

## **WOULD YOU TURN DOWN \$800,000?**

### **Letter to the Editor: Submitted to the Sun Tribune for Feb 19<sup>th</sup> edition**

WSCE Co-operative exists within the community of Whitchurch-Stouffville. The co-operative has 110 members, who also live in this community. The association (WSCE Co-operative) just offered you \$800,000. Would you take it? I think you would. You would ask some sensible questions, of course, but you would take the offer.

On Jan 20, 2015 the Whitchurch-Stouffville Community Energy Co-operative did just that.

We offered the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville an opportunity to take over our Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) contract for producing renewable energy. Yes, the Town would have to finance the solar installation at 3.07% from Infrastructure Ontario just as many other municipalities across Ontario do to finance local infrastructure. But the project will pay for all costs, including financing, and leave the Town with over \$800,000 in net income.

Whoa!! Where did this scheme come from? It is not a scheme. It represents over three years of diligent work by a group of community residents who were willing to take a small financial risk and put in a lot of hours to make it happen.

We want to make a local difference by acknowledging and addressing the climate change struggle.

We want a more environmentally sustainable community and we wanted to do it by our community for our community.

We have a green project that is ready to be built. It is a 260kW solar generator on top of the Clippers Arena that will generate green energy to our community. We hoped it would be 100% community owned, but as a volunteer community group dealing with a range of obstacles and delays, we now have neither the nor the resources time to raise the capital from community members.

So we said to ourselves why not transfer the project to the Town. It is on their roof, and other municipalities are doing it. The Town of Markham has built over 1,400kW of solar power on municipal roofs financed through reserves. The County of Brant generates over \$180,000 net income a year from the same FIT program.

Better we give the project to the Town than lose the opportunity for our community. On January the 20<sup>th</sup> our Co-operative presented this opportunity to the new Council, who thankfully agreed to refer the matter to Town staff, which is all we asked them to do.

But the opportunity is NOT finalized. Town staff will bring back a report to Council by the end of March. And we have lots of reason to be less than optimistic.

Through this proposed partnership the Town will receive a net income - that is right- a NET income of over \$800,000 over the 20 years of the contract. In return we are asking the Town to establish an environmental legacy fund to support further actions toward building more environmentally sustainable community.

The old Town Council killed the Environmental Advisory Committee.

Our co-operative is giving the new Town Council an opportunity to distinguish itself, to take this bold yet sensible step with an exciting green energy project and finally join the shift toward sustainable living that is happening around us.

Call your Ward Councillor. Call the Mayor and ask them what are they going to do to support environmental action in our community. Call us if you want to know more. You can find our contact information at [www.energycooperative.ca](http://www.energycooperative.ca)

The Board WSCE Co-operative Inc.