

Walter, Penny

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Shannon Blanchet - Council Donauer Motion to Investigate Options Regarding West Coast Reduction Ltd - CK 7830-1
Attachments: Letter to Saskatoon City Council_WCRL.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, December 13, 2022 1:26 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Shannon Blanchet - Council Donauer Motion to Investigate Options Regarding West Coast Reduction Ltd - CK 7830-1

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 - 13:24

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

Date: Tuesday, December 13, 2022

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: She/her/hers

First Name: Shannon

Last Name: Blanchet

Email: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED] Cochin Way

City: Saskatoon

Province: Saskatchewan

Postal Code: [REDACTED]

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: Monday December 19, 2022

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: Council Donauer's Motion to investigate options regarding WCRL's rendering plant

Comments:

Letter expressing concerns about air quality in Lawson Heights.

Attachments:

- [Letter to Saskatoon City Council WCRL.pdf](#)88.54 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

December 13, 2022

To the Honourable Members of Saskatoon City Council,

I am writing to express my concern about the impact of West Coast Reduction Ltd.'s (WCRL) operations on residents of Saskatoon, specifically Lawson Heights. I am eager to see action and hope that by sharing my experiences, Saskatoon City Council can find a solution to an ongoing issue in our community.

I first wrote to the city to express my concern about a sickly smell clinging to the air on July 13, 2022. I was disappointed by the City's initial response which stated that Saskatoon does not have any air quality bylaws and therefore could not do anything about it. I have been meaning to follow up on this exchange, wherein the city identified West Coast Reduction Ltd as the source of the odour, since August. Since July, it has become more intense and more frequent. I was shocked to learn last week, thanks to CTV news, that the smell which I have characterized as "the lingering stench of rot and death" is, in fact, exactly that.

Having moved to Saskatoon from Alberta in July 2021, we chose to move to Lawson Heights specifically because we heard that Silverwood could, in the words of our realtor, "get smelly because of the wastewater plant". We did not anticipate the frequent, fetid disturbance caused by West Coast Reduction's operations and would not have purchased in this area if we had. I suspect we are not unique in our desire to be proud of the place we call home. When we arrived, we were eager to showcase Saskatoon to friends and family and couldn't wait to host them in our new city and province. We now feel embarrassed to invite people to visit us.

There have been several days and even weeks when my partner and I are unable to go outside without coughing or gagging. I choose to drive instead of walking or riding my bike to travel to nearby amenities. I often choose to shop in other neighbourhoods because the smell permeates everything, including the air in the car. We regularly drive to another area of town to walk our dog to escape the cloying, gag-inducing stench. We keep the windows of our (un-airconditioned) home closed to prevent the smell from entering the house. I am aware I am privileged to be able to avoid/mitigate the disturbance in these ways, and that many of my neighbours do not have the same mobility.

The smell was particularly bad on Fridays from October-November when wind directions seemed particularly unfavourable. Regardless of wind, the smell is present almost daily and for several hours at a time (if not days on end) when the temperature hovers anywhere near or above zero. However, near-or above-freezing temperatures are not preconditions of the disturbance. As I write this letter at 07:59 on December 13th 2022, with an ambient temperature of -14c, the odour is present and intensifying. My partner first detected it at 07:15 as he walked from our house to our detached garage, a distance of approximately 8 feet.

What I feel when I catch the slightest hint of putrefaction in the air is frustration and anger. As someone who believes in the exchange of tax dollars for enhanced quality of life, I am growing resentful of paying property taxes for the privilege of living in a residential area where the quality of living is regularly and significantly compromised by industrial activity. I am frequently unable to use the outdoor portion of my property as well as surrounding parks and pathways. I am not a parent so can only imagine what it would be like to try to use one of the area's many otherwise beautiful playgrounds.

While WCRL is located within an industrial zone, my home is not. The nuisances allowed for under bylaw 8770 within IH zones are not, to my understanding, allowed in residential zones. It is vexing to discover

that, according to West Coast Reduction's own website, the Saskatoon plant was built at this location in 1990 *after* Lawson heights and Silverwood were established, meaning either that this situation could have been avoided, or that the operations of the plant have developed or changed since it was established, resulting in the current problem.

I imagine the bylaw's stated prohibition on elementary and high schools in 11.5.3 is to prevent nuisances associated with industrial activity from interfering with the physical, cognitive, and social development of Saskatoon's youth. I believe speaking to staff and students at Bishop James Mahoney, Lawson Heights Elementary, St. George, Marion M. Graham Collegiate, Brownell, St. Angela, Silverwood Heights, or Ecole Sister O'Brien may provide further insight into the impact of WCRL's operations on residents.

Looking at Bylaw No. 8770, I submit that WCRL could be considered as operating an intensive livestock operation. As evidenced by CTV's report on November 22, 2022, WCRL has been keeping livestock "in a confined structure, building or area" (2-17), directly in contravention of section 11.5.3. The fact that the livestock in question are deceased either begs a more comprehensive definition of livestock within the bylaw to include livestock remains, or the addition of a new term to close an apparent policy loophole.

If the organization is not considered to be keeping livestock, then they are arguably salvaging or storing other waste material, meaning that WCRL's land use is a form of junk and salvage yard. Within the bylaw, junk and salvage yards are defined as "uses involved in salvaging, storing or selling scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, wood and other waste material"(2-17). Such use is expressly prohibited in section 11.6.3 of Zoning Bylaw No.8770.

The emissions caused by West Coast Reduction Ltd.'s operations cause regular and significant disruption to the function and welfare of inhabitants in surrounding residential zones. The stated intention of Bylaw No. 8770 is to "provide for the amenity of the area and for the health, safety, and general welfare of the inhabitants of the municipality" (<https://www.saskatoon.ca/content/bylaw-8770-zoning-bylaw-2009>). If WCRL is operating in compliance with Bylaw No.8770 as written, then the Bylaw is not fulfilling its intended purpose.

It is clear to residents that WCRL's current practices are incompatible with its current location. WCRL is not living up to its claims to "help us all live in cleaner and healthier communities" (<https://www.wcrl.com/what-we-do>). West Coast Reduction Ltd. needs to modify its Saskatoon operations to eliminate disturbances to residents as mitigation strategies have failed. If it cannot eliminate these disturbances, the plant needs to move.

Saskatoon lacks policies that establish quality air as a requisite component of quality living. This is an oversight that urgently needs to be rectified. I ask Council to act swiftly to address health, safety, and wellness issues pertaining to WCRL's operations in the present, and to close policy gaps to ensure quality air, water, and soil for Saskatoon's residents in the future.

I am hopeful there is a solution to this ongoing issue in our community. As a fairly new resident, I would like to be a champion for Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. Being able to stand outside my home and take a deep breath of fresh Saskatchewan air would be a meaningful step in that direction.

I thank you for your attention and advocacy.

Shannon Blanchet