

Outgoing Mayor asks MOECC for clarification on mitigation

In his final days as Mayor of Melancthon, Bill Hill made a final attempt to get clarification from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Control (MOECC) on Dufferin Wind Power mitigation plans for turbine transmission poles running through his Township. In a letter dated November 27th, Hill addressed Glen R. Murray Minister of the Environment and Climate Change:

It is frustrating to not have had the courtesy of a response from you to any previous letters regarding the issue with Dufferin Wind Power Incorporated (DWPI). This is my third request.

When the mitigation issues started with DWPI, Gary Tomlinson, Senior Environmental Officer, Guelph District Office and I spoke on different occasions that when the job was done, there would be a Report compiled and it would be a public document. I specifically asked if a copy would be sent to the Township of Melancthon and the County of Dufferin as we were the municipalities affected. He assured me that we would get a copy. I have been advised that the MOECC is running these documents through the FOI Process.

Neither Melancthon Township nor the County of Dufferin has requested this information so far as we have been told it would be forthcoming. So I now request clarification from you that it will be necessary for Melancthon Township and the County of Dufferin to use the FOI Process.

I find this extremely concerning and troubling because if in fact DWPI has gone above and beyond and exceeded any requirement they had regarding the mitigation process, a reasonable person would think they would be proud of what they did and share it in order to eliminate concerns of the Public.

Our concern is still real because in one of the conversations with Mr. Tomlinson, he indicated the mitigation program had never been used in this type of situation before but he felt sure it would work. And then he added, But that's what they said about Walkerton?.

You and probably others in Queen's Park are well aware that, after 28 years of public service, I decided not to run in the recent Municipal Election. While I will not be here to send further letters to you, the fact remains, the issue won't go away because the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elect have been active in this file from the beginning.

So please fulfill your obligation and respond to the Citizens of Melancthon Township and Dufferin County and give them some assurances that your Ministry will see this mitigation program to the end and that you will continue to monitor this program, as required. Further, that you instruct that copies of the Final Report be sent as requested.?

In response to questions from the Free Press, the new Mayor of Melancthon, Darren White said, the mitigation on the pole line on the rail lands etc. was not a part of any agreement that the Township had with DWPI. The plan was developed by the MOECC and DWPI as an afterthought in response to public complaints about the pole line construction. The Township had NO INPUT into the plan, nor was it asked for comments or engineering advice. We were left out of the process altogether where this particular mitigation plan is concerned. With regards to why we don't have a copy of the plan, we are, I am, currently attempting to get it through an FOI request.?

Gary Tomlinson, the Senior Environmental Officer of the Guelph District Office of the MOECC responded to Hill's letter in an email that stated, It's pretty clear that we have had a miscommunication here.? Tomlinson did not use the words mitigation plans in his response, but rather referred to what he had promised, the now former Mayor, as a roll-up? of what happened and where it happened that he, himself would pass to the three lower tier and one upper tier municipalities impacted by the sealing project. Tomlinson reported that the most critical portion of the program, (the sealing), was completed back in mid-October?to prevent the possibility of them becoming conduits down to the fractured limestone bedrock.? He also reported that re-grading to prevent the undue excessive accumulation of surface water around the bases of the poles? is not yet fully completed. At such time as I am satisfied that the required areas are graded as was agreed with DWP,? Tomlinson wrote, I will be in a position to put together the roll-up and pass it along as promised.? He further added that, the project and operations at DWP continue to be monitored by MOECC Officers as resources, (and now the weather), allow.?

Green Party Candidate Karren Wallace, who took on Dufferin Wind in a preliminary hearing of an Environmental Tribunal last week says, the most telling and ominous statement by Tomlinson in his response to the Township is MOECC continues to monitor as resources allow.?

By Marni Walsh