

Shari Smaha
Brent Muir
3260 Powell Street
Smithers, BC
V0J 2N0

November 29th, 2021

Jason Llewellyn
Director Of Planning
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
PO Box 820
37 3rd Avenue
Burns Lake, BC
V0J 1E0

Sent via Jason.llewellyn@rdbn.bc.ca
Mark.Fisher@rdbn.bc.ca
Deneve.Vanderwolf@rdbn.bc.ca

Jason,

Re: Zoning Bylaw
Crematorium: West-End Ventures Inc.

Through neighborhood concern, we became aware that there has been a request for a zoning bylaw amendment for a property in our area to build a crematorium. While we are not against having a crematorium service, we are against the location.

We gained access to the re-zoning package through a neighbor as our address was not required to be notified. That's concerning as we are a part of the affected residential neighborhood and personally have been a long-term resident in this area for most of my life.

We again, though neighborhood notification, joined the zoom information meeting scheduled on November 17, 2021.

At the zoom meeting, Laurel Menzel provided information on the number of operating hours based on an average of Smithers deaths (2.2 people per week) equating to approximately 3.2 hours of operation per week. What she didn't expand on was the potential growth of the business that any successful business would rely on in order to exist. In their application under the section "Reason for Application" it reads "Within the regional district, there is a 500 km stretch where no cremation service exists. This leaves many communities both, within and just outside the BNRD, without readily available access to cremation services, adding a layer of complexity to what is often already a challenging situation when a death occurs. There is a crematory operator located in Smithers, BC wishing to cut that distance approximately in half and provide this necessary service to ease the burden of residents grieving a loss while carving out the required end of life tasks for their kin." What this tells us is that by positioning the business halfway between the two existing crematoriums, there is opportunity to attract customers from neighboring communities in both directions of Smithers. Increased business will result in increased operating hours. The question is what will be the increase and what will the

environmental impact be? We asked this question in the meeting chat room, but no response was received. We can only assume the operating hours substantially higher than the 3.2 hours per week mentioned and cannot answer the environmental impact as we are not qualified to do so.

In the planning department referral report, under the Proposed Rezoning section it reads “The applicant anticipates a maximum of approximately 100 humans and 100 animals to be cremated per year.” We understood that animals were not going to be cremated in this facility which contradicts the context of 100 humans and 100 animals proposal. And if animals are going to be a part of the service, again, operating hours will increase accordingly.

Another concern is The Regulation of Crematoriums, as stated in the report “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 can not ensure the Board that there would be any meaningful action the RDBN could take to ensure the facility operated smell and smoke free.” We reside directly in front of the airport and can confirm that there are days that fog lingers in this area for hours and should the crematorium be operating during time of low venting, how are we guaranteed that the air will be clean for us to breathe? In addition, Lauren Menzel did confirm that operator error can occur which is of great concern.

In the zoom meeting, there was also talk of a stack. We would like to have more information on this stack – what does it look like, how high is it – because the photo provided in the re-zoning package does not show the stack in question which is misleading.

Do we really want a crematorium on Highway 16? Access to the building as explained by Colin Brintjes, would be through their existing business property of Northern Truck Rentals. A person would turn right off of Highway 16 to Henry Road, then right again travelling in front of their existing building which takes away from the element of privacy for the family during time of loss. Carry that one step further and your vehicle would be visually parked at the building for community passing by to see which even further reduces privacy; at a time of loss.

The location should respectively be located in an area of privacy. From a tourism aspect, do we want our incoming visitors from the airport seeing a crematorium? From a compassionate point of view, for people that reside on this side of town, to be continually reminded of death whether it be from a personal family loss, community tragedy or simply end of life stage, every time they pass by the building will be emotionally upsetting and unfair.

This neighborhood consists of many long-term residents. We built our house eleven years ago and chose to invest and live in the area for its view, its location and proximity to Smithers. We

didn't choose to live by a crematorium. If the crematorium was here first, then we would have the option to decide where our values stood (mental wellness, environmental impact, emotional connection) and whether we would be comfortable in investing in land and building our home.

While Laurel Menzel provided information that home investments stayed consistent in areas neighboring a crematorium, there was no evidence of potential loss of buyers. It is unknown how many potential buyers walk away from the property due a crematorium in the area, which results in less competition during a sale.

There are better uses for this property in question such as a storage building that was declined recently by the Town of Smithers.

Letters of Support recognize the need for a crematorium but not all letters specifically identified the 3844 Henry Road location so it is a mixed message – are the letter of support for the service (from the prior Town of Smithers application) or for this location? Dates of the support letters are questionable as well which question whether their intent was for the Town of Smithers application.

Public opinion is an important part of consultation, and the consensus of our neighborhood residents is that we do not want to live near the crematorium for a variety of reasons. Please respect the concerns of long-term residents, decline the re-zoning application and encourage this business venture to locate their service in a respectful, dignified private setting with no impact to established surrounding neighborhood communities.

Sincerely,

Shari Smaha
Brent Muir
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