Rinaldo said landfill staff have stopped confiscating driver's licences, will have public relations training this year, and will accept credit cards. There's a fee waiver for groups doing community clean-ups, stepped up regional patrols to hinder illegal dumping and a new internal road to better link

the dump's entrance and container station.

"So far we've looked at the cosmetics, now we've got to get to the guts of the thing," said Halton Hills Councillor Rick Bonnette.

"I want to get to the bottom of it and get it resolved properly," said Mr. Lee, adding, "This region's motto is 'A World Class Place to Be', surely to God we should be able to figure out how to operate a landfill site to the satisfaction of its residents." "There are a lot of things not right there. I think we've come a long way but we've got a lot farther to go," said Burlington Councillor Barry Quinn.

Burlington councillor Joyce Savoline defended last year's budget committee decision backing user fees at the container station. "Basically the idea is a good one. Perhaps if we modify it, we'll make it better."

Ms Savoline said those dumping illegally to avoid a fee are irresponsible. "I don't think we should be catering to that irresponsibility," she noted.

Ms Katz complained the 150 kg weight sees rural residents, who transport their own garbage to the dump, paying more per bag than urban residents who pay for collection on property taxes and receive curbside pick-up. Among numerous recommendations, Ms Katz called for landfill staff recognition of rural users.

"Don't you agree that we should treat all users the same. I mean they don't have rural printed on their forehead," said Oakville Councillor Fred Oliver.

Ms Katz suggested "rural users be noted as people with a very basic service, a service they provide a fair amount of themselves."

Mr. Rinaldo said collection is a "no win situation that's always going to be confrontational. The confrontation comes from both

sides. Staff up there have been threatened." He also noted the difficulty of staff answering questions on-site when faced with car line-ups.

George Tell of Milton said he believed dump hours could be extended by staggering staff. He said

the Region's commercial landfilling fees of \$150/metric tonne are too expensive, that it's cheaper to haul garbage to Ohio for disposal.

Mr. Tell said single-tier waste management proposals sound like the garnering of a garbage monopoly

for the dump and its expensive fees.

Mr. Rinaldo said the tipping fees, and a report on unsuccessful measures in other municipalities to increase revenue by reducing tipping fees, will soon be before the budget committee.



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