

LCCW Public Meeting February 3, 2011

Meeting Summary

Residents met with government officials at an overflowing public meeting of almost 200 people last night in Port Perry, Ontario on a controversial commercial fill operation taking place in an environmentally sensitive area of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The dumping of fill, some of it from brownfield sites in Toronto, is continuing despite the revoking in October of the municipal permit that had allowed it to begin.

The meeting was organized by the Lakeridge Citizens for Clean Water and included speakers from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Transport Canada, the office of MPP John O'Toole, Kawartha Lakes Conservation Authority, and STORM (Save The Oak Ridges Moraine) Coalition, as well as the Township's mayor, Chuck Mercier, and a representative from Earthworx, the company operating the commercial fill operation. Ian McLaurin presented the basic facts of the issue and goals and objectives of LCCW.

Feelings ran high as residents demanded that the Ministry of the Environment and the Township of Scugog take immediate action to stop the dumping. The mayor Chuck Mercier announced that they would be in court February 14 proceeding with their action for an injunction to stop the dumping. There were shouts of disgust when the crowd heard that date would only be to set a subsequent court date for the hearing.

Dave Fumerton, the District Manager of the York Durham office of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, described the actions that they are taking to monitor the quality of the fill, including an environmental site assessment that is currently underway. He said that if the site assessment shows the possibility of contamination, further action would be taken.

Tom Lowrey, the Program Manager for Noise Management and Land Use for Transport Canada, and Jacob Mantle from the office of MPP John O'Toole presented letters from the Minister of Transport, Chuck Strahl, declaring that the federal jurisdiction over aerodromes does not extend to the fill. Until this announcement, the regulation of the site had been confused by the company's self-designation of the site as an aerodrome, thus under federal jurisdiction and, they contended, exempt from any provincial and municipal authority.

Rob Messervey, the Chief Administrative Officer of the Kawartha Lakes Conservation Authority spoke of the involvement of the CA's in this issue, including their monitoring wells around the site. Debbie Gordon, an outreach coordinator with STORM Coalition looked ahead to the review of the Oak Ridges Moraine legislation in 2015.

John Tidball, Earthworx's environmental lawyer, presented the case that the company had been complying with the MOE orders.

Approximately 100 new members signed up as supporters. The event drew media interest from the local papers, the Toronto Star and CHEX TV.