

Meetings planned with interest groups

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from Markham to Newmarket — caused a storm of protest in Markham and Aurora, where the 140-foot towers would run through residential neighbourhoods.

That plan was put on hold two weeks ago pending the OPA review but Hydro One has long maintained it wouldn't move ahead with the towers unless specifically asked to do so by York Region.

The region says it won't be asking anytime soon, because it's Hydro One's responsibility to provide power and the local municipalities who would have

to petition the Ontario Energy Board if they feel they're going to be facing shortages.

A spokesperson for the Ontario Energy Board, which will assess the viability of any power-generation projects, passed the responsibility on to the OPA.

"That falls under their jurisdiction," Paul Crawford said Thursday.

The process of reviewing alternatives here is just getting under way, according to Armen Kulidjian of Grid Management, the company overseeing the public consultation process in York Region for the OPA.

Grid has already scheduled a meeting next week with public

interest groups including Stop Transmission Lines Over People, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine and Friends of the Rouge.

Municipal politicians celebrating the delay of the hydro project and this week's withdrawal of a major gas-fired power plant proposed for Vaughan are ultimately responsible for finding new electricity sources, according to Thornhill Liberal MPP Mario Racco.

Oak Ridges Tory MPP Frank Klees questioned the need for the hydro proposal from the outset.

"The first thing the OPA review must nail down is whether the demand, in terms of power requirements, (is) in fact legitimate," Mr. Klees said.

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