

Community members watching disintegrator testing

By Donna Duric
Writer

Concerned Six Nations community members want to keep a watchful eye on air quality tests that are scheduled to be conducted on a garbage-burning disintegrator at the landfill in early November.

Robin Maracle, who was part of a group that shut down the controversial machine at the landfill in May, told councillors last Tuesday night community members should be able to watch what goes in the machine during testing.

Six Nations Band Council said the community is welcome to come and watch while the machine is being tested.

"We've got the schedule out there," said Elected Chief Ava Hill. "You can just check with

our office or (public works) what day (testing contractors) should be there."

The unit's inventor, John Kearns, claims the machine is able to break down garbage through a heated disintegration process that causes no toxic emissions. The machine is a prototype that has never been in operation anywhere before being brought to Six Nations last winter for a test run.

It ran intermittently throughout the spring before community members noticed black emissions coming out of the machine's smoke stack and shut the machine down in protest, demanding alternatives to waste handling or independent testing at the least.

Band Council has contracted an independent company,

RWDI, to conduct air quality tests on the machine.

A community member sitting in the council gallery during last Tuesday's meeting, Dale Williams, said she spoke with an officer at the Ministry of Environment, who told her, "if there's black smoke coming out, there's no need to even test it. It should show you right there there's something wrong with the machine."

Hill defended the presence of smoke.

"I think initially there might be smoke when it first gets started," she said.

Maracle said she was concerned about throwing plastic garbage bags into the unit without checking the contents of each bag first.

"Do you really think that makes good common sense to just let anything go in

there?" she asked.

Council Senior Administrative Officer Dayle Bomberry said people should sort their garbage and only put unrecyclable waste into garbage bags.

"We're still encouraging people to recycle and separate your garbage because all we want in there (the machine) is garbage," he said.

Maracle said the whole community needs to work together to come up with a solution to handling Six Nations' waste.

"I think if we all work together on a really good solution we could probably narrow it (our garbage) down," she said. "I'm not for burning. I don't like it. When plastic's burning it's not good to breathe in. Everything is going in the chute. I think it

should be sorted out."

She said she's aware people suspect she's against the machine because her son started a recycling company at the landfill.

"Everyone thinks I'm going to reap rewards (if the Kearns machine doesn't go forward)," she said. "Our reward is a clean environment."

The elected Chief agreed with her.

"I think that's all what we want, long-term," said Hill. Coun. Carl Hill said whether the machine tests clean or not, the community needs to ramp up its recycling.

"At the end of the day, we've still got to recycle," he said.

"We need to do the recycling but we still need to do the burning. That's why we need to get it tested. There's stuff that has to be burned that



Robin Maracle
you can't recycle."

Councillor Darryl Hill said members of band council's Solid Waste Ad-Hoc Committee will also be on hand to watch what goes into the machine during the testing. Some people suggested shipping all garbage off the reserve but Coun. Helen Miller didn't agree with that.

"We're supposed to be caretakers of the land," she said. "We can't be dumping our garbage onto somebody else."