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Council approves New Credit agreements

Reserve will get H-N water at a discounted rate

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TOWNSEND — After a summer of delay in finalizing the details of landfill and water agreements between Haldimand-Norfolk and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, regional council yesterday approved a bylaw implementing those agreements.

Once the Mississaugas approve a similar bylaw, something which could happen as early as today, the agreements immediately take effect.

The terms of the agreements, which provide for the daily sale of the 250 cubic metres of the region's water to the Mississaugas and remove their objections to the region's use of the Tom Howe landfill site in Springvale through the year 2022, weren't agreeable to all councillors. The bylaw passed by an 11-6 margin with

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councillors Anderson, Bergstrand, Dalimonte, Hall, Kalmbach and Trainer dissenting.

Frustration with the agreements centred around the discounted rate at which the water will be sold, the inability to ensure its use for residential purposes alone and the \$450,000 trust fund which will be established to account for any unanticipated environmental impacts from use of the landfill site.

Regional Chair John Harrison attempted to outline the positives of the negotiated agreements for councillors.

"Whether you like the terms of the water deal or not, we get a new customer for water and the dollars that flow to the region will be significantly higher than the cost of providing it," he said.

"As for the landfill site, the alternative to having the Ministry of Energy and the Environment have the dump certified is an environmental assessment hearing which would cost at least as much as the trust fund. And similar negotiations and rulings tribunals during the past several years have resulted in trust funds being established for two to four times the amount negotiated here."

Nonetheless, some councillors were frustrated.

"I can't support selling water to non-ratepayers for less than we sell it to residents," said Coun. Sandra Hall, "and the \$450,000 could be the biggest birthday party ever held in Canada. Nowhere do I see the trust fund monies tied to specific use for environmental issues."

Coun. Les Anderson was concerned that the residents of Springvale wouldn't receive equal benefit from the agreement.

"I'm not comfortable with the entire package," he said. "My main concern is that we haven't been able to offer the same level of comfort to Springvale residents as to those in neighboring communities. I believe the trust monies should be held within the region and made available to anyone who has an (environmental) concern, not just one particular group."