

Regional Councillor Report

Submitted by: Colleen Jordan, Regional Councillor Wards 3 & 4

Date: November 9, 2015

Regional Council – October 14, 2015

Regional Council approved the 2016 Property Tax Guideline at an overall increase of 1.75 per cent after assessment growth.

Regional Council – Nov. 4, 2015

EFW

Director of Works, Cliff Curtis, responded to delegations regarding the status of Acceptance Testing for the Durham York Energy Centre. The results of emission testing will be reviewed by the Ministry of The Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) as well as Durham and York Regions. The operation of the incinerator is subject to requirements contained within the environmental compliance approval issued by MOECC and commercial contract between Durham, York and Covanta. Initial tests indicated exceedances on some limits. Subsequent testing is being conducted. In order to meet acceptance and enter commercial operations the facility must meet the requirements of these documents.

Enshrining the Right to Live in a Healthy Environment

Regional Council referred back to staff a motion from the Blue Dot campaign which requests that the right of all citizens to live in an healthy environment be enshrined in appropriate federal and provincial legislation, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights. Many municipalities, including Ajax (endorsed April 2015), have endorsed similar motions.

National Pharmacare Program

Regional Council endorsed Ajax's motion urging the Government of Canada to work with the Provinces and Territories to develop and implement a National Pharmacare program. This motion was referred to Durham Region's Health Committee and reviewed by Durham's Medical Officer of Health who recommended endorsement of the motion. The Association of Local Public Health Agencies of Ontario also have called for a National Pharmacare program.

Comments on Provincial Legislation Reviews

Conservation Authorities Act

Durham endorsed comments on the Conservation Authorities Act calling on the Province to consider changes to governance, funding mechanisms and roles and responsibilities. Key recommendations included the need for predictable, sustainable provincial funding to ensure conservations authorities (CA) can implement expanding provincial policies and programs; consistent financial reporting process for all CA across the province; and clear definition of roles and responsibilities of CAs for various aspects of climate change adaptation at the watershed level.

Municipal Act and Municipal Conflict of Interest Act

Durham Region's comments included requesting a clear and practical definition of what constitutes a meeting, elimination of the Provincial Business Protection (capping of assessment increases) and that statutory rates for hospitals, prisons, education institutions, railway hydro rights of way and nuclear generating facilities be updated. These rates haven't been updated since 1998.

Funding for social housing was also discussed in the report and a recommendation was made that given income taxes are a more appropriate revenue source to pay for social housing services that the funding responsibility for social housing be uploaded to the provincial government. Ontario is the only province in Canada that social housing is the responsibility of municipalities. The motion also called for changes to joint and several liability so municipalities are protected from the brunt of rising insurance premiums, litigation and claim costs.

Durham also requested that in developing and implementing emissions pricing mechanisms that decisions be based on sound integrated environmental and energy policies and that any changes to carbon accounting be designed with a view to harmonization to avoid administrative redundancy and with recognition of municipal actions taken to date.

Update –Potential Impacts on Solid Waste Management of Ontario's Proposed Cap and Trade Program for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Council endorsed a motion requesting staff continue their efforts to collaborate with Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Waste Management Assoc. and other stakeholders to ensure the broader municipal interests are represented in the design and implementation of the Province's proposed cap and trade program. Durham staff cited their concern that currently the MOECC may include EFW facilities under the proposed cap while excluding fugitive emissions of methane from landfills, which creates a contradictory incentive to increase landfilling.

Quebec, European Union Emissions and Kyoto Clean Development Mechanism all exempt the solid waste management sector. California initially included EFW under the Cap but has since exempted them.

Nuclear Emergency Plans

Regional Council endorsed a motion requesting that the Government of Ontario provide all non-confidential data and studies used in considering changes to offsite nuclear emergency plans and requested that the Province consider expanding the feasibility of the 10 kilometre primary zone.

Fair Representation – October 23, 2015

The Committee has met four times. During the October meeting, Mr. Ken Seiling, Regional Chair, Waterloo spoke about the current governance model in place for his regional council, which includes direct election of council members. Directly elected means the regional councillor sits only on Regional Council and not on local municipal council. It is my opinion that Mr. Seiling's assertion that this provides more effective governance is not valid based on a combined change that took place in 2000. At that time, the Province imposed both direct election and reduced the size of Waterloo Council to 16. In 1995, Waterloo had 26 Councillors and 22 in 1997. Therefore the belief that Council was more effective could very well have been due to the reduction in size of Council. It was also acknowledged that not all Waterloo councillors would agree that direct election was more effective. It was of note that in Waterloo the rural communities each had only one representative. Mr. Seiling confirmed that the rural and urban communities were looked at in separate bands and that representation based on population was used to determine the number of councillors. Each urban regional councillor represent an average of 36,623 people.

A motion that the current method of double direct election of Regional Councillors (meaning the councillor sit on both the local and regional council) be maintained was deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee endorsed a motion that Mayors should automatically sit on Regional Council.

The Committee meets again on Nov. 6th.