

RECEIVED

MAR · 4 2019

THE CORPORATION OF  
THE CITY OF GRAND FORKS

**From:** S Walker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** March 4, 2019 11:37 AM  
**To:** Brian Taylor; Zak Eburne-Stoodley; Neil Krog; Chris Moslin; Christine Thompson; Rod Zielinski; David Bruce; kkorolek@grandforks.ca; Info  
**Subject:** Funeral Home Too Close To 7229 5th Street For It To Be A Respectful Location for Whispers Of Hope  
**Attachments:** Funeral Home Too Close for Homeless Population - March 4th.docx.pdf

Attention: Mayor Brian Taylor and Counsel Members

Please read the attached letter as it is an emotional plea from me that our city keep dignity and respect for our dying and grieving citizens of Grand Forks, BC.

Shelagh Walker (Senger)  
[REDACTED]

FILE CODE

WE3  
+ CIO - re Whispers Proposal  
(Businesses...) too close to  
Funeral Home

March 4, 2019

Shelagh Walker  
Resident of Grand Forks

Grand Forks BC V0H 1H0

Mayor and Counsel Members  
C/O  
City Hall  
7217 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Grand Forks BC V0H 1H0



**Attention: Mayor and Counsel**

**Subject:** Location for WOH next to Funeral Home & Crematorium  
Disrespectful to Grieving Family Members and in  
violation of Cemetery and Funeral Services Act

It has been brought to my attention that there is a law that prevents people congregating outside a funeral home. In fact people are not allowed to congregate within 100m of a funeral home and I can understand why. I have personally had the unpleasant experience of losing two people who were very near and dear to me. I can assure you it is both a traumatic and extremely painful experience even when handled with dignity and respect. Before my Mother's death we went together to the Grand Forks Funeral Home & Cremation Centre so she could discuss with staff what her options were after she died. This was a difficult and emotional time, but she wanted to have these discussions before she died so that her family would have less worry and stress after she passed. She was the sweetest woman I ever knew.

My father also recently passed away as well, and once again I found myself sitting down with the directors at the funeral home, discussing what arrangements were to be made. Discussing cremation is very challenging for anyone.

During the weeks that passed before and after, myself and my entire family were beyond grief. Tears kept welling up in our eyes. Conversations turned into episodes of crying, hugging, then fits of crying again. Sometimes conversations that wouldn't normally spark and argument would cause people to erupt in anger then followed by fits of crying. It's a time when people are 'overly sensitive' to comments or actions that might seem normal to others, and their emotions should be handled with respect and care.

During our meetings, I would find I had moments of composure, and also moments where I needed to go outside, sit at the park bench across the street, wipe my own tears, then head back into the funeral home to continue the extremely difficult conversations.

To no surprise – I am horrified that anyone is even considering 7229 5<sup>th</sup> Street as an appropriate option for the Whispers Of Hope to open up a Soup Kitchen. I have been hearing stories about people congregating in their old location, leaving feces, dirty toilet paper, needles, tents, sleeping bags, and piles of garbage in nearby areas and parks. I have seen the photos and heard the testimony of many people. I can't even imagine once person who would think it was appropriate to have this located adjacent to a Funeral Home and Crematorium. The conflicts and violence that occurred at their old location cannot be allowed to repeat themselves anywhere

near the funeral home. I personally know it would have been beyond disrespect if we had to deal with violence or conflicts caused by homeless when I was grieving.

I did also notice we have a law to prevent disrespectful things like this from happening. And it would seem rightfully so. It will be a huge disrespect to the members of this town if we allow homeless people to congregate outside our funeral home and in the park across the street, which is usually where the grieving go to contain their composure and meet up with loved ones before they enter the facility at 475 Market Ave.

The law Funeral and Services Act states that people may NOT congregate within 100m of a funeral home. It also carries a fine up to \$10,000.00 which I feel should be charged to the City if they approve such a knowingly disrespectful and unaccountable group to operate at 7229 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

I am truly speaking from the heart. I am very empathetic to hungry people and homeless. I have guilt even eating a burger the last few days without thinking about the current situation and I too want solutions. I have found myself driving by the warming station and driving around nearby lots on Donaldson that sit empty. Can facilities with trained and certified social workers be built on those empty lots? Are they zoned for a soup kitchen? Can a plan be put together for a solution to be on Donaldson? I believe it will also have challenges, but to allow Whispers of Hope to set up next to our funeral home and family orientated Splash Parks just seems very inappropriate which I am sure is obvious to most, but others might need convincing if they are not opening their mind to other solutions that are less degrading to the dying and grieving population of Grand Forks.

Please take some time to drive around. There are many open lots in Grand Forks that are for sale. Two of which are on Donaldson in close proximity to the Food Bank and Warming Centre. It would be only a short walk for individuals in need to get food and a hot meal. I grew up in this town and moved back in April 2018. I love this town and want to keep it a respectful place where we give grieving individuals a clean, quiet, respectful place to grieve and a place where we give the dying the feeling of dignity when they walk into the funeral home to express their last wishes.

**Yours Truly,**

**Shelagh Walker**

Resident of Grand Forks

cc.:info@grandforks.ca; Cathy Korolek ([ckorolek@grandforks.ca](mailto:ckorolek@grandforks.ca)); Neil Krog ([nkrog@grandforks.ca](mailto:nkrog@grandforks.ca)); Christine Thompson ([cthompson@grandforks.ca](mailto:cthompson@grandforks.ca)), Rod Zielinski ([Rzielinski@grandforks.ca](mailto:Rzielinski@grandforks.ca)); Dave Bruce ([dbruce@grandforks.ca](mailto:dbruce@grandforks.ca))