

Peachland Baptist Church



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October 16, 2025

[Via Email to: jcreron@peachland.ca]

The District of Peachland  
5806 Beach Avenue  
Peachland, BC V0H 1X7

Mr. Creron,

**RE: 4204 Lake Avenue, Peachland, British Columbia**

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We write further to our meeting with Mayor Van Minsel, Councillor David Collins, and Cory Labrecque to meet with our full Church Board on October 6, 2025. In the meeting we presented the official written position of our church, which I also attach to this correspondence. Peachland representatives provided 'options' that they have created unilaterally:

1. Move the church into the proposed new fire hall;
2. District purchase the church for the District pre-determined amount of \$1.5M;
3. Move the church building to an undisclosed location in the vicinity; or,
4. Unilaterally expropriate our lands and building.

In terms of next steps, it is your request that we relay our decision on your options by the end of October. In short, we reject these options.

For option 1, we have no clarity as to what space is being offered to us, on what terms, or for how long. Option 2 effectively disbands the church based on what our own professional estimates have suggested the overwhelming cost of rebuilding elsewhere would be. Regarding option 3, we have been given no details as to what parcel you are suggesting, what the value of that land is, or when it would be available, or what the apportionment of cost between the parties would be.

At several points in our meeting you referenced the appraised values you have obtained. It is our hope that Mayor and Council have been advised of the unique non-market provisions for churches in the *Expropriation Act* of British Columbia, as follows (key sections underlined for ease of reference):

***Limited market – churches, hospitals, schools, etc.***

**35** (1)Unless an owner elects to be paid compensation in accordance with the other provisions of this Part, the market value of the owner's estate or interest in the land is deemed to be the reasonable cost of equivalent reinstatement if, at the date of expropriation,

(a)the land is used for a church, hospital, school or similar use for which there is no

general demand or market, and

(b)the owner undertakes with the expropriating authority that it will relocate and continue the same use on other land.

(2)In determining the reasonable cost of equivalent reinstatement under subsection (1), depreciation of a building on the expropriated land must not be taken into account if the building was being used for the particular use referred to in subsection (1) on the date the expropriation notice under section 6 (1) (a) or order under section 5 (4) (a) was served.

(3)For the purposes of this section, the reasonable cost of equivalent reinstatement must be determined as of the date that the owner obtains, through purchase or construction, reasonably equivalent lands and improvements, but in no case later than one year after the date of expropriation.

Expropriation in our context requires equivalent reinstatement. Our professional third party estimates for equivalent reinstatement predict a total financial impact to the District of \$4M to \$4.5M, not including legal and other costs. Expropriation would be a conscious decision to spend more money on the fire hall, which is already well-over budget, and entirely to our detriment.

We provided several questions in writing prior to the meeting and the District provided verbal responses in the meeting as follows:

<b>Peachland Baptist Church Questions</b>	<b>What We Heard – District of Peachland Responses</b>
<p>The town referendum communications indicate that the building will be located on District <u>owned</u> property.</p> <p><b>Q1: Has the town consulted with the public now that the intent has changed? Or was it the intent of the town from the outset to expropriate the church property and this was just not communicated to the public?</b></p>	<p><b>A: The referendum question was only about funding and not the location of the fire hall. The intent has not changed but the price increased.</b></p> <p>[no response was provided to the question on how and if the public have been consulted on these changes]</p>
<p><b>Q2: What other properties have you explored to place a protective services building? Are there District owned properties that can be repurposed? Is there a reason why the District cannot acquire lands and build to the west of your existing lots on San Clemente?</b></p>	<p><b>A: Other sites are less convenient. Better access can be provided if the proposed building displaces the church.</b></p> <p>[no response was provided as to the specific sites that were explored]</p>
<p>We understand that the referendum set an ceiling on borrowing for the fire hall. You have indicated that because of this you have to grow your plans to raise the funds to build the building.</p> <p><b>Q3: As an alternative, would you consider putting a new estimate just for a basic fire hall on your existing lots on the ballot in fall 2026 as an updated referendum question? If not why not?</b></p>	<p><b>A: No.</b></p> <p>[further response was not provided as to why the town won't obtain a higher borrowing limit for basic hall].</p>

<p><b>Q4: What is the status of our repeated offer to consider a move across 13<sup>th</sup> street? Has the District explored options to acquire that property for our use? Is there a reason why the District has not responded to this option?</b></p>	<p><b>A: No, this would be less easy. Town planning documents prioritize development and investment. The District is not willing to entertain this further.</b></p> <p>[no clarity was provided as to if the owner of those lands would sell, if the District has considered expropriating that property, or why planning intent can't be altered]</p>
<p><b>Q5: Why did the District do a news release implying consent of the Church when we have not reached agreement? And why not provide notice to the church that it was happening?</b></p>	<p><b>A: The District felt the church might say something publicly and so decided to go to the media to control the message.</b></p> <p>[no response as to why the church was not notified]</p>

Other points made by the District during our meeting are as follows:

1. *"The church land is required to improve access and egress for fire trucks and response times"*. We note that the original plans used accredited consultants, and several existing staff and Council members were present at the time of their production and endorsement. It seems instead that price catalyzed a new plan with new consultants, not because previously unknown safety issues suddenly surfaced after the fact.
2. *"There were several fires in the area this this summer which required emergency response"*. We note that each of those fires was successfully responded to by the fire department from the existing location. In fact, in the town's own 2024 Annual Report notes there were only 16 fires responded to in the entire year (a little over 1 per month). Only enigmatic assertions have been made regarding public safety, and no tangible statistics have been provided as to actual response times or safety issues.
3. *"The appraised market value for the church's land and buildings is \$1.5M"*. We note that while no written market appraisal has ever been shared with the church, the original (unsolicited) offer to the church was well below what the District knew was this appraised market value at that time.

In summary, it has become clear to us that the District is not prepared to find a workable solution for the church and is prepared to expropriate if we don't acquiesce to the poorly framed alternatives already thrust upon us.

Regards,



Pastor Lyle L. Wahl, Peachland Baptist Church

cc. Peachland Baptist Church Board; Mayor and Council, District of Peachland

Enclosure: Official Position of Peachland Baptist Church

## **Official Position of Peachland Baptist Church**

The church has never wanted to sell or be relocated. We have offered in writing to move across 13st but it is important to recognize the church does not have to agree to move our building, and we won't agree to a parcel with less value.

Moving to a parcel of less value would effectively be asking our small, charitable organization to donate value from our only asset to a town building project that is displacing us.

We are 100% supportive of a new fire hall, but that vision can and should be accomplished on property the district already owns. In fact, the referendum communications openly said the new fire hall can be achieved using District lands.

We do recognize the town's power to expropriate but this would potentially close us down, and the process would cost the town a lot of money between legal fees and of course the undepreciated value of our lands and building which is estimated to be \$4M - \$4.3M based on obtained professional third-party estimates.

It is therefore our recommendation that the town look for a more pragmatic solution which would be to:

- 1) down scope the concept;
- 2) use only town-owned land; and,
- 3) if more funds are required this should be through the legislative public assent process, which can be done in association with the 2026 election.