



The Napanee Beaver

Commentary

INDEPENDENT AND LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 1870

EDITORIAL

Here we go again...?

The Richmond Landfill Expansion: The Sequel?

To be sure, there are many local residents who hope not. For the better part of a decade, the fight over that controversial landfill expansion dominated this community. Few would relish another decade of debate.

Obviously, you shouldn't judge something you haven't seen yet – and Waste Management, the operator of the Beechwood Road facility, hasn't said conclusively that it will once again seek provincial approval for an expansion of the site. At the same time, we do have concerns if another expansion is in WM's game plan.

The concerns of local residents must be put to rest. Odours from the site continue to be an issue, despite WM efforts to reduce them. Concerns about other off-site impacts linger. Unless the current site can be conclusively addressed, it's difficult to give our blessing for a bigger site.

But there's a more fundamental question that goes beyond whether or not the site is safe. What we're asking is this: hasn't this community done enough to help alleviate the need for waste disposal capacity in Ontario?

The site has operated for about 50 years under a number of different owners, and it's already big enough that it can be seen from miles around. How much more garbage do we need to take? We would argue that we have done our part, and it's time for the rest of Ontario to start doing more to reduce the amount of waste it produces, and find new methods by which to dispose of its garbage besides landfilling.

To its credit, WM is expanding its own recycling and compost efforts, and its other initiatives such as the electronic waste collection program. WM has offered financial and other assistance to a number of good works in the community, and it deserves to be acknowledged for it.

But Greater Napanee has been home to this massive landfill for long enough. We'll wait to see what, if anything, WM brings forward. But at this point, we think it's time for the site to be closed safely and for this community to move on.