

Niall and Brenda Trainor

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December 4, 2021

Chairman and
The Directors of the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako

Via email: deneve.vanderwolf@rdbn.bc.ca

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

**Re: Rezoning Application RZ-A-07-21
Rezoning Bylaw No. 1966
Proposed Crematorium at 3844 Henry Road, 8150 Highway 16**

According to the Notice of Public Meeting, it is proposed that Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020 be amended by Bylaw 1966, 2021 which would add 'Crematorium' as a permitted use in the M1A zone. We are writing on behalf of our relatives, David and Julie Lalik, who live at 3885 Lund Avenue, a property situated adjacent to the proposed crematorium development at 3844 Henry Road, 8150 Highway 16. We are sympathetic to their concerns about this proposal, and wish to offer some thoughts of our own.

Cremation is already an approved use of land within other zoning in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. In other words, the Regional District has already thought about where to locate crematoriums and has already decided that they should be located in zones M1, M2, M3, and P1A. The proposed 'text' change is in reality a thinly veiled attempt to re-zone the area for a purpose for which it was never intended. The application should have been rejected outright because it is not an approved use within the current M1A zoning for the area.

Changing the text of M1A to allow cremation is a material change to the meaning of zone M1A. To do so affects the integrity of the zoning system as a whole, i.e., M1A becomes indistinguishable from other zones where cremation is allowed. If their intention is to operate a crematorium, the proponents should locate it in an area already zoned for that purpose.

We were shocked to observe that in the Notice of Public Meeting the Regional District admits that the proposed crematorium may be a source of environmental pollution and that neither the province nor the Regional District has a plan in place to monitor the effluent from this facility. Indeed, the Regional District admits that it does not even know its legal authority, or obligation, in this matter. They say:

"There is a general requirement under the Environmental Management Act (Section 6(4)), that applies to crematoriums, that a person must not introduce waste into the environment in such a manner or quantity as to cause pollution. However, emissions from crematoriums are not monitored by any Provincial Government agency and there are no specific emissions standards for crematoriums. The Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority says that local governments can set their own emissions standards; however, it is unclear under what authority this could be achieved by the RDBN.

Staff's research has indicated that a properly operated crematorium may have little impact on the community surrounding the subject property. However, should the incineration equipment not operate properly there could be times where smell and smoke from the facility could be detected. In this case staff cannot ensure the Board that there would be any meaningful action the RDBN could take to ensure the facility operated smell and smoke free."

In addition to apparently not submitting this matter for a legal review, the Regional District has not taken any step here to conduct a proper, professional environmental impact study. It is not just smell and smoke that are emitted from the chimneys of crematoriums. According to the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health, the emissions from a crematorium include combustion gases; particulate matter and fine dust; organic pollutants such as polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins, dibenzofurans, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons; heavy metals including mercury; and even radioactive particles such as when the cremation is of someone who was recently treated for cancer with radioactive substances.

In addition to operating a crematorium, it is our understanding that the proponents intend to operate a facility for the disposal of dead animals which involves alkaline hydrolysis, dissolving the animals and disposing of them via liquid effluent into a septic bed which would be placed in close proximity to David and Julie Lalik's property. It is unclear what this effluent will actually contain, but some studies indicate that the effluent from alkaline hydrolysis has a high pH, which should be of concern given the potential for affecting agriculture in the area. It is also disconcerting that the proponent would obviously be stockpiling dangerous caustic chemicals at the site which pose both human health and environmental concerns.

It is unclear from the Notice of Public Meeting whether the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako has considered the environmental impact of this crematorium on the local waterway, Kathlyn Creek, which runs along David and Julie Lalik's property. We understand that Kathlyn Creek is a spawning ground for salmon, which is a food source for the local indigenous population and others. Have local First Nations been consulted?

In our opinion, in addition to obvious health and environmental concerns, it is reckless to proceed with this proposal without a clear understanding of (1) the Regional District's legal authority over the business and its legal obligation to the public residing in the vicinity of this facility, and (2) without understanding the potential legal liability that the Regional District may be imposing upon itself by virtual of a proactive action on its part to constructively re-zone the area so as to actually facilitate the potential damage to life and property that may occur. In other words, the Regional District may be opening itself up to a charge of negligence.

Even a cursory review of the internet will tell you that on account of their environmental impact people are very concerned about crematoriums being located near residential neighbourhoods. We share this concern for our family. David and Julie Lalik moved to Smithers to be closer to their family and to live out their remaining years in the tranquil countryside where they socialize and play on their property, enjoy a summer

dip in Kathlyn Creek, raise their own chickens and eggs, and enjoy fresh and preserved produce from their large vegetable and fruit gardens. How can they enjoy this now knowing that toxic chemicals from the burning bodies next door may be landing on their property and leaching into their soil from the liquified remains of pets? Could you enjoy this property if you lived there? We certainly couldn't. Julie and David's dream property has now become their nightmare!

In addition to health and environmental concerns, review of internet websites indicates that when similar proposals to locate a crematorium near a residential neighbourhood have been made elsewhere, residents become concerned about their property value. We do not know whether there is objective evidence of a decline in property value, but certainly that is what people think does happen. Honestly, would you buy a home next to a crematorium? We would not. And we think that many others would agree. So, we conclude that David and Julie Lalik's nest egg that they had hoped to pass on to their family will be substantially diminished. Moreover, the value of other properties in this area will also likely be diminished.

Until this came up, we had been looking forward to returning to visit David and Julie and their family. Their home on Lund Avenue is a lovely spot and they have worked so hard to improve the house and grounds since they moved there in 2017. If this crematorium goes forward, we imagine that the smoke from the chimney of the crematorium will waft over the fence and create a pall over this beautiful place and the people who live and visit there.

In closing, in our opinion, this proposal is ill-advised. It has not been thoughtfully considered and there are important issues that require further research and consideration. To us, the solution is obvious. The Regional District has already identified areas where crematoriums should be located and the proponents should be encouraged to find a suitable property in an already approved area. It would be damaging to David and Julie Lalik, and to other neighbours, should this proposal succeed.

Submitted respectfully,

 *Brenda Trainor*

Niall Trainor and Brenda Trainor (nee Lalik)