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Task force asks council to step up enforcement at Tottenham airfield

Town lawyer says site plan agreement being followed

Tottenham aerodrome

Brad Pritchard photo

The front entrance of the Tottenham Aerodrome on Highway 9.



Alliston Herald

By [Brad Pritchard](#)

An environmental group says New Tecumseth is not doing enough to enforce its site plan agreement with the Tottenham Airfield Corporation (TAC), but the town's lawyer argues all steps are being taken to ensure the fill operation follows the rules.

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Carmela Marshall from the Ontario Soil Regulation Task Force spoke to council March 20 to air a number of concerns the group has about the fill activity at the property, located on Hwy. 9 just east of the Tecumseth Pines community for seniors.

Marshall first questioned why the site, which lies within the Oak Ridges Moraine, was using fill from a soil management facility that accepts soil with PCBs, toxic chemicals that used to be found in paints, inks, lubricants and other products.

“This is the first I heard that they detected PCBs at the site, which is extremely, extremely alarming,” she said.

While Marshall said she believes this goes against the conditions of the agreement, town lawyer Jay Feehely has a different opinion.

“We've only had one serious exceedance of PCBs and that's being corrected. It's being dug out,” he said. “The others are minor and are below the standard set by the Ministry of the Environment, but we are following up on those, as well.”

He further noted the town has received a letter from TAC confirming it won't be sending any materials to the site that have PCBs at the source.

"It's an enforcement issue, but it's not one I'm going to go to court over at this point," he said.

A representative from TAC was not present at the meeting and *The Herald* did not receive a response from the company's legal representative, Shari Elliot.

Marshall also questioned why the town doesn't have more timely reports from the TAC, such as weekly and monthly truck loads, soil tests, audits, and well monitoring results.

She said having this information and making it public would help "instil confidence" in local residents that the town is staying on top of the issue.

"You go out and do your due diligence, you do your quality assurance, you do your testing and ensure reports are done on time," she said.

While Feehely said the company isn't required to submit the information to a specific deadline, he noted staff members meet with the property owner and site managers on a regular basis.

"We are monitoring monthly, we are following up on the agreement, and we are doing everything that's necessarily to enforce it," he said.

Marshall also sought an update on the groundwater monitoring program and asked council to look into a drainage issue recently discovered in a pond at Tecumseth Pines.

The town's consultant said preliminary results taken from 10 wells drilled in February were "encouraging." He said further tests and consultations have to be performed before the final report is submitted to the town.

Coun. Shira Harrison McIntyre, whose ward contains the site, requested council be given regular updates on activity at the site.

"It's such an enormous issue and such an important issue that everyone (should) be kept up-to-date on it," she said.