

Outaouais to investigate best waste disposal option

BY DAVE ROGERS

The Outaouais has given itself five to six years to agree on a regional garbage incinerator, waste-to-energy or biofuel plant so area municipalities won't have to continue shipping their garbage to a landfill near Lachute.

Gatineau Councillor Patrice Martin said yesterday the city, and the regional municipalities of Pontiac, Papineau and the Collines-de-l'Outaouais have

signed a contract to ship their garbage to Lachute for another 30 months, but said it will take at least five years to agree on an alternative to landfill sites.

"Outaouais municipalities have formed a committee to determine the most appropriate technology and location for a regional solution for the post-landfill era," Mr. Martin said. "This committee should start its work within two weeks.

"Everything is on the table. There are different technolo-

gies, including plasma gasification, like Ottawa is testing, incineration and using waste to produce ethanol. We want to look at the pros and cons in terms of economics and the environment."

Mr. Martin said Gatineau's intention is to become responsible for its own waste instead of shipping it outside the region.

Starting this year, Gatineau will phase in an ambitious composting and recycling program that is expected to divert

65 per cent of the city's garbage from landfill sites by 2011.

The city plans to build a plant south of the Gatineau executive airport for composting, sorting recyclable material, and shipping garbage that can't be recycled or composted to Lachute, halfway to Montreal. Composting will start in 2009 in some neighbourhoods.

Each household will receive a free waist-high 360-litre wheeled plastic recycling bin by spring 2008. Free 45-litre

containers for table scraps will be available starting in 2009.

The waste diversion project will increase garbage disposal costs included in property tax bills to \$189 a year per household in 2011 from \$111 a year.

Michèle Borchers, vice-president of the Coalition Against the Danford Lake Megadump, said the decision to send the region's waste to Lachute is good because it means that a landfill at Danford Lake is less likely.

Ms. Borchers said the con-

tract with the Lachute landfill gives Outaouais municipalities time to develop alternatives. She said recommendations from the Outaouais regional waste committee are expected by September 2008.

Opponents of the proposed Danford Lake landfill on Highway 301, located an hour north of Gatineau, are concerned that runoff from the site could leak into the pristine Picanoc River and wells that provide drinking water.

'Old idea' back in vogue — and wins award

A pair of old homes on Bolton Street show off restored porches that boost their value, and look fantastic, reports MARIA COOK.

Cats like them. On hot summer nights, people drink beer on them. Bikes accumulate on them. Who doesn't love a front porch?

A century-old house in the ByWard Market, with three restored porches, has won a City of Ottawa architectural conservation award.

It's a modest project in the grand scheme of things — other buildings receiving awards at a ceremony today include Rideau Hall.

But discovering great old porches is like "finding a buried treasure," says Paul Denys, the Ottawa designer and builder who renewed them.

"A lot of people don't realize they have a diamond in the

rough," he says. "These porches are one of a kind. They're not mass-produced."

The Victorian house at 208-212 Bolton St., which contains three units, was built about 1900. At that time, a wooden porch was the focus of a great deal of creative energy. Styles were exuberant and ornamental. The carpenter's heart was really in it. This is where he had a chance to show his craft and skill.

The Bolton Street porches feature columns, rosettes, flower petals, arches, coves and crowns. "It's meant to be a showcase," says Stuart Lazear, City of Ottawa co-ordinator of heritage planning.

"Porches are part of the first impression of a heritage building," he says. "The care with which a porch is retained and restored speaks to the maintenance and care of the building as a whole."

Take away the porch and what you often find is a relatively plain brick or wooden building. "If you lose the porch, you lose the house," says Mr. Denys.



The Bolton Street porches feature columns, rosettes, flower petals, arches, coves and crowns, a project so excellently restored that it won a City of Ottawa architectural conservation reward.

In the past, porches and woodwork were an excuse to use colour. The Bolton Street porches highlight their rich details in shades of light and dark green, cream and gold.

A porch does many things. It creates a point of entry to a house and provides a threshold between public street and private life. Porches appeal on a gut level because they are tactile and in proportion with the

human body. You can touch the handrails and columns, lean against the balustrade.

In the Queen Anne and Victorian periods, porches were understood as places where civic life happened, a delightful place to hang out. They were big enough for furniture. New porches are often too small, too narrow and the woodwork is mean and insubstantial.

"A porch is such a critical as-

pect of the heritage of a building," says Mr. Lazear. "Unfortunately, if it's allowed to deteriorate too much, you have to take the whole sucker down."

Mr. Denys and the owners of the Bolton Street house did an unusually good job in fixing it up, he says. The project involved restoration of a balcony and shoring up sunken porches. The front columns and bases, along with all the rail-

ings, were replaced with custom-turned components.

