

BAG group pleads for support in Pefferlaw to help them close dump

The Brock and Georgina Against Garbage (BAG) activist group which is fighting to have the Brock dump closed before it is expanded to receive 750,000 tonnes of additional garbage, took their case to the residents in the Pefferlaw area on Wednesday, March 14 to try and drum up support for their cause.

As reported in the past, the Brock dump has been leaching into surrounding and adjacent property and a remediation plan to address the problem has been submitted by Durham Region to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE).

The plan calls for a leachate collection system and 100,000 tonnes of material to contour and shape the landfill before a “roofing” system is put in place to prevent rainwater and moisture from seeping through the garbage. Once in place, Durham Region’s plan is to ask for MOE approval to expand and continue using the facility to allow a maximum of 750,000 tonnes of garbage to be landfilled there. MOE approval is required before the remediation plan can go forward and currently they are waiting for clarification on some points and a site operations report from Durham Region which is due on March 31. Heather Gillies, husband Peter and long-time resident and Brock dump activist Fran Fish have been leading the charge to have the dump closed to prevent further damage

to neighbouring farms and the Lake Simcoe watershed.

The meeting in Pefferlaw was one of many hosted by BAG in other centres to engage residents in a mass letter-writing and telephone campaign to Durham Region and MOE representatives.

According to Brock mayor Larry O’Connor, BAG has asked the Township of Brock to sue Durham Region over the damage caused by the dump, but council has rejected the idea due to costs.

“It would cost about \$200,000 and that would mean a four per cent increase in tax levies,” Mr. O’Connor said. “There are some other routes we can take that we are looking at.”

Brock resident Penny Beudrow responded to Mr. O’Connor by saying that she would not mind paying the tax hike to help pay the costs of a law suit.

Another tactic proposed by BAG is to have the Township of Brock pass a by-law that would reduce load capacity on roads leading to the dump to half-loads.

“We just can’t do that,” Mr. O’Connor told the audience at the Pefferlaw Lions Hall. “It just won’t work.”

Owen Williams, a Pefferlaw resident who lives less than 3 kilometers from the dump has been following the issue and is concerned about the impact on the Lake Simcoe watershed.

“I’m afraid they are not getting enough people on-side quickly enough,” Mr. Williams said, “and they have to get a group of people together acting cohesively.” He stressed many more people have to come forward and become involved.

Barry Hobbs, a resident from Cannington attending the Pefferlaw meeting agreed.

“We need a collective effort,” he said.

“What BAG is doing is extremely important and our local politicians have to demonstrate a level of anger that will cause them to do something they don’t normally do—put the region’s feet to the fire.”

Mr. Hobbs went on to say the issue is threatening the area’s most sacred feature, the environment. “This is about protecting this place and it is one thing if you don’t support it, but it is another to jeopardize the environmental health of the area,” he said. “Lake Simcoe and the Pefferlaw River are only four kilometers away.”

According to Gavin Battarino, a project officer for MOE, the only application before the MOE is the remediation plan and Durham Region has not submitted a plan or application to expand the facility.

“Any application would be subject to the stringent requirements of our environmental legislation and no approvals would be given without a detailed review of the site conditions and potential environmental impacts,” he said.