

Colleen MacDonald

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November 16, 2023

Mayor and Council
City of Fort St John
10631 – 100th Street
Fort St John, BC
V1J 7J2

Dear Milo Macdonald, Chief Administration Officer

I am writing to express a concern about a specific Halloween decoration I had seen displayed at [REDACTED] in Fort St John from the duration of time between October 31, 2023, and November 8, 2023, of a full-size construction worker in blue and yellow Nomex coveralls hanging by its neck from a tree in the front yard of the afore mentioned address, and the superficial response I received from a Bylaw officer when I raised my concern.

Mental health issues and suicide prevention are topics that should be at the forefront of peoples' minds, particularly for a society and a community that is still recovering from the isolation of the COVID lockdowns. I feel the noted Halloween decoration was in extreme poor taste as, in my opinion, it idolized suicide and could be seen as targeting a specific sector of our hardworking community, construction workers. The display was within 100 ft of a children's playground and visible from the Alaska Highway.

I did not drive around the community as a whistleblower to target any particular property that was decorated, nor am I a person that typically seeks out to complain about something like this. I am very fortunate that my life has not YET been touched directly by suicide, however, I can only imagine how someone, who's loved one has died by suicide, might have been triggered by such a display. As the decoration was visible to me every day as I drove home from work and I found the hanging effigy to be particularly offensive, if I didn't have the courage to point it out to the city as a concerned citizen, who would? Nothing changes without some affirmative action.....

I would suggest that the City of Fort St John could publish guidelines in the local newspaper and/or on its website for the community and property taxpayers to follow as they decorate in the future for holidays such as Halloween. Then if complaints like mine come in, at least letters of cease and desist could be sent by the city in response to such displays pointing the offending residents to a published guideline. Unfortunately, my complaint this year was just brushed aside by the Bylaw officer that had contacted me about my concerns, which I also found quite disrespectful and unprofessional.

Please contact me at the above address or by phone at [REDACTED] should you desire any additional information.

Sincerely,

Colleen MacDonald

Colleen MacDonald, M. Eng., P. Eng., LLM
[REDACTED]