

Remarks on the Clean Air Subcommittee 2009 Mike Douglas

Hello Ladies and gentleman, I'm Mike Douglas from Sheridan and it's a pleasure to review with you a year to remember for the Clean Air Subcommittee.

First I'd like thank her worship the Mayor and distinguished city Councillors, for your support of clean air in Mississauga and in particular I'd like to thank Councillor Mullin for her bold and resolute leadership in this fight.

After MIRANET first formed, and the clean Air Subcommittee was created, Maureen Shaw, President of the Clarkson Fairfields South Ratepayers' Association gave fellow MIRANET members the grim details about hundreds of tonnes of toxins coming to south Mississauga, **if** the planned power plant by Sithe Global was allowed to proceed.

Maureen introduced us to Julie Desjardins, a community volunteer who famously reduced the pollution from St Lawrence Cement and became Co-Chair of the Clarkson Airshed Advisory Committee (CASAC).

We asked Julie to tell us her story at our January meeting and we heard how one individual could face up to negligent powers and make a beneficial difference for all. MIRANET voted to unanimously support the previous CASAC resolution against the power plant going into the already stressed Clarkson air shed.

From the outset, Julie and experts like Dr. Boyd Upper had informed us that this was an issue of human health versus energy efficiency. Our new committee had much learning to do.

The March 3rd OPA town hall meeting, which MIRANET publicized, was full to overflowing as 400 people sat or stood listening incredulously to the OPA's story - that there would be no health impact from this power plant's emissions.

On the basis of Ontario's general air quality being improved by removing remote coal burning plants, the OPA argued that gas power plants right here in Mississauga, would actually be good for our health. This was

rebutted by Dr. Boyd Upper in a presentation that to this day is one of the most downloaded documents on the MIRANET website.

On April 21, we contributed to and reported on, 17 residents associations meeting with the Mayor and the Minister of Environment to document the shortcomings of his Ministry on this file and to underline the need for action to make the air better, rather than worse.

At the City of Mississauga, efforts by Councillor Mullin and the Mayor led to unanimous support from City Council for a resolution to prohibit new industrial polluters from operating in this already overly polluted airshed.

All of City Council, the Peel Medical Officer of Health and Peel Council, our MP and MPP, along with merchants, schools and churches, the community as we knew it was united, and that provided a strong foundation for the fight ahead.

At the OPA, the game changed dramatically, the power plant contest was expanded to include 3 more proponents, all within the Clarkson airshed study area, so we wasted no time on differentiation, they were all bad or worse, including the site in Oakville. The new RFPs would be due by July, the OPA's decision would be announced by the end of August.

MIRANET's website sought to transform information into action.

The Ministry of Environment hired new experts and set up a meeting for May 28th, at Lorne Park High School, they were questioning the validity of their own Clarkson Airshed Study. Again we took responsibility for ensuring the interested attend and again hundreds arrived, the cafeteria was both packed **and** informed.

The meeting agenda featured various expert assessments based on questionable inputs, with the discussion to be facilitated and managed – but no - the crowd wouldn't have it. The agenda was tossed and citizens' questions took over the meeting, grilling Consultants and the harried Director from the Ministry of Environment, over how to end the prospect of this power plant.

At the meeting, MIRANET was invited by the MOE to submit to the Ministry our proposed terms of reference for a renewed version of CASAC, which we did.

It was time to hold our own meeting. We joined forces with other community volunteers, particularly Julie Desjardins, to produce a public rally for clean air on June 24th. Together we planned and executed the biggest political rally in Mississauga history. All our political representatives were on stage. We heard the Mayor of Nanticoke describe her community's industrial strategy and their need for the power plant. We heard our own Mayor renew her pledge - no gas plant in the Clarkson area. We presented Mayor McCallion with 17,000 Petition signatures: the largest petition she'd ever received and MPP Charles Sousa accompanied her to the Premier's Office to deliver it.

We gave the rally blueprint, banner and assistance to our new colleagues in Oakville, and they hosted a similar rally in July.

When the Premier postponed the decision to the end of September, the MIRANET website became the source of the story as we pushed out press releases and media initiatives carrying the fight to Queen's Park. We challenged the findings of the OPA's inadequate health report to the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario and we generated press coverage in all media.

On September 14th, the Mayor called for a public press conference that we actively supported, to share our health concerns with the Premier and the Ministers responsible. But those elected leaders ducked our meeting and a blistering event was held for the packed gym full of 500 residents and a receptive media. With no appearance by the province's 'leaders' we decided to organize a press conference and public rally for them, at Queen's Park.

On September 28th Mayor McCallion and Oakville Mayor Rob Burton along with volunteer leaders, went to Queen's Park and performed with great effect at a well attended press conference and **scrum**. The Rally was

called off due to rain but the appearance of 50 residents with the Mayor in the Legislature, helped the human health story play large all day.

Finally at the end of September, the plant's location was announced, along with a new Task Force to clean up the taxed Airshed.

The winning proponent (TransCanada) had done a deal with Ford for their site and the Oakville Generating Station was hatched. The people of east Oakville and west Mississauga are now threatened by a needless power plant.

The Citizens for clean air, C4CA, based in Oakville have taken over the lead on this issue and we maintain contact with them. Some of our members serve on C4CA committees, working well against a relentless and senseless foe.

Immediately Ford and Trans Canada challenged the Town of Oakville bylaw prohibiting any large power plants until the Town could properly address the issue of location. On October 15th Dorothy Tomiuk appeared on our behalf before the OMB hearing and was cited in the successful judgment allowing Oakville time to assess their new situation.

And on Dec. 9, the MIRANET presentation to 400 people at a C4CA planning meeting in Oakville was instrumental in sharing experiences to inform the ongoing cause.

The membership of the MIRANET Clean Air Subcommittee will continue to include Brian Holtham (CRA), Ivan Sack (WLPCA) and MIRANET Secretary Dorothy Tomiuk, who will be reporting on the progress of the new Provincial Air Quality Task Force on the Clarkson-Oakville Airshed.

I am grateful to them, and for the education I enjoyed, as I look forward to new interests.

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MIRANET AGM Report