

Not our 'business to be playing with residents' money': councillor

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in part, the resolution put forward by Ward 4 Councillor Rick Upton and approved by council Tuesday night.

The Clippers Complex is in Upton's ward.

The project was rejected, in part, because of the \$1 million required up front by the town and the reduced rate of return, Upton told The Sun-Tribune Wednesday.

"It would jeopardize other opportunities we could have," he said, including the library expansion.

sion.

Upton also told The Sun-Tribune the 20-year program was problematic, because there was no guarantee of return.

"It's not a government's business to be playing with residents' money," he said.

Back in January, Mayor Justin Altmann told council "I believe we are missing out on an opportunity."

Altmann and French went for a site visit to Brant County, prior to that meeting in January, to look at a rooftop solar panel project that was very similar to the one proposed for the Clippers Complex.

"You have to go to Brant," Altmann told his councillors back in January.

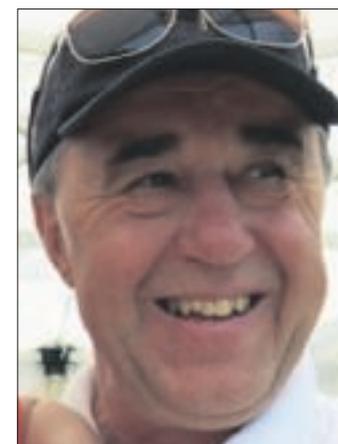
The mayor did not speak to the matter last night, other than to thank the delegate for the presentation.

"I was taken aback by the brutality of it," French told The Sun-Tribune of Tuesday night's decision. He added he thought they had a 50-50 chance of being given the go-ahead to do the project, which has been in the works since 2011.

The co-op will now be dissolved. Forty of its 110 members invested \$1,000 into the co-op, including French, but they will only receive a "small portion" of that back, he said.

According to the council resolution, town staff will now explore other solar green energy options, which will be incorporated into the design of future facilities, including the second indoor pool. The initiatives will directly benefit the town and residents.

The project was plagued with issues since its inception four



HARRY FRENCH: President of energy co-op 'taken aback by the brutality of council's rejection of plan.

years ago.

In 2013, the co-op's application to the Ontario Power Authority's FIT program was denied due to an incomplete application.

Later that year, the application was re-submitted with the addition of a licence agreement with the town being a requirement.

During those two years, changes were made to the FIT program. In particular, the per kWh price, for projects larger than 100 kWh, dropped from 53.9 cents to 32.9 cents.

This was a 250 kWh venture.

In August 2014, council of the day decided it wanted a \$100,000 letter of surety from the co-op.

"If things did go amiss, we could always step in and take it over," Councillor Rob Hargrave said during the Jan. 20 meeting of why the surety was requested.

Hargrave was also a councillor during the last term.

Hundreds of other communities are embracing solar/green initiatives, however, "this community has done nothing of any substance. "(Council has) lost touch with what is going on around them," French, who unsuccessfully ran for council last year, told The Sun-Tribune.

"There's no real leadership around community initiatives. There's a want to control things," he told The Sun-Tribune.

The Sun-Tribune tried to contact Altmann for an interview, however, he did not respond prior to our publication's deadline.

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