

**Mason Stucklberger**  
**3960 Lund ave**

**Bylaw 1966 Public hearing submission - Crematorium**

I have lived in or around Smithers my entire life.

I sought out a career here, made my home here, and now also own a small business here.

As with all home owners I have put so much of my time and money into purchasing, maintaining, and improving my home and property. In spite of the work and sacrifice it takes, I have always thought it was well worth it, and feel privileged to call this place home.

Along with my neighbours, I value my home and this area very much, so when a proposal is submitted that threatens the value of my home, my quality of life, and the general “picture” of our community I cannot help but object.

I love what this small town has to offer, including the services we are lucky to have given our relatively low population.

I am in favour of new services if they are needed, but honestly, a crematorium service is not one that I have ever considered as something we desperately need our community.

I understand the statistical rise in the amount of people choosing cremation, and if the majority of residents are in favour of this service I would support its development in a suitable location.

The applicant has suggested the residents of this area are demonstrating a “not in my backyard” attitude towards this proposal, if anything it’s mostly our front yards we are talking about.

But it does beg the question, who among you would be in full support of this service, with no real oversight or limit on expansion, being operated in your own front yard?

A lot of research work needs to be done and a lot of questions need to be answered before this type of facility is considered for approval, especially in close proximity to your neighbors and local residents. Not to mention an area of first impressions approaching our town from the west.

I’m sure many of us have never really considered how cremation equipment actually works.

With that in mind I had looked forward to a presentation from the applicant to truly inform on what the realistic daily operations would look like.

I hoped that the applicant’s information meeting would answer questions and inform on the reality of an operating crematorium but, on the contrary, it raised more questions than it answered.

The self serving (rather than community serving) and vague nature of the applicants information meeting was, at best, irresponsible.

The applicant claims that a crematorium is “without visible emissions” and is “entirely unlikely to cause any sort of disturbance to any neighbouring residences or businesses”.

With very minimal research anyone will clearly find this claim is obviously inaccurate.

(see attached photo of a current crematorium in use, claiming they also use “state of the art” equipment at a funeral home in Edmonton AB).

One picture, of literally thousands available, I think is sufficient to cast a reasonable doubt on the visible emissions claim.

Incidentally, the funeral service pictured here regularly calls the local **Fire Department** to inform them they will be producing visible emissions likely to trigger calls from local residents. This demonstrates that the funeral services have prior knowledge these types of emissions are known, and likely to cause a disturbance vs the claim presented from the applicant.

The one sided and dramatized nature of the proposal sales pitch presentation is not something one looking to make an informed decision can appreciate.

The sell that the proposed Crematoriums “state of the art” equipment will somehow produce nothing more than “basically water vapor” and provide nothing to officially back it up, is not helpful to those of us looking to learn and hear accurate data on which to make a decision.

The serious lack of data in this industry to support the claims of the applicant should be a red flag to stop and make a safest course of action decision rather than a green light to go ahead using lack of current oversight and repercussions as a safety blanket.

According to an RDBN representative, many of the laws governing crematoriums are no longer relevant, outdated, and/or non-existent at this moment in time.

There is no official Canadian law to oppose or regulate proximity to homes and exposure to residents, or to monitor emissions. Any antiquated set back distances seem to be chosen at random throughout the world.

What information is the RDBN considering to decide on set back distances?

One reason, according to RDBN, there has been no update to these laws and bylaws is the lack of staffing power and resources to tackle this kind of project within the RDBN and environmental authority.

I think many can appreciate that reality.

With that in mind, is it not a reasonable and responsible course of action to err on the side of caution, and only permit this type of operation in a more appropriate location, away from residential property, on properly zoned areas already in existence?

What is the purpose of the current Zone M1A?

Has the current zoning of this land suddenly become irrelevant?

What are some other reasons this would be considered other than to support the business venture of a small group of people?

There are a lot of unanswered questions on the air emissions of the proposed facility, but the applicant has also failed to address the subject of ground water waste and the disposal of animal remains.

What type of septic system being proposed?

Is it sufficient for the type of waste produced?

If the answer is yes, is there data to back this up?

Is the RDBN concerned with the proximity to the fish bearing creek nearby?

Are there environmental regulations to support a facility like this near Salmon and steelhead bearing waterways?

### **The Need for this service:**

The opinion that this essential service is indeed essential for Smithers and area is so far just that, an opinion.

Sadly, opinions these days do often receive the same importance as actual fact.

Are there statistics showing that we, as a community, are exceptionally far removed from this service based on the average in BC or Canada?

If so I am definitely in favour of new services, and definitely in favour of new business in our area.

Establishing this service in our area does not seem to be the general concern, but a responsible location choice has to be the first accomplishment.

### **Mental Health:**

I do not think it is anyone's right to decide how comfortable another person or another family "should" be with death.

You will not see any argument here that everyone and their families deserve dignity when it comes to death care and funeral services.

I do not think it is anyone's right impose the burden of death or, in this case, disposal of human remains on other families and residents in our community.

It is a fact that we all will have to deal with death at certain times in our lives, but to force a group of residents to have to deal with death, on a daily basis, outside the front door of where they've worked so hard to build their homes inconsiderate and irresponsible especially when there are other options available.

### **Home Value:**

When it comes to home value there is one universal truth so important that it is always repeated...Location! Location! Location!

The effect of crematorium proximity on home value is an obvious concern.

While real estate experts agree there is no universal graph or formula to determine how the proximity of said business will affect a certain home's value, they also agree that it will considerably shrink the number of potential buyers.

The simple economic law of supply and demand comes into play here.

A reduction in the number of potential buyers for a given property will result in lower selling prices and the property being on the market longer.

Essentially creating a perpetual buyer's market for properties in a less than desirable location.

It is a very reasonable notion that, if given the choice, most people would choose NOT to live in close proximity to a facility consistently disposing of human and animal remains.

If the above is not ringing true, please ask yourself the important question:

Would you be in support of this facility across the street from your own home?

If the directions to your home include the words "turn right at the crematorium" and you do not feel like this is off-putting, I believe you are in the minority.

I have faith that the board will be practical and reasonable in regards to this proposal by denying this unnecessary zoning text amendment, and by suggesting more suitable locations. There's a better way, so let's work together please.

