

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

Keep residents in loop on incineration

York councillors were to short-list five properties for the new York-Durham waste treatment facility today — four in Clarington, the other in East Gwillimbury.

It's usually at this point in the process — when public consultation begins — that opposition starts to breed.

Asking people to support an environmental initiative, be it a wind turbine or, in this case, an incineration facility, is easy. Tell them it's within a kilometre or two of their home and it becomes a different story.

The key, as in anything, is effective communication. Openness and easy-to-understand language should be the order of the day.

Yet, so far, we're not seeing this.

Even the way in which the York-Durham committee is referring to the plant, calling it a thermal treatment facility, seems vague. It has also been referred to simply as "the preferred option".

Government needs to get away from using industry jargon and tell people in a way they can understand.

True, this isn't an incinerator by old-school standards — the goal is to harness energy from the process that can be put to use in the community. But at the heart of it, the place will be used to burn garbage that can't be collected through the region's blue box and organic programs. The term used is residual waste.

From the start, the East Gwillimbury site was the only York property in the running to house the facility.

The 11-hectare site, northeast of the corner of Woodbine Avenue and Davis Drive, is next door to the region's new recycling facility and waste transfer station. It is bordered by industrial and agricultural land and close to Hwy. 404.

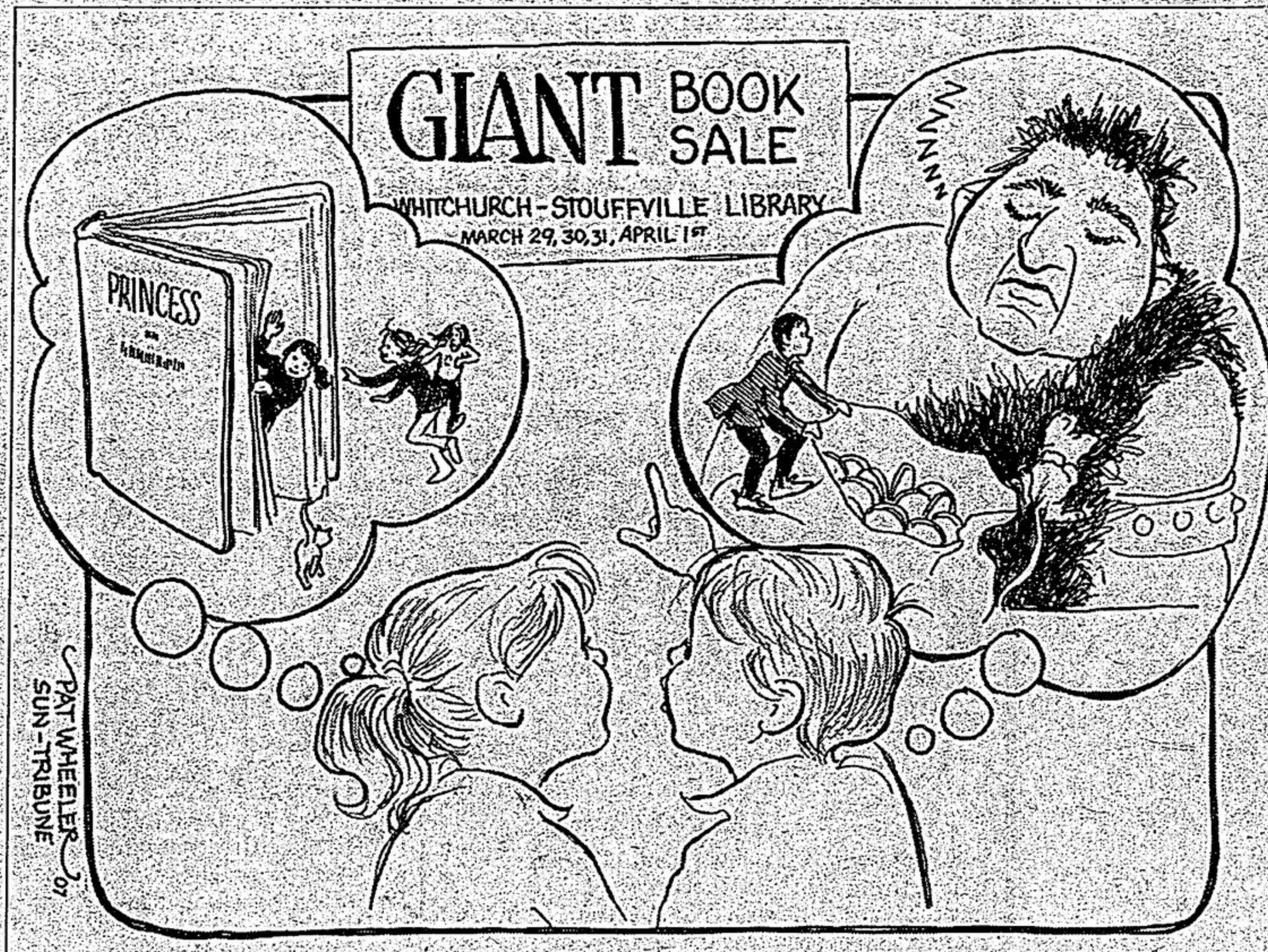
While the site is within the provincial greenbelt zone, it is still in the running because of zoning changes made before the greenbelt plan took effect.

