

## Frequently Asked Questions About the District of Peachland Wanting to Acquire Peachland Baptist Church Property

**The town has said that they have offered the church 30% more than the value of the land and building. Why doesn't the church think that is fair?**

*The church does not want to sell or be relocated, and the referendum process said the fire hall needs could be met using District-owned lands. In terms of the offer of \$1.3M from the town, it is important to note that a like-for-like replacement of land and the building is estimated to be **\$4,339,810**. In other words, the town has offered 1/3 of the value of the land and building.*

**The fire hall is an important public project and it is a bit surprising that the church is trying to stall that valid public purpose. Why not partner with the town on a solution?**

*We are 100% supportive of a new fire hall, as are a vast majority of residents based on the 2022 referendum. But that vision can and should be accomplished (as was promised) on property the District owns. What started as a simple fire hall concept has turned into a 7-story project housing new staff offices, a municipal hall, residential development, commercial development, RCMP quarters, an ambulance base and parking for everyone. The project has not received assent from the public, and the public not aware until recently that church lands could be taken to facilitate its development. The church was not even aware the town was considering this until March 7, 2025 when a letter was received mentioning the concept of expropriation for the first time.*

**The town has said they are happy to move the building the church owns to another location nearby. Why not do that?**

*This is something the town has suggested and the Church sees this as a last resort, if there is no other option to stay where we are at and all other options are exhausted. The church would consider this to save the town money, given that an expropriation would be at much higher, legislated amounts.*

*We have offered in writing to move across 13st but the town has not replied to this offer, instead suggesting an undefined parcel 'nearby'. It is important to recognize the church does not have to agree to move the building to any parcel at the town's choosing, and we can't agree to a parcel that has less value. That would effectively be asking a small, charitable organization to donate value from our only asset to a town building project that is displacing us. We are an independent church and our regular attenders and members pay to operate and maintain the church - we do not receive funds from any outside organization or grants from any other organization. Like many other community organizations, we have built what we have through sweat equity, careful investment and service of our members so this church can exist in Peachland.*

## Frequently Asked Questions About the District of Peachland Wanting to Acquire Peachland Baptist Church Property

### **The town gives the church a tax break so why should the church even get a say?**

*Our members are residents of Peachland and the surrounding area and they live and work and pay taxes like other folks. For 120 years the church has run programs and services that are open to the community, and offers its space for funerals at no charge and provides its parking lot to the public at no charge. The town itself has used our building for meetings. Statutory tax exemptions are automatic exemptions from property tax provided by federal and/or provincial legislation. Municipal councils and regional district boards have no discretion in this matter.*

*These exemptions are directly applied to eligible properties by BC Assessment. Statutorily exempt properties are usually government properties or properties that provide some equivalence to government services, for example: Hospitals and health facilities, universities, colleges and other institutions, public schools, libraries, municipal properties, emergency facilities, sewage treatment plants, cemeteries, places of public worship and certain farm fixtures. Provincial and federal Crown properties are exempt under the federal Constitution but pay a grant-in-lieu of taxes.*

### **The church meets on Sundays and that seems like a waste of land that could be used 7 days a week for this building. Why doesn't the church just purchase a different spot and meet there?**

*Our ministry is to the people of Peachland, and there just isn't available land or a building like what we currently have in this community - we've looked. We meet on Sundays but also all through the week for counselling, small group meetings, bible study and other events. The pastor keeps regular office hours 5 days a week in the building as well. We are growing church and have doubled in size since COVID. If we cease to operate because an expropriation it will be exchanging one public good for another, instead of finding a way to accommodate both. The province is experiencing a mental health crisis and civil society and charitable organizations serve an important purpose during those times, and they should be supported not eliminated.*

### **The church has said that they have asked questions that the town has not answered – what are those?**

*Some basic questions we have asked but have not received an answer to are:*

- 1) if there is an option where we can be left as is by a smaller build like the option of a single story building originally costed by the District*

## Frequently Asked Questions About the District of Peachland Wanting to Acquire Peachland Baptist Church Property

*2) why can't they build to the west where they have already acquired property*

*3) why can't they move us across 13<sup>th</sup> street in exchange for our spot*

*There are many other questions we have like why the town felt it was necessary to do a news release without our involvement, or why the meetings of Council have been in closed sessions on these issues, and why the procurement process for the augmented protective service building included our lands without our agreement.*

**The town says they need the church lands because costs have gone up on the fire hall. What is your position on that?**

*If the average person is looking at buying a car or building a new home and prices have gone way above what they can afford, they look at downsizing their expectations or revisiting what is a need versus what is a want. In the case of the town, it appears that as prices have gone up, they have only expanded their aspiration. We think it would be wise for the town to revisit first principles and scale down the vision to what matches the community needs based on the budget approved by the public in the referendum.*

**The town has said publicly that the respondents to their procurement for the new building have suggested they needed more land, which is why they are trying to make a deal for the church lands. Is that your understanding?**

*The procurement was conducted this summer, but the first time the town expressed an interest in our property was 2021. In a similar vein, the referendum was conducted in 2022 but a year before that the town inquired with the church about acquiring the church lands and building but this information is conspicuous in its absence from the public information for the project.*

**Are you still willing to work with the town on this?**

*Yes, it is the position of the church that the elected officials and their authority are put in place by God, and the town leadership are ultimately responsible to make decisions for the community. We just don't understand why the town has taken the aggressive approach they have, when we have repeatedly made good faith efforts to work with them on solutions.*