

Hydro One promises to upgrade town's power equipment

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second outage "the transfer station blew up," said McInnes. "The last was the patio umbrella landing on the distribution wires and damaging the equipment. We had to work with what we purchased. We're going to bring a whole new system into town next year," said McInnes.

Whitchurch-Stouffville was one of about 120 utilities in Ontario to be sold following direction from the provincial government. "We had no choice but to sell," said Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson. "The province told us to sell. We couldn't survive as a small utility."

Led by Emmerson, council directed town staff Tuesday to revisit the \$6.2 million deal and check out the terms.

The local utility commission served 3,500 customers in the com-

munity of Stouffville. The rest of the municipality, including the rural area and the hamlets, has been served by Ontario Hydro for years.

When the sale was announced, Emmerson assured Hydro customers they would not see a rate increase for three years.

Ward 3 Councillor Peter Dobrich, a former member of the local utility commission, is also concerned about the recent developments.

"We did have a three-year freeze," said Dobrich. "I saw the wording. But it depends on the clarification. Hydro One is owned by the government of Ontario. Is it the government that didn't honour its commitment? We'll find out."

While council struggles with the rates, residents of Maystone Court, Elm Road, Rupert Avenue and Winlane Drive, worried about the quality of Hydro One's service, pre-

sented council with a petition.

"If we had a similar power outage in the winter, pipes would burst," said Little. "We want this fixed."

When the flying patio umbrella put part of Stouffville in the dark in August, Hydro One official Kathy Kiska confirmed it blew out two major electrical circuits within a Tenth Line power station, halting electrical service to more than 1,000 homes, businesses and municipal facilities.

When Hydro One work crews arrived in Stouffville to restore power to the community, they faced a difficult and time-consuming task, said Kiska.

The Hydro One crew was given an "outdated town mapping system" to work with, said Kiska. "This is the schematic drawings of the circuits within the town. They were not up to standard and caused a



WAYNE EMMERSON Mayor leads call for town to revisit \$6.2 million sale of local utility to Hydro One.

delay in the Hydro One crew restoring power."

A move is now underway to

bring the Stouffville mapping system up to date, said Kiska.

"Customers are wondering whether to expect more disruptions during the colder months when an extended power outage could have far more disastrous consequences to homes and businesses," Little told council.

Carrie Lynn Ognibene, Hydro One's communications advisor, pointed out that Hydro One owns and operates one of the largest electricity transmission and distribution networks in North America.

More than 30 per cent of the electricity consumed in Ontario flows through our high voltage power lines," said Ognibene. Meanwhile, Hydro One's low voltage network serves about 1.2 million homes, farms, and small businesses connecting about one third of the electricity consumers in Ontario.

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