

Councillors frustrated by long wait for power to return

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After cold and darkness lasted nine days for the unluckiest residents of Scarborough, city officials were looking at what can be learned from the massive ice storm recovery effort and who ultimately will pay for it.

Questions at a special Toronto council meeting on Jan. 10, at which the city is expected to ask the province for compensation, are expected on communications after the storm, and whether authorities could have found better ways to reach residents with important information.

When Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and four

doing their utmost."

As Toronto Hydro and the provincial utility Hydro One were then beginning what was described as the final, difficult recovery phase consisting mainly of individual houses.

By press time Monday, officials were hoping power to the last 725 could be restored within hours, but on Friday 32,000 customers across the city were still in the dark.

In Scarborough, that included entire streets where frustrations were building and greater efforts were still needed, said local councillors, some of whom said they were tired of storm-recovery "photo ops" staged by other politicians.

On Friday, Michelle

Berardinetti, called the safety jackets and hard hats Wynne and the MPPs wore in Highland Creek "props" and questioned why the premier had come. "To my residents it looks fake," she said.

The councillor for Scarborough Southwest was among the first to call for a declared state of emergency — "Call it what it is," she said — and insisted more still needed to be done for residents who had gone up to seven days without power. "People are really upset," Berardinetti said.

Berardinetti said the city hadn't set up enough warming centres in hard-hit Scarborough.

Gary Crawford, Southwest Scarborough's other council-

lor, said at least 12 streets in his ward still had significant outages on Friday, and many there felt forgotten.

"There's a real sense of abandonment, that people just don't care — which I don't think is the case," he said.

Some residents, isolated and elderly, stayed because they worried leaving would open their homes to thefts, said Crawford, while others hadn't yet seen a Hydro truck nearby and just wanted information.

Paul Ainslie, a councillor for Scarborough East, counted three areas in his ward that were still dark.

"We're not talking house by house, we're talking streets," he said, adding his distaste for an appearance Mayor

Rob Ford had made at a local school.

The school had power and the mayor, Ainslie said, had for a "photo op" pulled a crew from Hydro Windsor away from their work reconnecting homes around it.

On Monday, Scarborough-Agincourt Councillor Mike Del Grande said he had been frustrated by a lack of specifics on, for example, where Hydro crews were working, and uncertainty on who, Mayor Ford or Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly, was really in charge of the city's recovery efforts.

"There should be one message coming from one place," said Del Grande.

i For updates on the ice storm recovery, visit us online at www.scarboroughmirror.com

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