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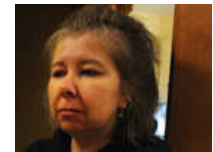
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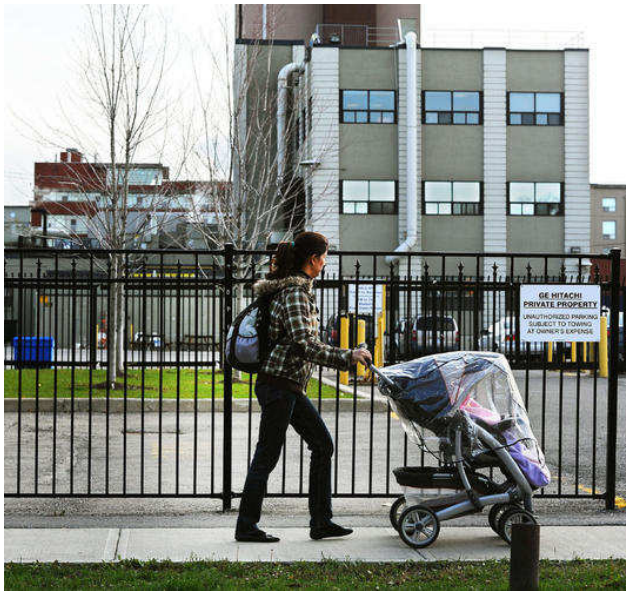
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Residents, company officials spar over uranium processing plant

Published on Wednesday November 14, 2012



A woman walks a child past the General Electric-Hitachi factory on Lansdowne Ave. near Dupont St. The uranium-processing plant has been operating for 50 years in the neighbourhood.

RICHARD LAUTENS/TORONTO STAR

Karissa Donkin

Staff Reporter

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General Electric-Hitachi officials admit the company needs to communicate better with the public about a [uranium processing plant](#) that has caused confusion and panic in a west-end neighbourhood.

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"It's obvious we need to do some work," GE-Hitachi environment, health and safety manager Paul Desiri told a packed room at the Bloor/Gladstone branch of the Toronto Public Library Wednesday evening. The public meeting was hosted by community group DIG IN (Dupont Improvement Group).

The meeting about the facility on Lansdowne Ave. was supposed to be the first step toward

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by the regulator, but said they are now trying to go above and beyond those standards by opening public meetings and setting up a hotline for residents' questions.

GE-Hitachi officials also sparred with Peterborough activist Zach Ruitter, who has been going door-to-door in the community to warn people about the plant. He wants the plant to suspend operations while the company goes through a process with the community. GE-Hitachi officials and Ruitter had a verbal tennis match going on throughout the meeting. GE-Hitachi suggested some of Ruitter's facts were wrong, while Ruitter suggested some of what GE-Hitachi was saying was misleading.

Resident Matt Park told Ruitter the community didn't want to be used as a soapbox for him to mount an anti-nuclear crusade. He criticized a poster Ruitter posted on the wall at the meeting that shows the GE logo with devil's horns.

"You're better than that," he said.



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Ruitter said he doesn't feel ashamed about trying to alert the community.

"I'm not trying to exploit this community. I'm trying to bring justice to this community," he said.

Fingers were also pointed at city councillor Cesar Palacio (Ward 17, Davenport), who couldn't attend the meeting and sent staffer Mike Makrigiorgos in his place. He was criticized for not knowing about the plant.

"The city's job is to deal with land use," Makrigiorgos said, adding that Palacio is working on having the site's land-use designation changed from heavy industrial to light employment.

The meeting ended when the library closed, with many people in the audience still waiting to speak, some clearly frustrated.

GE-Hitachi says people with questions about the Lansdowne Ave. facility can call the company at 1-855-696-9588 or email GEH.Canada@ge.com.

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