

City holds little sway over landfill expansion; Zoning issues to be dealt with; serious concerns to be handled by advisory committee

West Carleton Review

The City of Ottawa held a meeting last week in Carp that showed, going forward, how little power it has over the landfill expansion.

Waste Management plans to create a second site next to the colloquially named 'Carp Mountain' at Carp Road and Highway 417. It has received the provincial government's blessing but requires a zoning change approval from the city.

City planner Cheryl McWilliams told the dozen or more concerned residents at the agricultural hall meeting on May 28 that the city has a say on a few requirements: exterior visuals such as landscaping (including tree species), berms, fencing, and the like; the location and size of parking lots and internal roads; buffer zone sizes; on-site water treatment for workers; and building height.

"So it gets down to a fair bit of detail as to the peripheral things," Mc-Williams said. "The zoning process doesn't get into some of the concerns raised."

A few fears raised include: groundwater contamination if landfill leachate seeps into the fractured limestone below; increased traffic on the already congested area roads; odour similar to levels that forced the province to reprimand Waste Management about six years ago; a drop in property values due to having a nearby landfill; the catchment area is not limited to Ottawa and area, but could see trash come in from other parts of Ontario; a working landfill situated among the three fast-growing communities of Kanata, Stittsville and Carp.

The four west Ottawa councillors at the meeting explained there is an advisory committee made up of city and company officials, along with community stakeholders. The committee will negotiate agreements on the contentious issues. The committee has no legal power; Waste Management can accept or reject recommendations.

The company has publicly stated it wants to satisfy area residents.

Residents at the meeting doubted there is enough time for negotiations, and accused Waste Management of accelerating the process to silence critics. The 120-day comment period ends in early July, when council votes on the plan. Company officials were at the meeting but declined comment.

One resident found it difficult to believe a landfill could be created within city limits without council's agreement. Other area communities in recent years have rejected landfills.

"If you really wanted to stop it, you could have."

Another asked: "The city has no authority over a company coming in and contaminating our groundwater? Doesn't that infuriate you?" West Carleton-March Coun. Eli El-Chantiry recounted city efforts to block the expansion, including the mayor's letter to the environment minister, the 18 council-backed demands, the 20 public meetings and many residents' submissions, and the rise of opposition citizen groups.

"Then we found out in the media that it was approved," he said.

Kanata North Coun. Marianne Wilkinson warned against taking the company to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Any gains made at the committee level would be lost at the OMB, she said.

Incorrect information has appeared on the city's website. Residents asked if missing addresses is enough to delay the entire process. It was explained that the map shows the affected properties and that is enough to keep it on track.

"There was no intention to mislead," McWilliams said.

No one representing the province was on hand. Carleton-Mississippi Mills NDP candidate John Hansen attended the meeting.



Planner Cheryl McWilliams explains the requirements the city can impose upon Waste Management's landfill expansion.