The need for such a site was prompted by Michigan's decision to close its borders to Ontario's trash by 2010. With both regions in the same boat, York and Durham began working together on a joint solution to maximize efficiencies.

Trucking our trash south was a short-term solution at best and if we are to be true stewards of the planet, we need a homegrown solution for our waste.

There's no question we need this treatment facility. Yet, wherever it is to be built, it is clear the committee needs to do a better job keeping residents abreast of the progress.

Not doing so will only allow misinformation to breed and smolder, likely leading to fervent opposition and possibly delaying the project.



Dave Teetzel

Class size extension good election move

With the provincial election campaign being unofficially launched with last week's budget, it might be worth looking at an incident that highlights the difference between our current government and the one we had 10 years ago.

Oak Ridges Conservative MPP Frank Klees fired shots at Education Minister Kathleen Wynne in the legislature for backing down on primary class caps.

"Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the minister of education as she takes her rightful place in the renowned McGuinty Liberal Promise-Breakers Club."

During the last election campaign, Dalton McGuinty said the hard cap on class sizes was the single most important plank in his policy platform. Mr. Klees said Tuesday.

Yesterday, in the face of growing class sizes across the province, with many classrooms with up to three grades per room, the education minister simply abandoned the plank altogether.

OK, what she actually did was grant a one-year extension.

The remainder can have a maximum of 23 students. She did this at the request of several large boards that were having trouble implementing the cap.

I have no doubt that, had the school boards facing parental backlash taken their concerns to former premier Mike Harris, the answer would have been something like, "Tough noogies. I made a promise and I am keeping it. It's your job to make it happen."

Is the Liberal government's approach better? In this case, probably not.

An extension is helpful to school boards needing more rooms and have construction programs in the works.

Otherwise, all the same factors will exist and solutions will remain the same: busing, split classes or creating some classes with even fewer than 20 students but at a cost that can't be fully recouped from the province.

The York Region District School Board was ready to implement the cap this fall, even though it required split classes and busing.

So the extension may be just a good election move. It allows Liberals to pronounce themselves on the brink of a cap without dealing with angry fallout.

Letters to the Editor

Lots to be proud of in Stouffville hockey successes

Re: *Sorry, theatre fans, but it's hockey season in Stouffville, column by Jim Mason, March 1*

Yes, indeed, hockey season is in full bloom across Whitchurch-Stouffville.

As Mr. Mason wrote, we are not the official Hockeyville from the TV contest. Still, we have plenty to be proud of in our hockey world.

Stouffville District Secondary School deserves the praise it is receiving for icing two Ontario championship teams.

The Spartan boys and girls squads won the A/AA titles in a span of three days last week. Well done.

As impressive as the wins were, a look down the rosters reveals a large number of young players, boding well for the future of the programs, too.

To see the senior players share the moment of winning a championship with the rookies, some only in Grade 9, was a truly great moment in sport.

The Stouffville girls returned to Stouffville to celebrate their win; they were welcomed with true small-town hospitality by the crew at East Side Mario's.

At last weekend's Stouffville minor hockey tournament, Stouffville teams won four of the six division championships. A fifth team was runner-up. Well done, Clippers.

The juvenile Clippers made it to the Ontario Minor Hockey Association A finals before losing Windsor. Our Stouffville Spirit had another

fine year, advancing to the elite eight in the 35-team Provincial Junior A league.

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters.

All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address.

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Write: Letters to the Editor, 6290 Main St., Stouffville, L4A 1G7, e-mail jmason@yrmg.com or fax 905-640-8778.

It's been my pleasure to work with the Spirit over the years and still be affiliated through minor hockey.

Young minor hockey players accompanied the Spirit on two road trips this year, thanks to Ken Burrows and Dan West of the junior team.

The youngsters were welcomed with open arms by team officials and players.

They were included in the pre-game speeches, post-game meals and the usual fun of a two-hour bus ride to Collingwood or Orangeville.

The Spirit should be very proud of its players. They are excellent ambassadors for our community.

Our family has billeted Spirit players over the last six years, including Trevor Smith and Rob Groom, most recently.

Many of these boys are like family. They share in special occasions. They visit. They write. We get to know their families.

They are always welcome back in our home. We became part of the Spirit family because of them.

MIKE HUMPHREYS
PRESIDENT, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE
MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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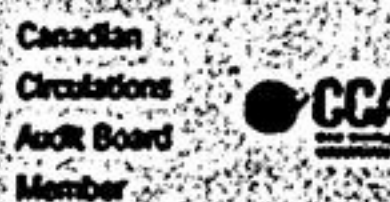
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