"He didn't just go to a hardware store and pick up any old column and insert it," says Mr. Lazear. "He didn't chop the bottom off the rotten column and encase it in wood. He took the pattern of the half column remaining and used that as a template to create a full column."

Mr. Denys also succeeded on the second-floor balcony. Sometimes, rebuilt second-storey porches don't compensate for a sloping floor, resulting in balustrades that lean out at an angle. "That's ugly as hell," says Mr. Lazear.

A porch renewal with custom millwork can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$40,000, says Mr. Denys. "It's not as cheap as getting components from Home Depot, but those aren't the same sturdiness and appropriateness."

The added value to a house is "more than double your money back," he says.

The City of Ottawa lends a hand by giving \$5,000 matching grants to heritage property owners for exterior restoration. Grants total \$150,000 a year.

New houses are once again being built with porches. It's part of an urban design movement to banish garages from the front and create some semblance of street life.

"People can mingle with neighbours, watch the kids, and keep an eye on the street for safety," says Mr. Lazear. "New idea? No. Old idea coming back."

An Ottawa first: Shiites and Sunnis co-operate to honour Muslim MPPs

BY TIM SHUFELT

While sectarian violence continues to claim lives in Iraq, Shia and Sunni Muslims in Ottawa are working together.

The two groups held a joint event this past Friday to honour the civic contribution of four Muslim MPPs and to herald a new era of Muslim engagement in Canadian society, said Tyseer Aboulnasr, spokeswoman for the Canadian Muslim Network, an umbrella group representing various organizations across the country.

Ms. Aboulnasr said religious divisions in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East do not hold in Canada.

"How I pray, at the end of day, in my home, is really none of anybody's business. What matters is how we deal with each other and how we contribute to the community at large."

While there is no animosity or tension between the Ottawa Muslim Association (OMA), which represents the region's Sunni Muslims, and the Shia group Ahlul Bayt Centre-Ottawa (ABC-O), it is important to bridge the gap to preclude the possibility of a rift between sects, Ms. Aboulnasr explained. Having broken the ice, the two groups should continue to co-operate, she said.

"There's a lot more in common with us than there are dif-

ferences, so let's work together."

Many of those differences trace back to a nearly 1,400-year-old disagreement over the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad. Sunnis now make up the vast majority of Islam's estimated 1.1 to 1.8 billion followers worldwide, with nearly every other Muslim identifying as Shiite.

In the Ottawa region, more than 90 per cent of the Muslim community is Sunni, said Akbar Manoussi, spokesman for the OMA.

Although Mr. Manoussi is Shiite, he said he has never heard even a whisper of protest about serving on the board of a Sunni group for several years.

"It's amazing. Things like that, if you're talking about back home, they wouldn't accept it. They wouldn't believe it's happening," said Mr. Manoussi, who was born in Iran.

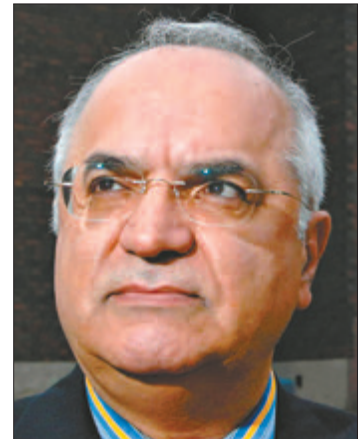
However, he said he has been encouraged by his fellow Shiites in Ottawa to join the ABC-O, to which he issued a friendly challenge. "The day I come is the day you choose a Sunni executive in your group. Until that day comes, I'll pray to Allah," he said, laughing.

Mr. Manoussi said Canada is an example of tolerance of which the rest of the world should take notice. The key is in emphasizing the similarities, he said. "The worst thing is to start

talking about the differences."

There were no discussions of divisive religious issues on Friday night, he said. Premier Dalton McGuinty was on hand at the event at the Sheraton to commend MPPs Yasir Naqvi, Ottawa Centre; Khalil Ramal, London-Fanshawe; Reza Moridi, Richmond Hill; and Shafiq Qadri, Etobicoke North.

But Ms. Aboulnasr stressed that the honorees' victories in the October provincial election benefit Canada rather than the Muslim community. "They were not elected to represent Muslim perspectives. These people were elected as Canadians, elected by Canadians and accountable to Canadians."



ASHLEY FRASER, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Although a Shiite, Akbar Manoussi has not heard a whisper of protest about serving on the board of a Sunni group.

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Contact:

Don Hale

t: 613.825.7502

f: 613.825.7758

e: dchale@sympatico.ca