



TS'UUBAA-ASATX
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Lake Cowichan, BC
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April 26th 2023

Cowichan Valley Regional District
175 Ingram Street
Duncan, BC
V9L 1N8

Dear Mr. Stone,

I am writing to you on behalf of our Chief and Council regarding a serious concern in respect to a “community” meeting called by one of your Directors, Karen Deck.

In an email dated April 18th 2023 to our General Manager Aaron Hamilton, the Director advised Aaron that she hosted a meeting regarding our proposed quarry operation on the evening of April 17th with over 30 people attending from the region. We were not advised of this meeting, asked to provide any materials in advance of the meeting, nor invited to attend.

We had a concerned attendee from the meeting approach us afterwards to fact check the information that was presented and shared at the meeting. They reviewed their notes with us point by point and we were disappointed and shocked by the level of misinformation. We obtained a copy of the detailed notes and can share them with you to help you understand the seriousness of our concerns and the level of unnecessary hysteria that was created at that meeting.

Of note, Director Deck was asked why the Nation was not in attendance her response was that this was an “initial” meeting. A truthful response would have been we were not invited. Excluding the nation at a meeting intended to discuss a nation-lead initiative created an ecosystem for amplifying misinformation and creating more division and polarization. The damage done at the meeting to our relationships within the community, and our image as a First Nation was very harmful. It also created the potential fall out for our development at North Shore Estates, our shining star of Lake Cowichan developments. Of great concern is the blatant disregard for the respectful relationships we have strived so hard to build, this meeting was the opposite of the direction and shared values we identified through our Community to Community process with our local governments and the MOU we co-created in 2021.

Mr. Stone, we ask, does the CVRD not embrace UNDRIP? Can you please advise how this meeting and the actions of your director align with UNDRIP? It has been so discouraging being witness to the plethora of racist comments and statements the nation is rogue and does not have to comply with any environmental bodies or standards.

Was this just lip service that was being provided at the beginning of the meeting by the Director acknowledging the Land and its traditional owners – the Ts' uubaa-aasatx people?

Was the email written to our General Manager Aaron Hamilton which closes on the “peopling of the Americas ... for fulfilling their sacred responsibility to care for their territory from the beginning” just a convenient and insincere patronage to our Nation?

Here are a few facts we wish to put in front of the CVRD.

- First and foremost – we live here too. We have 100 acres of Reserve Lands. We are not going to engage in activities that put our community and our members at risk, in fact, we are going above and beyond our due diligence to protect our people and land now and for future generations. Full stop.
- To be clear we are currently building a community core with an elder care facility, operational day care, housing for our people, youth/community center and a sports plex on land that is closer to the quarry site than North Shore Estates. Does that not demonstrate that we are committed to meeting the highest standard of quarry development?
- To manage that limited land base for our growing community we must find ways of creating an economy using this one asset we have. This can be seen in our decision to have over 30% of the land developed as North Shore Estates. Certainly, one of the finest residential developments in the region that provides housing and a marina for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous home buyers and builders. This development provides revenues to our Nation and members have shared their view that this development is a means to economic reconciliation.
- We are Federally mandated, and through our due diligence process note we do not fall under Provincial permits. Despite this fact, our entire investigation into a quarry operation has been following the B.C Ministry of Mines permit requirements. We have expert Hydrologists, Geologists, Environmental consultants helping us analyze the potential of this operation. We have engaged a firm that has over 20 years of operating a quarry operation in the region guide us through the evaluation process. We are also meeting with the B.C. Ministry of Mines to ensure compliance.
- The Nation chose to evaluate the opportunity for an aggregate business because it is land that will likely not be suitable for residential development yet still provide a significant revenue and employment opportunity for our people for the expected 10-15 year life of the quarry. Every step in our evaluation of the business opportunity has been sensitive to noise, sight lines and protection of the environment.

I could go on at great length the tens of thousands of dollars we have invested in this evaluation stage of this business opportunity, but I trust you recognize this mistreatment and the exclusion of our Nation to participate in a dialogue about our project is painful and sets back our relationship in a most serious way. This is not how you build trust.

I wish you to remind your Directors that Ts' uubaa-asatx is a Nation on 100 acres of Reserve lands. That is all we have been left with.

We pride ourselves in engaging with the Cowichan Valley Regional District to provide historical context to our people, their culture and their history on the lands. Relationships matter to us.

So, I ask you Mr. Stone where do you suggest we go from here? We started with one agitator who got the ear of a director and now we have wave of misinformation and racist comments to deal with. We are now investing in a very expensive process of telling our story to the media so that the facts, not the emotional and racial rhetoric will be told. We are in damage control not because we did anything inappropriately but because one individual was allowed to spread falsehoods and create hysteria without anyone fact checking.

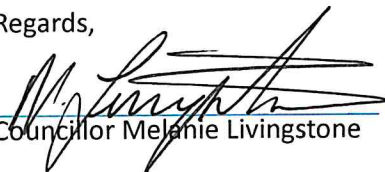
We took appropriate measures to address the individual in respectful manner. We advised we are in the preliminary stages of exploring a quarry and we would provide information once we had it. We do not yet have all reports in and therefore do not have anything significant to share at this point. It is disappointing your director did not take any steps to fact check or reach out to us before stirring the pot by hosting a meeting.

In closing, I would hope that you will join us and have your Directors informed of our proposed quarry. We will meet with them upon their request.

Second, we wish to know what the CVRD will do to set the record straight? If the CVRD is not supportive of our goal towards self sufficiency as outlined under the UNDRIP charter then at least to convey the facts of what the Nation has done to ensure the concerns that were raised at that meeting of April 17th were and are being addressed.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,



Councilor Melanie Livingstone

cc. Mayor and Council Town of Lake Cowichan

